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July 14, 2015

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

We write today to once again request that your administration make the extradition of Joanne Chesimard and William Morales from Cuba an immediate priority.

Recently your administration announced that the United States and Cuba will reopen embassies in both countries. We are greatly concerned that your administration has taken steps to normalize relations with Cuba while the Cuban government aids and abets convicted murderers, specifically William Morales and Joanne Chesimard.

As you know, William Morales was sentenced to 99 years in prison for his participation with the terrorist organization Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional Puertorriqueña (FALN). William Morales was a chief bomb maker for FALN, and he has been linked to the 1975 bombing of Fraunces Tavern in New York City, an attack that injured 60 and killed 4.

Joanne Chesimard, also known as Assata Shakur, was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison in 1977. In 1973, New Jersey State Troopers Werner Foerster and James Harper made a routine traffic stop on the New Jersey Turnpike. When the troopers asked the vehicle's driver to exit the car, one of the passengers, Joanne Chesimard, pulled out a gun and began shooting. During the ensuing firefight, Foerster was hit twice in the chest and Harper once in the shoulder. The injured Foerster was then shot twice in the head—execution style—with his own sidearm.

It is imperative that your administration ensures that justice is served by making the extradition of Joanne Chesimard's and William Morales' a top priority. In recent months Bernadette Meehan, a National Security Council spokeswoman said "the return from Cuba of fugitives from U.S. justice is an issue of long-standing concern to the United States that will be addressed in the broader context of normalizing relations." However, there has been no evidence of progress in securing the return of these fugitives.

The rhetoric from the Cuban government is especially troubling. When asked if returning fugitives was on the negotiating table Cuba's head of North American affairs, Josefina Vidal,

stated the Cuban government has "explained to the U.S. government in the past that there are some people living in Cuba to whom Cuba has legitimately granted political asylum," and "there's no extradition treaty in effect between Cuba and the U.S." This statement shows that the Cuban government has no real intention of negotiating the extradition of some of America's most wanted fugitives.

For too long, the Cuban government has refused to cooperate with United States officials seeking to have these fugitives returned. This is unacceptable. As your administration continues negotiations with Cuba, we once again strongly request that your administration prioritizes the return of William Morales and Joanne Chesimard as one of the requirements for achieving normal diplomatic relations with Cuba. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Scott Garrett
Member of Congress



Thomas MacArthur
Member of Congress



Peter King
Member of Congress



Leonard Lance
Member of Congress



Frank LoBiondo
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress