



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** Res 0705-2004, **Version:** \*

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### Res. No. 705

Resolution calling upon New York State Governor George Pataki to grant executive clemency to Ms. Sharon Richardson, who, during her 14 years of incarceration, has participated in countless rehabilitating programs, humanitarian activities and educational initiatives, thus proving herself to be deserving of clemency.

By Council Members Barron, Clarke, Comrie, James, Seabrook and Vann

Whereas, During Ms. Sharon Richardson's 14 years of incarceration at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, she has taken every opportunity to rehabilitate herself and has proven herself a model inmate; and

Whereas, She has participated and excelled in programs such as "Choices and Changes", "Family Violence", "Alternatives to Violence", "Non-violent Conflict Resolution", "Anger and You", Parenting Groups, as well as other prison programs; and

Whereas, She has worked in intensive training and counseling in HIV/AIDS and provides orientation about HIV/AIDS to other inmates when they first arrive at Bedford Hills; and

Whereas, She has worked with the disabled, nursed fellow inmates dying of AIDS, cared for babies in the Infant Day Care Center, trained dogs for the blind, worked for many years as assistant to former Superintendent Elaine Lord and currently works full-time at the Chaplain's Office; and

Whereas, She has received her Associates Degree and is in the process of completing her Bachelor's Degree in Sociology; and

Whereas, Although behind bars, Ms. Richardson has tried to be the best mother possible, maintaining and even strengthening the bonds she had with her family and continuing to take an active role in her children's lives; she was a founding member of "Mothers of Adolescent" group at Bedford Hills; and

Whereas, Ms. Richardson was a victim of continuous domestic violence during her relationship with her

abusive boyfriend, Jeffrey Bridges, leaving her with physical and emotional scars, and, although Ms. Richardson did not know it at the time, her nine-year old daughter was also sexually molested by her abuser; and

Whereas, Ms. Richardson was sentenced on October 8, 1991, to a term of 20 years to life for murder in the second degree and conspiracy in the first degree, following the killing of Mr. Jeffrey Bridges by five other men; and

Whereas, Ms. Richardson faces life in prison even though she has consistently maintained her innocence, and most of the actual killers are free and many have signed affidavits recanting their allegations of her involvement in the May 1990 death of Mr. Bridges; and

Whereas, Not only does Ms. Richardson pose no threat to society but if released will in fact be an asset to our community; and

Whereas, Ms. Richardson has a complete release plan including housing, employment offers, and a supportive family awaiting her return home; and

Whereas, Many political leaders, including U.S. Congresswoman Nita Lowey, New York State Senator Velmanette Montgomery and New York Assemblywoman Amy Paulin have written to the Governor in support of Ms. Richardson being granted clemency; and

Whereas, Leading State lobby groups against domestic violence and sexual assault support Ms. Richardson's clemency application; and

Whereas, Over 560 people in Brooklyn have signed a petition asking the Governor to show mercy to Ms. Richardson; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York Resolution calls upon New York State Governor George Pataki to grant executive clemency to Ms. Sharon Richardson, who, during her 14 years of incarceration, has participated in countless rehabilitating programs, humanitarian activities and educational initiatives, thus proving herself to be deserving of clemency.

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11-30-04