



December 16, 2024

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

Re: Clemency for Leonard Peltier

Dear President Biden:

On behalf of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NACDL), I write to you today to urge you to grant clemency to Leonard Peltier, an 80-year-old member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa and boarding school survivor who has spent nearly five decades in federal prison. His case has become a symbol of hope and resilience in the face of systemic injustices. Indeed, Mr. Peltier is an icon of the American Indian Movement who has devoted his life to fighting for the liberation of Indigenous Peoples.

NACDL's mission is to serve as a leader in identifying and reforming flaws and inequities in the criminal legal system and redressing systemic racism. Mr. Peltier's case and long incarceration stands as one of the most egregious examples of the systemic racism and inequities in the legal system.

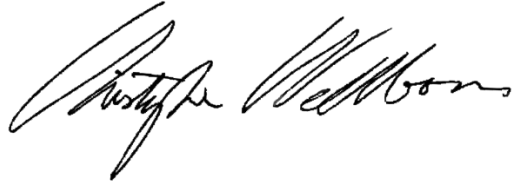
Mr. Peltier's conviction has been widely criticized as flawed and unjust. Despite the government's admission that it could not definitively prove his guilt, he remains incarcerated. This prolonged imprisonment, particularly for an elderly man in declining health, is a profound injustice.

The support for Mr. Peltier's release is broad and deep, extending from Native American communities to human rights advocates worldwide. Renowned figures such as Nelson Mandela and Pope John Paul II have called for his freedom. Even within the U.S. government, there is long-standing and growing recognition of the need for justice in this case. As your friend and fellow statesman, the late Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, stated to CBS *60 Minutes* on September 22, 1991: "I think if you add up all the evidence and if all the truth came out that the affidavits were fabricated, that the ballistic information will show that this gun was not in any way involved – I think a reasonable jury would have found him not guilty." But whatever history may make of the questionable jury verdict, surely compassion dictates that Mr. Peltier poses no danger to society and no good comes from his strangely prolonged imprisonment.

I urge you to carefully review and grant Peltier's clemency petition. His continued imprisonment serves no purpose and contradicts the principles of justice and mercy. By granting clemency, you would rectify historical mistakes and send a powerful message of compassion and understanding.

I implore you to act with courage and compassion and release Leonard Peltier. His freedom would be a beacon of hope for countless others who have suffered injustice.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher Wellborn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Christopher" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Wellborn".

Christopher A. Wellborn  
President  
National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers