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2ND DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

COMMITTEE ON RULES

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

SENIOR DEMOCRATIC WHIP

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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The Honorable Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama,

I am writing to urge your full and fair consideration of a request by brothers Robert and Michael Meeropol to issue a presidential proclamation -- or similar action -- to address the injustice done to their mother, Ethel Rosenberg.

A significant body of evidence - including U.S. government files, grand jury testimony, and other third-party sources - now suggests that Ethel was not a spy, and that the government knew this at the time of her prosecution and execution. Moreover, this evidence indicates that Ethel was prosecuted not because of her own culpability but as a "lever" to put pressure on her husband, Julius, to cooperate with the government.

There is also now reason to believe that the prosecution team, lacking credible evidence on which to convict Ethel, carried out an unjust trial. Ethel's brother, David Greenglass, stated in a 1996 interview that Roy Cohn, a key member of the prosecution team, pressured him to give false testimony about Ethel that led to his sister's conviction and execution. In sharp contrast to that trial testimony, when testifying before the Grand Jury on August 7, 1950 (documents released to the public in 2015), Mr. Greenglass stated, "I said before, and say it again, honestly, this is a fact: I never spoke to my sister about this at all."

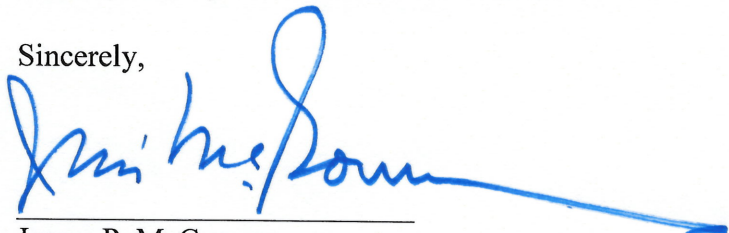
Further undermining the integrity of Ethel's trial, it appears likely that Mr. Cohn engaged in illegal ex parte communication with the presiding judge. The body of evidence used to convict Ethel and the integrity of the trial have appropriately been called into question in recent years. I accordingly urge you to re-examine the case and determine if the conviction and execution of Ethel Rosenberg was fundamentally flawed.

In June of this year, reacting to hateful rhetoric against Muslims after the Pulse nightclub shootings, you stated: "That's not the America we want, it does not reflect our democratic ideals. We've gone through moments in our history before when we acted out of fear and came to regret it." Ethel Rosenberg's politically-motivated condemnation was one of those moments. A proclamation or other presidential action that declares her conviction was unjust and her execution was wrongful would be a powerful repudiation of the hysteria and accusations that took place in the McCarthy Era.

I hope you will consider this request and, if appropriate, take action to right this historic wrong. By so doing, you can send a clear message to the American people that our government's actions must be just, humane, and accountable.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim McGovern", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress