



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0654-2006, **Version:** *

Res. No. 654

Resolution calling upon the New Jersey State Police Department and the United States Department of Justice to cease portraying Assata Shakur as a terrorist, and calling upon the appropriate authorities to rescind the reward for Shakur's capture and grant her clemency.

By Council Members Barron and Palma

Whereas, JoAnne Chesimard, also known as Assata Shakur, is a social justice activist, a poet, a mother, and a grandmother; and

Whereas, Shakur, as a member of the East Coast chapter of the Black Panther Party, actively participated in facilitating educational programs for adults and young people, as well as assisted in the organization's free breakfast programs for children; and

Whereas, According to the Hands Off Assata Campaign and the Talking Drum Collective, during the 1960s and 1970s, Shakur was a victim of racial profiling and a target of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Counterintelligence Program, also known as COINTELPRO; and

Whereas, As stated in an interview by Shakur published by Our Time Press, in 1971, she was forced underground due to federal and state charges against her from which she was later acquitted or which were later dropped; and

Whereas, In 1973, according to the *New York Daily News*, a New Jersey State trooper stopped a vehicle shortly after midnight on the New Jersey Turnpike for an apparent broken tail light, and the incident resulted in a gunfight which led to the deaths of the New Jersey State trooper and one of the car's passengers, as well as injuries to Shakur and another officer; and

Whereas, Shakur was convicted of first degree murder and was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1977;

and

Whereas, Through accounts issued by the Associated Press and a 1998 interview with WNBC-TV, Shakur has proclaimed her innocence and described how she was initially shot while she had her hands up in the air and then shot once again in the back; and

Whereas, In November 1979, with the help of four of her visitors, Shakur escaped from the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women in Clinton, New Jersey; and

Whereas, Shakur is presently living in Cuba, where she received political asylum, attended college, obtained a Master's Degree, published an autobiography, and wrote several works of poetry and essays; Shakur also had a documentary film made about her life and maintains contact with her daughter and grandchild; and

Whereas, On May 2, 2005, the reward for Shakur's capture was increased to \$1,000,000; and

Whereas, Shakur has the support of numerous national and international groups, including the Black Radical Congress, Global Exchange, Jericho, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, National Conference of Black Lawyers, Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization ("IFCO")/Pastors for Peace, Venceremos Brigade, and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New Jersey State Police Department and the United States Department of Justice to cease portraying Assata Shakur as a terrorist, and calls upon the appropriate authorities to rescind the reward for Shakur's capture and grant her clemency.

JPV
LS# 1139