

Hip-Hop Community Political Prisoners

Written by Robert ID2122

Saturday, 19 November 2005 06:47 -

As the hip-hop community, rap artists, actors, politicians, and many grass roots members rally around condemned death row inmate Stan 'Tookie' Williams in California; we should remember also the other political prisoners held in prisons from coast to coast.

The late rap icon Tupac Shakur's father figure, Mutulu Shakur is held in a Georgia prison. He was arrested on February 12, 1986 on charges of conspiracy to aid bank expropriation. Dr. Shakur was charged under the U. S. conspiracy laws known as "Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization" or "RICO" laws (8 counts). The U.S. government alleged that Mutulu's political associates constituted a racketeering enterprise. Also aiding in the escape of rap icon's godmother Assata Shakur (Joanne Chesimard)

U.S. Federal Court brought back convictions on all counts resulting in a 60 years imprisonment.

You can write and help uplift Dr. Mutulu Shakur at:

Mutulu Shakur #83205-012

601 McDonough Blvd SE

Atlanta, GA 30315

Also there is the case of Veronza Bowers, Jr who is being held hostage by Federal Prison System.

Veronza Bowers, Jr's conviction occurred during the FBI's infamous COINTELPRO operations, which used covert and illegal actions to eradicate civil rights, political and peace organizations. On October 6th, 2005 the five members of the U.S. Parole Commission met at the request of the U.S. Attorney General. They upheld the U.S. Attorney General's request to deny Veronza

Bowers parole and to keep him indefinitely in prison.

Concerned citizens across the country are calling upon the U.S. Parole Commission to approve the release of Veronza Bowers, Jr. who remains in prison 18 months past the expiration of a 30-year sentence he had already completed serving.

Mr. Veronza Bowers, Jr, a model prisoner lauded by prison officials, was scheduled for mandatory parole on April 7, 2004. Mandatory parole is required by statute after a prisoner has completed his full sentence if a record of positive institutional adjustment is achieved and the inmate is not considered to be a "threat to society" upon release.

Four different Parole Examiners, as well as the U.S. Parole Commission (USPC) itself, the most powerful parole authority in the nation, agree that Mr. Bowers has complied with these prerequisites. In spite of this, just minutes before his April 7th release, the USPC rescinded his parole at the request of a law enforcement lobby group known as the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), which claimed to have evidence that Bowers had violated prison rules. At a subsequent hearing, FOP claims were dismissed as unsubstantiated and a new parole date was set. After the hearing, the national president of the FOP stated that he was "appalled" by the USPC decision to release Mr. Bowers, and that the FOP must act to protect the public from the U.S. Parole Commission. The FOP then lobbied the U.S. Attorney General, Alberto Gonzales, to intervene and, as a result, Mr. Bowers has languished in prison over 18 months past his scheduled release date.

How is it possible for a U.S. citizen to serve his complete sentence under the law and still be held in prison this long after his sentence expires? This is particularly baffling in the case of Veronza Bowers, Jr., who has exhibited unique abilities to help others and improve himself on all levels during more than 30 years of incarceration.

To many, his accomplishments in prison are nothing short of astounding. Deeply committed to a spiritual faith and practice, Mr. Bowers founded and led the All-Faith Meditation Group. An interest in healing motivated him to study the ancient healing arts and philosophy of China and Japan. He has helped inmates both physically and spiritually overcome obstacles to their health and personal development. Mr. Bowers has also been honored by the Native American community as an honorary elder for his support and teaching of their spiritual and cultural practices.

On a daily basis, Veronza Bowers, Jr has worked with at-risk youth, inmates with anger-management problems and as a mentor and tutor for prisoners with learning disabilities. Numerous prison officials have relied on him as an intermediary in dealing with the most difficult inmates. At one facility, Mr. Bowers helped to disarm a fellow inmate and save a prison guard from harm. He was given a letter of commendation for this intervention.

Mr. Bowers has served the last twenty-one years of his incarceration without a single violation of prison rules or "incident report", an accomplishment that is virtually unheard of. His efforts to gain parole have been supported by numerous prison officials, attorneys, former members of regional and the U.S. Parole Commission itself and even a member of the U.S. Congress. He has the support of distinguished professionals and public servants most of whom have never before advocated for a prison inmate.

Mr. Bowers was convicted in the murder of a U.S. Park Ranger on the word of two informants, who had been charged with the crime, along with Mr. Bowers. These two men had both been convicted of armed bank robbery. However, in exchange for their testimony against Mr. Bowers, both had all charges against them dropped in connection with their part in the murder of the park ranger. In addition one of the informants served no time in connection with his bank robbery conviction for which he had been sentenced to 12 years in prison and was paid \$10,000 after entering the witness protection program, according to the Prosecuting Attorney's post trial transcripts. There were no other eye-witnesses independent of these informants to link Mr. Bowers to the crime. At his trial, Mr. Bowers, who testified on his own behalf, and his wife offered alibi testimony which was not credited by the jury. Nor was testimony of two relatives of the informants who insisted that they were lying. Mr. Bowers has consistently proclaimed his innocence of the crime he claims he never committed even at the expense of having his appeals for parole denied--for which an admission of guilt and contrition as an expression of remorse is virtually required--he has insisted on maintaining his innocence.

