



**NEWS FROM**

**CONGRESSMAN**

**CHRIS SMITH**

**4th NEW JERSEY**



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CONTACT: Peter Dickinson (202) 225-3765

## **Smith Amendment Would Pressure Cuba To Return Fugitive Joanne Chesimard & Release Political Prisoners**

(Washington, DC) – **Congressman Chris Smith** (NJ-4), Vice Chairman of the International Relations Committee, today offered an amendment to pressure the Cuban government to return fugitives killers, including escaped **cop-killer Joanne Chesimard**, as well as release political prisoners languishing in Cuban prisons. *[NOTE: Vote on this amendment expected by 6:30 PM tonight.]*

“My amendment requires two simple actions by the Castro regime before we allow unrestricted leisure travel to Cuba: first, that fugitives killers living in Cuba be returned to the United States; and second, that political prisoners, languishing in Cuban prisons, be released,” said Smith. “Right now, more than a hundred thousand Americans to travel to Cuba for humanitarian, educational, cultural, journalistic and professional reasons; but there is no urgent reason why we should promote tourism until the Cuban government meets minimal conditions of civilized behavior,” he said.

“In 1973, Joanne Chesimard murdered New Jersey State Trooper Werner Foerster and was later convicted and sentenced to life in prison. In 1979, she escaped from prison and soon fled to Cuba where she has lived as an honored guest of Fidel Castro,” said Smith. “Before we allow the Castro regime to profit from American tourism, we simply ask that he return Joanne Chesimard and the estimated 77 other fugitives living in Cuba to face justice in the United States,” he said.

“Under the rules in force today, travel is already allowed to Cuba; in fact at least 100,000 people travel to Cuba every year under current law,” said Smith. “We must not give away our remaining leverage to free political prisoners, routinely tortured because of their beliefs, and bring to justice those wanted for murder, air piracy and drug trafficking who use Cuba as a safe haven,” he said.

During the debate on the floor, Smith pointed out that travel is already allowed for a myriad of legitimate social, educational and economic reasons today, and that lifting the remaining restrictions would only effect leisure travel.

“Much of the ‘pleasure travel’ that would take place without these restrictions would be government-sponsored sex tourism, including child exploitation,” said Smith. “Cuba is on the short list of destinations for middle-aged men who travel the world looking for inexpensive prostitutes, especially child prostitutes,” he said.