

Committee on the Judiciary  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2138 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

## Petition for Congressional Hearings on COINTELPRO and the Pine Ridge “Reign of Terror”

COINTELPRO is an acronym for a series of counterintelligence programs conducted in the 1950s-1970s by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) against various dissident groups and political activists.

Despite citizens’ efforts since 1975, no serious effort has been made to officially investigate alleged constitutional and human rights violations by the FBI against such organizations and individuals—nor have such occurrences against residents of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, South Dakota, been addressed.

In 1975, the U.S. Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (or “Church Committee”) was poised to address allegations of misconduct with respect to the FBI’s counterintelligence program and its targeting of Indigenous civil rights organizations and Native American activists following the 71-day siege at Wounded Knee, SD (27 Feb-8 May 1973). That hearing was cancelled and never rescheduled.

The last official request for relief, initiated in March 2004 (and still pending), was a request to your Committee for congressional hearings focused on the FBI’s improper use of confidential informants in Indian Country.

As there have been numerous allegations of FBI misconduct on reservations, in general, over the years—and on the Pine Ridge Reservation, in particular—it is advisable that Congress examine federal law enforcement activities on reservations. This inquiry must include an investigation of the so-called “Reign of Terror” on the Pine Ridge Reservation (1973-1976), the many deaths and injuries that occurred during that time, and the role of the FBI in fomenting violence on the reservation in an attempt to “neutralize” the Indigenous rights movement.

All Americans have the right to know the truth. Most of all, however, Indians must be heard on these matters.

We, the undersigned, join with other activist organizations in asking the Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. House of Representatives, to schedule hearings on "COINTELPRO: Its Legacy and Continuing Impact." Your efforts will ensure impartiality, accuracy, and a complete inquiry, as well as accountability. We believe that these measures will finally bring closure to the residents of Pine Ridge and put to rest the tragic events of the 1970s. We also believe this to be the Committee’s opportunity to find the truth and, hopefully, pass legislation that will begin to address some of the gross injustices committed not only against political activists and dissident organizations under the auspices of COINTELPRO, but reverse laws enacted since September 11, 2001, that have limited our constitutional freedoms.

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