



City of Chicago



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Office of the City Clerk

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Letter of support from Shirley Hermitage for reparations to victims and family members of torture by Chicago Police Department

Committee(s) Assignment:

Shirley Hermitage
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Chicago City Council
121 N LaSalle St
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Chicago, IL 60602

August, 2014

I support passage of the Ordinance to provide reparations to survivors of torture by the Chicago's police.

From 1972 to 1991, officers of the Chicago Police Department systematically tortured over 100 suspects, under the direction of Police Commander Jon Burge at Area 2 and 3 police stations. In addition to beatings, individuals alleged that they were subjected to electric shocks; had plastic bags placed over their heads and threatened with mock executions.

Although Burge was convicted in federal court for perjury and obstruction of justice, neither he nor any of the detectives he supervised have been prosecuted for committing torture.

Statutes of limitations not only prevent the ability to obtain justice for these crimes but also financial reparations for survivors. International law strictly prohibits the use of torture and other ill-treatment, and stipulates that governments are responsible for investigating torture allegations; bringing criminal proceedings in torture cases and compensating the victims.

It has been more than twenty years since these allegations of torture first came to light. For all of that time, survivors and their family members have been denied prosecutions of the crimes alleged and many have been denied reparations to make them whole as required under international law. Now is the time to take steps to make these survivors of torture and their families whole again. Please pass the Reparations Ordinance for Chicago Police Torture Survivors to help take that step.

Shirley A. Hermitage
Shirley Hermitage

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