



OGLALA SIOUX TRIBE



Office of the Vice President

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*Steven Hernandez
Administrative Asst.*

*Tamara Trueblood
Executive Secretary*

October 15, 2013

Greetings President Jefferson Keel, Executive Director Jacqueline Pata,

Executive committee, Staff, Chiefs and Headmen, and distinguished members,

I had hoped to be able to attend this year's conference and celebration of your 70th Anniversary but events here at Pine Ridge in the past week have made that impossible.

I write to ask that NCAI renew and strengthen your efforts on behalf of Leonard Peltier. I know that Leonard and his family and we at Pine Ridge are grateful for your ongoing support and your resolutions in his case.

I urge you to use each and every opportunity possible to advocate for him from now on. It is no secret to anyone who has followed Leonard's almost 40 year ordeal that this is truly his last chance at Freedom. If President Obama leaves office without granting clemency to Leonard, he will almost certainly die in prison.

I recently visited him at Coleman 1 prison in central Florida. It seems no accident that he is imprisoned more than 2000 miles from his home and family. Prison guidelines call for inmates to be less than 500 miles from their homes. I don't think that has ever happened for Leonard.

I had not seen him in almost 40 years and I did not know what to expect when I went through all the doors and felt the bars locking behind me each time. But he was smiling and happy to see me, as I was to see him.

After a little while of catching up about people he knew at Pine Ridge and how it is here today he quickly began to share ideas with me of how we can work to give our young people some hope and try to put a stop to all the suicides and hopelessness

that continues here today. I was touched by that. It was clear that he has never stopped thinking about trying to make things better for our people.

At the same time he did not say much about the obvious health problems that have taken such a heavy toll on him after all these years of bad prison food and the harshness of prison life. He is suffering from Heart Trouble, Diabetes and now very concerning prostate problems. He has suffered a stroke and a heart attack and lost most of the sight in one eye. Yet he still seems to have a very strong spirit.

For a while he thought back to his days at Franks Landing in the early fishing rights struggles and at Fort Lawton and in Wisconsin and other places where the people stood up. He smiled as he remembered his friends here at Pine Ridge and in other places.

I know he wants badly to go home to live out the time he has left with his family and his people.

For us, we will not forget him. He stood up for us at a very dark time in our history and we cannot and will not turn our backs on him now.

I could write pages on the ways his rights have been violated and the years he has spent in solitary confinement and document all the ways he was framed, but after all these years he has long since served his sentence and has been eligible for parole for years. They have taken their revenge and someone has paid for the events at Oglala, even if it is not the right person or people.

I ask your members to take every opportunity to speak out and advocate for Leonard Peltier now, and make good on the promises made in your earlier resolutions. He has been the victim of unfairness in the courts and continue to suffer attacks from in enemies in and outside of prison in the form of false accusations, and I pray that his decades long nightmare will come to an end soon and he will live to see the Black Hills and the Dakota's again and live out his days among his family and friends.

Thank You for this opportunity to address this important matter,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas Poor Bear". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Thomas Poor Bear, OST Vice President