



American Indian Studies Association
PO Box 874603
Tempe, AZ 85287-4603

August 16, 2016

President Barack Obama
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

The American Indian Studies Association (AISA) is comprised of scholars and students from throughout the United States and we are committed to pursuing accurate, truthful information about American Indian peoples and nations. On behalf of AISA, we urge you, President Obama, to grant Leonard Peltier Executive Clemency.

Mr. Leonard Peltier was denied due process by U.S. courts. Initially, four American Indian men were charged with the deaths of FBI agents Ronald Williams and Jack Coler. Charges were dropped against one individual and a jury acquitted Dino Butler and Bob Robideau on grounds of self-defense. Mr. Peltier was indicted and tried separately. On February 6, 1976, Peltier was arrested and extradited from Canada based on an eyewitness account by Myrtle Poor Bear. Myrtle Poor Bear later recanted her statement and testified that FBI agents wrote her eyewitness account. She was never present. The United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit found her affidavits to be false. Ultimately, Leonard Peltier was tried, convicted and sentenced to two consecutive life terms for the death of these two FBI agents.

Leonard Peltier's case has garnered much attention and support in Indian Country largely because his conviction is indicative of historical and ongoing injustices against Indigenous peoples and nations. Mr. Peltier's incarceration highlights how the American justice system punitively punishes American Indian activists who have fought to maintain their dignity and humanity as Indigenous peoples. Leonard Peltier fought against corruption and murder of Lakota people living on the Pine Ridge reservation and he has paid the price of fighting against a colonized tribal and federal political governments with his life. Peltier has maintained his innocence despite being incarcerated for over forty years. The lack of justice clearly exhibited by the courts must be overturned.



We respectfully urge you, Mr. President Obama, to examine Leonard Peltier's conviction. As President of the United States, you have the ability to grant Mr. Peltier Executive Clemency. In doing so, you will overturn centuries of injustice against American Indians. On December 10, 2010, the United States lent its support to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous people. You also declared that actions were far more important than declarations. Now is the time for you to fulfill your own words through action: Executive Clemency to Leonard Peltier.

Sincerely,

Elise Boxer, Ph. D., Native American Studies, University of South Dakota
President

Jeanette Haynes Writer, Ph.D., Department of Curriculum & Instruction, New Mexico State University, Board member

Lloyd Lee, Ph.D., Native American Studies, University of New Mexico
Former AISA President and board member

Richard Meyers, Ph.D., Tribal Relations Director and Program Coordinator of American Indian Studies, South Dakota State University, board member.

Simon J. Ortiz, Regents Professor of American Indian Studies and English, Arizona State University, Board member

Cornel Pewewardy, D. Ed., Professor and Director of Indigenous Nations Studies, Portland State University, Board member

James Riding In, Ph.D., American Indian Studies, Arizona State University
Former President of AISA

Ernest Weston, Jr., South Dakota State University
Student Representative

Michael Yellowbird, Ph. D., Director of Indigenous Tribal Studies, North Dakota State University, Board member