

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 12, 2024

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write to you with renewed urgency regarding the case of Native American rights activist Leonard Peltier. The power to exercise mercy in this case lies solely within your discretion, and we urge you to grant Mr. Peltier clemency, allowing him to return home and live out his remaining days among his own people.

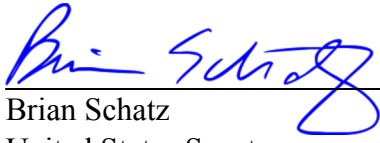
Nearly 50 years ago, Mr. Peltier, a citizen of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, was arrested and later convicted for his alleged involvement in the murder of two FBI agents on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Since that time, Mr. Peltier has maintained his innocence, and serious concerns have been raised regarding the fairness of his trial and incarceration. Calls for his release have also received sweeping support from civil liberties and human rights organizations – including the American Civil Liberties Union, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch; faith leaders and other respected voices – including Pope Francis, Saint Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama, and Coretta Scott King; and even those previously involved in his prosecution. James Reynolds, the former U.S. Attorney whose office oversaw Mr. Peltier’s prosecution and appeal, has argued that Mr. Peltier has served his sentence “on the basis of minimal evidence, a result that [he] strongly doubt[s] would be upheld in any court today.”¹

Despite the grave concerns surrounding the continued imprisonment of Mr. Peltier, who is now 80 years old and suffering from severe health conditions, including increasing vision loss, the Bureau of Prisons denied Mr. Peltier a compassionate release or reduction in sentence in April of this year; and in July 2024, the U.S. Parole Commission denied him parole. These recent denials mean only you have the unique ability to grant him clemency and rectify this grave injustice that has long troubled human rights advocates and Native Peoples across the globe.

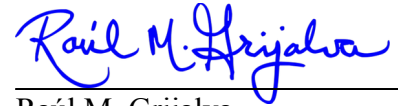
We commend the steps that your Administration has taken to right past wrongs of our federal government’s treatment of Native Americans, and the steps you have taken to uphold the American values of liberty and justice, including rectifying inequities in our nation’s criminal justice system. In keeping with these principles, we strongly urge you to commute Mr. Peltier’s sentence.

Sincerely,

¹ Letter from James Reynolds, Former U.S. Attorney, to President Joseph R. Biden (Jul. 9, 2021), <https://www.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/From-US-Attorney-James-Reynolds.pdf>.



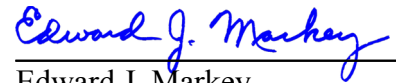
Brian Schatz
United States Senator
Chairman, Committee on Indian
Affairs



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress
Ranking Member, Committee on
Natural Resources



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



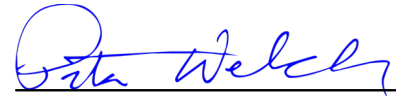
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



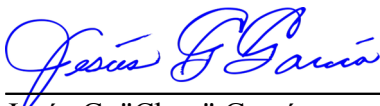
Peter Welch
United States Senator



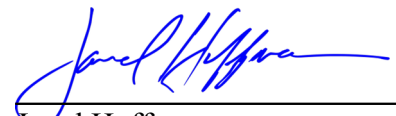
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Pramila Jayapal
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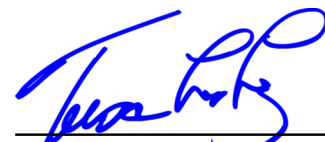
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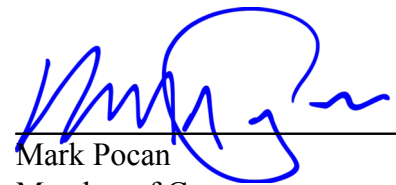
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Mark Pocan
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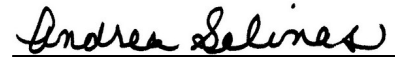
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