



CHRISTINE C. QUINN  
SPEAKER

THE COUNCIL  
OF  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
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Governor Luis Fortuño  
La Fortaleza  
Cll Recinto Oeste  
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00901

Dear Governor Luis Fortuño,

After hearing about the gruesome, vicious murder of Jorge Steven Lopez Mercado, we at the New York City Council are deeply disturbed by the sheer brutality of this act. It is unspeakable. His death should not be taken lightly, and proper action must be taken now.

Jorge was a beloved member of his community. He was a young, vibrant, openly LGBT teen whose life was taken too soon by the hand of hate. As human beings and members of the Hispanic and LGBT communities, we urge you to send a message to the residents of your island that acts of hate will be neither tolerated nor taken lightly.

Additionally, the disturbing remarks made by a local detective about the hate crime – "people who lead this type of lifestyle need to be aware that this will happen" – are unacceptable. These comments need to be addressed and proper disciplinary action must be taken. Such remarks could be interpreted by some to be an open invitation to others to commit similar acts of hate against the LGBT community.

On the heels of the passage and signing into law of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act by Congress and President Obama, we are troubled by reports that a murder has never before been classified as a hate crime in Puerto Rico – despite there being a local hate crimes statute on the books since 2002. We urge the Puerto Rican government to change this historical trend now by prosecuting this violent act as a hate crime as defined by U.S. law.

As members of the New York City Council, again we call on you to publicly denounce this crime and call it exactly what it is – a crime born out of hate. We urge you to prosecute the perpetrator to the fullest extent of the law.

Sincerely,

Christine C. Quinn  
Speaker

Rosie Mendez  
Council Member

Melissa Mark-Viverito  
Council Member