

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 13, 2011

The President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write to request that you promptly arrange a meeting with Reina Loina Tamayo, the mother of Cuban political prisoner Orlando Zapata Tamayo. Reina arrived in the United States last month, and has passionately continued to advocate for freedom and democracy in Cuba. Her heartbreaking story must be heard, and we believe this brave woman deserves your audience and support.

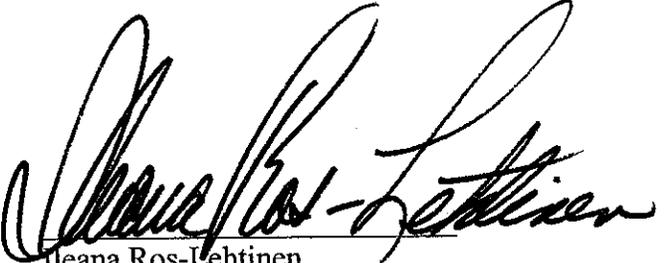
As you know, Orlando Zapata Tamayo was a prisoner of conscience who was murdered while imprisoned in Cuba at the hands of the Castro regime. Orlando was arrested several times for participating in peaceful demonstrations to demand the release of political prisoners. Since his initial arrest and unwarranted imprisonment, the regime repeatedly increased Zapata's prison term. Orlando Zapata Tamayo endured frequent beatings and had to suffer appalling living conditions while in Castro's gulags. On December 3, 2009, Orlando began a hunger strike to protest the human rights violations and the repeated beatings by the Cuban authorities. After an 83-day hunger strike, Orlando Zapata Tamayo passed away on February 23, 2010.

After Orlando's death, Reina bravely continued her son's fight by leading peaceful marches and protests to ensure that his message of freedom would live on. In response to her actions, Cuban officials routinely attacked Reina and her family both verbally and physically. She was even detained on the anniversary of his death to force her silence. Moreover, Reina and her husband were arrested while inquiring about immigration procedures to leave Cuba. Thankfully, Reina and her family were recently able to reach the United States safely.

You have previously spoken out against the wrongful death of Orlando and the need for change in Cuba, and now we urge you to meet with Reina Loina Tamayo to hear her account of the abuses suffered by her family and the ongoing oppression of the Cuban people by the Castro brothers. Thank you in advance for your prompt consideration of this request. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

  
Albio Sires  
Member of Congress

  
Heana Ros-Lehtinen  
Member of Congress



Mario Diaz Balart  
Member of Congress



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David Rivera  
Member of Congress