

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL

October 4, 2022

Supporting The Release of Eyvin Hernandez

Eyvin Hernandez, born in 1978, migrated to Los Angeles as a toddler with his parents, who were fleeing civil war in El Salvador. Mr. Hernandez and his family lived in several communities within the Second Supervisorial district and graduated from local schools- Leuzinger High School and El Camino College before attending UCLA for both his bachelor's and law degrees. Mr. Hernandez has dedicated his entire career to public service as a Deputy Public Defender at the Law Offices of the Los Angeles County Public Defender (PD) for 15years. He was most recently assigned to the Clara Shortridge Foltz Courthouse where he handled felony cases.

On March 31, 2022, while on vacation in Colombia, Mr. Hernandez accompanied a Venezuelan friend to the Colombia/Venezuela border for what was supposed to be a short trip for the friend to complete an administrative proceeding. However, according to news reports, the two were met by what could have been paramilitary groups or official Venezuelan groups and the encounter quickly turned into Mr. Hernandez being hooded, put in the back of a truck, and turned into the military counterintelligence agency of Venezuela.

As of today, Mr. Hernandez remains detained in a maximum-security prison in Caracas, Venezuela. According to published reports, Mr. Hernandez faces criminal association and conspiracy charges, which he denies. These charges are punishable by

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up to 16 years in prison. Americans jailed in Venezuela are at a disadvantage when it comes to seeking help from their government. The U.S. closed its embassy in Caracas in 2019, after recognizing opposition lawmaker Juan Guaidó as the nation's legitimate leader but did not issue a travel advisory until July 2022, well after Mr. Hernandez was detained. The United Nations has also noted the lack of independence for Venezuelan judges as well as expressed concerns over the facility where Mr. Hernandez is being held. Alarmingly, Mr. Hernandez was not granted his first hearing until August 29, 2022, almost 5 months after his abduction.

Mr. Hernandez's family has sought assistance from the federal government to help secure his release. Supporters of Mr. Hernandez set up a petition asking President Biden, Vice President Harris, Senator Dianne Feinstein, Senator Alex Padilla, Congressman Gregory Meeks, and Congresswoman Karen Bass to intervene and attempt to negotiate his release. Given the urgent nature of Mr. Hernandez's situation, it is important and appropriate that this Board join Mr. Hernandez's family and support their efforts to obtain his release.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct Chief Executive Office, through the Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations Division, to send a 5-signature letter to President Biden, Vice President Harris, Secretary Blinken, and the Los Angeles County Congressional Delegation urging them to investigate this matter urgently and do all that is necessary to ensure the well-being of Mr. Hernandez.

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