Mr. Bowers conviction occurred during the FBI's infamous COINTELPRO operations which used covert and illegal actions to eradicate civil rights, political and peace organizations. Veronza Bowers, Jr. has moved past this controversy, however, as have his family, friends and supporters. This group is now focusing on convincing the U.S. Parole Commission to follow the rule of law and abide by their own regulations. They insist that the Commission acknowledge Mr. Bowers has made an extraordinary adjustment in prison, is not a threat to society and deserves to be released on mandatory parole.

This contention is supported by a report submitted by Mr. Hans H. Selvog, a licensed clinical social worker and Clinical Director of the Augustus Institute (National Center on Institutions and Alternatives of Baltimore, Maryland) providing a forensic assessment of Mr. Bowers evaluating his suitability as a candidate for parole. This exhaustive evaluation consisted of a mental status exam, psychological testing and risk assessment. It also reviewed Mr. Bowers' behavioral adjustment record while incarcerated.

Mr. Selvog writes:

"Psychological testing confirmed my clinical impressions of Mr. Bowers as someone who does not suffer from any psychiatric or personality disorders that would prohibit him from maintaining a normal, pro-social way of living and relating. Nor does he harbor a corrupt or criminally oriented style of thinking or perceiving. Actuarial risk assessment provided additional support that Mr. Bowers, should he be granted parole, would in all likelihood continue to engage in a lifestyle that is respectful of himself and others."

On October 6, 2005, the U.S. Parole Commission will make a final decision on Veronza Bowers, Jr. petition for mandatory parole. His supporters believe that the outcome of this meeting will not only determine the fate of one man, but the spirit of justice and democracy in this great nation of ours.

For more information go to <http://veronza.org>

Find out more information on the struggle of Veronza Bowers, Jr. on line at any of the following sites:

Veronza Bowers Legal Defense <http://www.veronza.org>

The Jericho Movement <http://www.thejerichomovement.com>

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The Freedom Archives <http://www.freedomarchives.org>

Write to Veronza! Uplift him with your words and stay updated. The increased mail will also show Prison Officials that Veronza Bowers has global support.

Veronza Bowers #35316-136

FCC Medium C-1,

P.O. Box 1032,

Coleman FL 33521-1032

Also you can write letters to the U.S. Parole Commission, the Attorney General and the National Appeals Board. It is very important to make your voice heard in this matter. Emphasize Veronza's excellent record in prison and unquestionable legal entitlement to parole.

U.S. Parole Commission

5550 Friendship Boulevard, Suite 420

Chevy Chase, MD 20815-7286

TEL.: 1-301-492-5990 FAX: 1-301-492-6694

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Alberto Gonzales

U.S. Attorney General

U.S. Department of Justice

950 Pennsylvania Ave. NW

Washington, DC 20530-0001

TEL.: 1-202-353-1555 E-MAIL: AskJOJ@...

What can you do now to aid Veronza Bowers, Jr in his struggle?

Even with some of the attorneys working pro bono, there are many legal and court costs. In order to continue the struggle for Bro. Bowers" freedom, please find it in your heart and pocketbook to help in any way that you financially can. Donations should be sent to:

Veronza Bowers, Jr. Legal Defense Fund

PMB 201

2614 N. Tamiami Trail

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Naples, FL 34103-4409

Veronza's immediate concern is staying out of the prison mess hall. There are too many fights and problems there. He buys food (sardines, crackers, etc.) from the commissary and takes it back to his cell and is hurting for phone and food money. Please send whatever you can (check or m.o.) to help our Bro. survive this gulag:

Federal Bureau of Prisons

Veronza Bowers, Jr. #35316-136

P.O. Box 474701

Des Moines, Iowa 50947-0001

Note: As of Nov.12 Elder Veronza has NO money in his commissary. Cash by mail takes WEEKS to process. If you decide to send him a donation, please send it Western Union, if possible.

(a) Western Union Wire Transfers

Toll Free #: 800-225-5227

"Company" name: FBOP-DC

Inmate #: 35316136

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(b) Send Donation by Western Union Online

Additional information on Veronza Bowers, Jr can be found on these web sites also:

Assata Shakur Forum - <http://www.assatashakur.org/forum>

FTP Dollar A Month Club - <http://www.ftpmovement.com/dollar.html>

Pan African TV - <http://www.PanAfrican.TV>

The Talking Drum - <http://www.thetalkingdrum.com>

Information on other political prisoners can be found at – The Jericho Movement web site: <http://www.thejerichomovement.com/prisoners.html>

And PLEASE do not forget about Stan 'Tookie' Williams. Support for his struggle is very timely and urgent. Please visit <http://savetookie.org> to assist in his struggle.