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**Deal W. Hudson**

**Fairfax, VA 22032**

President George W. Bush  
Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush and Attorney General Mukasey:

I am writing today regarding the application for a posthumous pardon for Mr. Charles "Charlie" Winters.

Charlie was one of a handful of Americans convicted under the U.S. Neutrality Act of 1939 for his role in a successful effort to provide decommissioned U.S. military airplanes to the Jewish armed forces for its defense during the 1948 Israeli War for Independence. The assistance provided by Charlie and his colleagues was critical in ensuring Israel's survival as an independent state. Upon completion of the delivery of the airplanes, Charlie returned to the United States, accepted full responsibility for his actions, pled guilty and served a short prison sentence. He was released from prison on November 17, 1949, and lived a humble life in Miami, Florida until he passed away in 1984. His obituary in the *Miami Herald* was poignantly entitled "Charles Winters, 71, Aided Birth of Israel."

Former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir once noted that Charlie's selfless efforts on Israel's behalf had earned him "a place of distinction" among American friends of the Jewish state. I believe Charlie's actions were also notable because he was a Christian with no familial or other ties to Israel, and because he honorably accepted the legal consequences of his actions at the time, even though the Neutrality Act served to frustrate what was clearly an extraordinary act of conscience.

Two other individuals who were convicted along with Charlie have already been pardoned by your predecessors in office. While it is somewhat unusual to seek a posthumous pardon on Charlie's behalf, his family and our Nation would be the better if you granted the request. Among other things, it would be a powerful and timely reminder of the broad ecumenical support for Israel in the Christian and Jewish communities. It would also be an especially moving tribute coming from you, a leader who has consistently answered the call of conscience regardless of the immediate political consequences.

Yours truly,



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