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Res. No. 1976

Resolution calling on the City of New York to compensate the six men who were wrongly accused and incarcerated in the Central Park Jogger Case.

By Council Members Barron, Seabrook, Mealy, Sanders Jr.., Stewart, Vann and Mark-Viverito

Whereas, The tragic case of Trisha Meili, who came to be known as the Central Park Jogger, stunned the city of New York during the spring of 1989; and

Whereas, Five teenagers, Antron McCray, Kevin Richardson, Raymond Santana, Yusef Salaam and Korey Wise were arrested, tried and jailed for the rape and beating of Trisha Meili; and

Whereas, Steven Lopez was also arrested, falsely accused and tried with the five other teenagers for taking part in the crimes committed against Ms. Meili; and

Whereas, With little evidence against Mr. Lopez prosecutors agreed to drop the charges against him if he would plead guilty to an unrelated robbery in Central Park; following his guilty plea Mr. Lopez was sentenced to one and a half to four and a half years in prison; and

Whereas, In 2002 The Central Park Jogger case was re-opened when DNA left at the scene of the crime was matched to Matias Reyes, a convicted serial rapist and murderer who confessed to attacking Ms. Meili; and

Whereas, It was discovered through DNA testing that none of the men jailed could be linked to the crimes committed against Ms. Meili and had therefore been wrongly convicted; and

Whereas, Twelve years after their conviction, Antron McCray, Kevin Richardson, Raymond Santana, Yusef Salaam and Korey Wise were exonerated of the crimes committed in Central Park against Ms. Meili; and

Whereas, These six men, as teenagers, lost invaluable years of their lives in the prison system for crimes

they did not commit; and

Whereas, Since DNA testing began to be used in New York to examine old evidence in cases completed before DNA testing was available there have been 24 exonerations to date in the state; and

Whereas, New York State has the third highest number, behind Texas and Illinois, of individuals whose wrongful convictions have been exposed through DNA testing; and

Whereas, In 2008, The New York State Bar Association convened a Task Force on Wrongful Convictions because the Bar Association believed that "the number of exonerations in New York undermines the assumption that the criminal justice system sufficiently protects the innocent"; and

Whereas, The Central Park Jogger Case has become one of the most well-known examples of wrongful convictions in New York and continues to be a contentious issue between the public, the police and the city government; and

Whereas, The onus falls on the City of New York to compensate the men whose lives were forever changed and who had years stolen through a heinous error in the judicial process; and

Whereas, New York City has a responsibility to these men and their families to do everything in its power to repay them for the precious years they lost; and

Whereas, Although no monetary award could fully repay them, the city must make the effort to try and correct this monumental miscarriage of justice; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the City of New York to compensate the six men who were wrongly accused and incarcerated in the Central Park Jogger Case.

RMP
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