

June 1, 2017

Lorraine Vázquez Cortés, Chair  
National Puerto Rican Day Parade

Dear Ms. Vázquez Cortés and Members of the Board of the National Puerto Rican Day Parade,

I write to clarify any confusion about the honor you bestowed on me and about my relationship to the Parade. Rather than remain an honoree, I am bestowing the honor, as I stated in the Op Ed published on June 1, “on our pioneers who came to the United States and opened doors. It should go to activists and elected officials who fight for justice and a fair society.” I am also bestowing the honor on the people – Puerto Ricans and others who love justice and freedom – whose years of human rights work resulted in President Obama’s commutation of my sentence. The honor also goes to those confronting the fiscal, health care and human rights crisis Puerto Rico is facing at this historic juncture.

As I also stated in the Op Ed, I will march in the Parade, as a humble Puerto Rican and grandfather who at 74 years old, after serving more than 35 years in prison, continues to be committed to helping raise awareness about the crisis Puerto Rico is facing.

On June 11, I will be proud to march down Fifth Avenue with my people, embracing all our differences, in celebration of our Puerto Ricanness. We cannot allow those who have the power and the money to dictate or to define for the NPRDP, what *you* have the power to do.

En resistencia y lucha,  
Oscar López Rivera