

SAMPLE LETTER TO SENATOR DASCHLE:

To : United States Senator Tom Daschle
United States Senate
Washington D.C.

From : NAME, ADDRESS (IF NATIVE SPECIFY..OR ANY AFFILIATION OR
TITLE)

Dear Senator Daschle,

I am writing to express my disappointment and sense of betrayal with regards to your recent decision to oppose clemency for Mr. Leonard Peltier. Given your responsibilities as United States Senator of a state with a large population of Native peoples, many of whom greatly assisted you when you first ran for office, I expected a more just and reasoned position on this issue. Evidently I was mistaken.

As you well know, Mr. Peltier has never had the benefit of a fair trial. There is clear evidence that vengeful FBI agents coerced witnesses, utilized false testimonies, and concealed a key ballistics test reflecting his innocence. Although he was denied a new trial on a technicality, even the court expressly noted that but for the abuses which occurred, Mr. Peltier might have been acquitted. Even the United States Attorney admits that no one knows who fired the fatal shots. Mr. Peltier has now been imprisoned for twenty five years and is deteriorating health. Despite his remarkable record of human rights achievements from behind bars, he remains incarcerated and long overdue for parole. To make matters worse, his controversial conviction is deeply rooted in the Pine Ridge "Reign of Terror" of 1973-1976, one of the most grim chapters in recent American civil rights history. For disturbing information as to FBI misconduct throughout these years of repression and right wing violence, I would refer you to the reports of the United States Civil Rights Commission. Surely, as Senator of South Dakota, you have heard the frightening testimonies of various Lakota survivors in this regard. If not, you have been remiss in your duties.

This case has long been a great embarrassment to those of us in the United States who believe in equal rights and due process of the laws for all citizens. As a leading Democrat in Congress, you should have defended the basic values of your party and your constituents. In betraying Leonard Peltier you not only betrayed an individual human being, but the Native people of your state, as well as all of us who believe in basic civil rights and justice.

Perhaps you should consider changing parties.

Sincerely,