



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** Res 0238-2004, **Version:** A

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### Res. No. 238-A

Resolution decrying the sexual violence and killing of women in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico over the past ten years, calling upon the Comptroller of the City of New York to develop and enforce procedures, short of disinvestment, that ensure that corporations receiving New York City pension funds respect the basic human rights of their employees and calling on the appropriate authorities in Mexico to take steps to end the killings in Ciudad Juarez.

By Council Members Lopez, The Public Advocate (Gotbaum), Boyland, Sears, Quinn, Gonzalez, Baez, Barron, Clarke, Fidler, Foster, Gennaro, Gerson, Liu, Martinez, Palma, Rivera, Sanders, Vann, Serrano, James, Weprin, Jackson and Seabrook

Whereas, According to Amnesty International, approximately 400 women have been murdered in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico since 1993; and

Whereas, Many of these deaths have been classified as “violaciones,” the official definition of rape in Mexico, which excludes many acts of sexual violence and therefore underestimates the number of women who have faced such violence in Ciudad Juarez; and

Whereas, According to Dr. Alicia Gaspar de Alba of the University of California at Los Angeles Chicano Research Center, the killings typically involve graphic acts of sexual violence such as mutilation, stabbing and torching of young women between the ages of 15-18; and

Whereas, According to Dr. de Alba, more than half of the victims whose occupations were known were employed by or seeking employment from maquiladoras, which are export-oriented, low-cost manufacturing plants concentrated on the Mexican side of the U.S.-Mexico border near the cities of El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, as well as San Diego and Tijuana; and

Whereas, According to Amnesty International and Mexican newspaper reports, many of these women have disappeared while traveling between the maquiladoras, which are typically sited in isolated locations on the outskirts of the city, and their homes; and

Whereas, Many reports have faulted these maquiladoras for providing inadequate security for workers by, for example, failing to invest in adequate public lighting or security services, failing to perform basic background checks of bus drivers hired to transport maquiladora workers, turning employees away from shifts on the edge of town for being as little as three minutes late and leaving such employees to return home alone and in danger; and

Whereas, According to a report by the investigative news magazine Mother Jones, there has been no coordinated campaign

to protect these young women workers, despite the pledges of companies in the industrial areas of Ciudad Juarez to do so; and

Whereas, Furthermore, A formal Demand for Justice for the Women of Ciudad Juarez indicates that there were 340 maquiladoras in Juarez employing over 220,000 people in 2002; and

Whereas, According to the business directory, entitled "The Complete Twin Plant Guide 2003," (Twin Plant Guide) many prominent multinational companies based or operating in the U.S., such as Tyco International, Delphi Auto, Lear Corporation, TDK USA, Proctor Silex, Phillips Consumer Electronic, Siemens Energy and Auto, Phillips Lighting, Honeywell Inc., Mannesman, Inc., Sumitomo Electric Wiring, Epson Portland, Inc., Johnson and Johnson Medical and Toshiba America, subcontract work to a number of these maquiladoras; and

Whereas, As of June 30, 2002, the 40 highest equity holdings and the 40 highest bond holdings of the New York City Employees Retirement System had a total value of approximately \$14 billion, some of which are invested in corporations such as General Electric, the Ford Motor Corporation, Alcoa Incorporated and General Motors that, according to the Twin Plant Guide, subcontract with maquiladoras operating in Juarez; and

Whereas, While the Council of the City of New York is sensitive to the economic impact of disinvestment on the people of Ciudad Juarez, the City must act to ensure that its pension funds are appropriately invested in corporations that respect basic human rights; and

Whereas, Furthermore, human rights organizations such as Amnesty International have commented on the responsibility of the Chihuahua State government and the federal government of Mexico to acknowledge mistakes and irregularities with respect to past investigations and to end the killings of women in Ciudad Juarez; and

Whereas, Sexual violence is a major problem affecting women worldwide, including women in New York City; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York decries the sexual violence and killing of women in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico over the past ten years, calls upon the Comptroller of the City of New York to develop and enforce procedures, short of disinvestment, that ensure that corporations receiving New York City pension funds respect the basic human rights of their employees and calls on the appropriate authorities in Mexico to take steps to end the killings in Ciudad Juarez.

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