

Holyoke Council committee recommends support of Oscar López Rivera resolution

Escrito por Mike Plaisance / MassLive
Martes, 05 de Abril de 2016 14:13



President Barack Obama would receive a resolution from the City Council urging the unconditional release from federal prison of Oscar López Rivera under a committee recommendation made Monday.

"It is as much a request for support as it is an invitation to be on the right side of history," said Marcos A. Marrero, a Linden Street resident and city official who said he was speaking as a private citizen.

"By helping out one part of our community, it helps all of us," said David Yos, of Sydney Avenue.

There's debate about whether Lopez Rivera is a political prisoner wrongly incarcerated or a terrorist justly confined.

The full City Council Tuesday at City Hall at 7 p.m. will consider the 5-0 recommendation in favor of the Oscar Lopez Rivera resolution from the Development and Government Relations Committee (DGR).

Ward 2 Councilor Nelson R. Roman proposed the resolution for Oscar Lopez Rivera. The declaration to the president is a desire of the community here with Holyoke's population of 40,000 about half Latino and many of those of Puerto Rican descent, he said.

A Vietnam War veteran, Lopez Rivera has had the United Nations, labor groups and numerous levels of elected officials call for his release.

"Be it therefore resolved, the city of Holyoke urges President Obama to exercise his Constitutional power to grant the immediate and unconditional release of Oscar Lopez Rivera," Roman's resolution reads.

Holyoke Council committee recommends support of Oscar López Rivera resolution

Escrito por Mike Plaisance / MassLive
Martes, 05 de Abril de 2016 14:13

Lopez Rivera has served 34 years of a 75-year sentence for "seditious conspiracy" related to his participation in the FALN, a Puerto Rican nationalist group that has used violence in its campaign for Puerto Rican independence from the United States, though Lopez Rivera has not been charged with participating in bombings or injuring anyone, said online sources such as Encyclopædia Britannica, Mother Jones, a left-leaning magazine, the New York Daily News and City Journal, a quarterly published by the Manhattan Institute, a conservative think tank.

Lopez Rivera is currently in the United States Penitentiary in Terre Haute, Indiana.

The New York Times reported on Sept. 8, 1999 that Lopez Rivera " was convicted in Chicago in August 1981 of numerous charges, including weapons violations and conspiracy to transport explosives with intent to destroy Government property, and sentenced to 70 years in prison."

Holyoke Mayor Alex Morse declared March 28, 2016 "Jose López Day" with a mayoral commendation. Jose Lopez is the brother of Oscar López Rivera and made appearances in the city last week. He has advocated internationally for the release of his brother.

"This is a Holyoke issue and is important to the Puerto Rican community," Roman said last week. "When it comes to Oscar, he is the Nelson Mandela of Holyoke."

The DGR committee consists of David K. Bartley, the chairman, and councilors Peter R. Tallman, Joseph M. McGiverin, Michael J. Sullivan and Roman.

The vote was difficult to discern from the audience in City Council Chambers. Bartley and Roman said the recommendation in favor of the resolution was 5-0.

Sullivan voted in favor of the resolution, but previously questioned whether it was proper for the City Council to get involved in such national issues when many local issues require attention.

Marrero is director of the city Department of Planning and Economic Development.