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Congress of the United States
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(U.S. HELSINKI COMMISSION)

November 15, 2016

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

Dear Mr. President,

It has been a great honor serving in Congress during your Presidency. I have appreciated all the courtesies you have extended to my constituents and to me. The grants and awards my district has received from your Administration have been vital to helping a city that has too often been overlooked and I further thank you for nominating individuals who I recommended to serve as judges, TVA commissioners, and US attorneys. These appointees have served with distinction and have provided additional diversity among their colleagues.

With only a few months left in your Presidency I would urge you to do everything within your power to do those things that only you can do and which are highly unlikely to be done during the next Administration.

I encourage you to bestow Presidential Medals of Freedom on Julian Bond, Julius Rosenwald, and Harry Belafonte as well as other great Americans whose contributions are unlikely to merit recognition by the new conservative administration.

I would urge you to summon the maximum manpower at your disposal to vet commutations and pardons so that as many sentencing wrongs as possible may be corrected as thousands of incarcerated Americans who are serving unjust sentences may receive justice. I don't believe the incoming administration will be inclined to use the presidential pardon of commutation for victims who have been convicted of non-violent drug crimes.

On behalf of my constituency and myself, I extend my heartfelt and sincere gratitude for your leadership, values both political and personal, and the grace you have exhibited which has made America a point of pride around the world.

As always, I remain,

Most sincerely,



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress