

Leonard Peltier, Native American political prisoner for almost 50 years, denied parole request... again!



Washington, July 2 (RHC)-- The U.S. Federal Parole Commission has denied Leonard Peltier's bid for parole, his lawyer said Tuesday, another setback in freeing the ailing Indigenous rights activist who has long maintained his innocence in the killing of two FBI agents almost 50 years ago.

Peltier, who turns 80-years-old in September, made a case for parole based on several factors, including his age, nonviolent record in prison and declining health, which has been affected by diabetes, hypertension, partial blindness from a stroke and bouts of COVID-19.

Ahead of Peltier's June 10th hearing, his lawyer, Kevin Sharp, had acknowledged that the request was "probably his last chance" to make a case for parole since Peltier's last full hearing was 15 years ago. Sharp said Tuesday that an interim hearing about Peltier's parole status has been set for 2026 with a full hearing scheduled for June 2039, when he would be 94.

He added that the commission recommended the Federal Bureau of Prisons review Peltier's medical records and assess whether he should be transferred to a medical facility the agency operates.

"Today's announcement continues the injustice of this long ordeal for Leonard Peltier," Sharp said. "This decision is a missed opportunity for the United States to finally recognize the misconduct of the FBI and send a message to Indian Country regarding the impacts of the federal government's actions and policies of the 1970s."

Native American rights groups and tribal leaders say Peltier's conviction was emblematic of the struggle between Native Americans and the federal government, particularly on Indigenous lands.

Nick Tilsen, president and CEO of NDN Collective, an Indigenous-led advocacy organization, said Peltier's latest denial for parole represents a "sad day for Indigenous Peoples and justice everywhere."

"While we are heartbroken by the parole commission's decision," he said in a statement, "our work to ensure that Leonard will receive justice and freedom will continue with renewed dedication."

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