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NEWS RELEASE

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Whitman Doubles Reward for Chesimard to \$100,000 Torricelli Urges Castro to Send Chesimard Back Franks, NJ Delegation and Cuban-American Members Call for Return

Washington – Gov. Christie Whitman marked the 25-year anniversary of the murder of a NJ State Trooper by doubling the reward for the return of convicted murderer Joanne Chesimard. Senator Robert G. Torricelli wrote to Cuban President Fidel Castro calling for the fugitive's return and Congressman Bob Franks assembled the NJ congressional delegation and Cuban-American members of Congress in demanding an end to Chesimard's sanctuary in Cuba.

"Twenty-five years ago this weekend, Trooper Werner Foerster was murdered in cold blood by Joanne Chesimard and her cohorts on the New Jersey Turnpike. Trooper Foerster was shot four times, twice at point blank range with his own service revolver," Gov. Whitman said.

"Chesimard was tried and convicted. In 1979 she escaped at gun point from a New Jersey prison. Today she lives a life of special status and privilege as a guest of Fidel Castro and the Cuban government," she explained.

"Today I have doubled the reward the State of New Jersey has posted for the safe return of Joanne Chesimard to New Jersey. Anyone who assists in the safe return of Joanne Chesimard to New Jersey will be eligible for a \$100,000 reward," she said.

"I want Joanne Chesimard back in New Jersey and back behind bars. She is a convicted cop killer and her most-favored fugitive status in Havana is an insult to all Americans," the Governor said.

US Sen. Robert G. Torricelli today wrote to Cuban President Fidel Castro urging him to return the convict to the US as a gesture of good faith on the part of the Cuban dictator.

"May 2 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the brutal attack on two of New Jersey's finest police officers. Nothing could be more appropriate on this anniversary than for Cuba, who has harbored this cop-killer since 1984, to return her to face justice in the United States," Sen. Torricelli wrote.

"Joanne Chesimard's brutal actions left a woman without her husband and a son without his father. By protecting her from justice, Fidel Castro is an accomplice to her heinous crime. I agree with Governor Whitman that Chesimard's life as a free woman in Cuba is "an intolerable affront" to the families of the victims, and the people of New Jersey," the Senator said.

Torricelli also announced that he will be introducing legislation requiring the President to report to Congress on the action being taken by the Department of Justice to extradite Chesimard to the United States.

Whitman also joined Congressman Bob Franks (NJ-7), other members of the New Jersey delegation and Cuban-American Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart (FL-21) in support of House Concurrent Resolution 254 which expresses the sense of the

Congress that the return of all criminal fugitives residing in Cuba should be a top priority of the US government and that Cuba should immediately extradite those individuals.

"There are an estimated 90 criminal fugitives residing today in Cuba. They range from cop killers like Joanne Chesimard to airplane hijackers to corporate swindlers like Robert Vesco. They should all be returned before there is any improvement in relations with Cuba," Franks said.

"My resolution sends a clear message to Fidel Castro - there can and must be no safe haven for Joanne Chesimard and the other fugitives you are harboring in Cuba," Franks said.