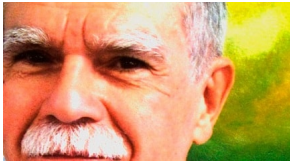


## José López, brother of Puerto Rican nationalist Oscar, to speak in Holyoke

Escrito por Michelle Williams

Martes, 29 de Marzo de 2016 21:47

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HOLYOKE -- A Puerto Rican activist will speak in the city Monday regarding the Puerto Rican independence movement and identity outside of the island. José López is a Puerto Rican activist based in Chicago and the brother of Oscar López Rivera.

In the 1980s, López Rivera was sentenced to 55 years in federal prison for an array of charges including seditious conspiracy. He was a member of the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional, Spanish for the Armed Forces of National Liberation. The paramilitary organization advocated for the independence of Puerto Rico from the United States.

Now in his 70s still serving his sentence in an Indiana federal facility, López Rivera is called a political prisoner by supporters and a terrorist by those petitioning to keep him behind bars.

He has received support locally from Ward 2 City Councilor Nelson Roman. On his first day in office, Roman introduced a resolution urging President Barack Obama to grant the immediate, unconditional release of López Rivera.

After Roman introduced the resolution before the Holyoke City Council, a representative of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center in Chicago reached out to him asking if he'd be interested in hosting a public discussion with López Rivera's brother.

López will speak at the Holyoke Public Library Monday evening of his brother's imprisonment, Puerto Rican diaspora and anti-gentrification efforts in Chicago.

The event will feature a panel discussion moderated by Maria Salgado-Cartagena and featuring

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López, City Councilor Ward 4 Jossie Valentin, Salsarengue Restaurant owner Jose Bou and Manuel Frau, owner of El Sol Latino.

It will be held in the community room at the Holyoke Public Library, 250 Chestnut Street. The discussion will begin at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, March 28. Doors will open at 5:30 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

The event will be held a week before the City Council is expected to vote on Roman's resolution.

In addition to speaking at the library, López will be welcomed by regional and local officials at City Hall in the office of Holyoke Mayor Alex Morse on Monday.

López's roundtrip flight from Chicago was paid for by the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, private local donors provided funds to cover his hotel room and meals during his time in Western Massachusetts will be provided by the Fiesta Cafe and Salsarengue, Roman said.

"It really was a grassroots effort to bring him out here," he said.

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