



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

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August 8, 2008

Mr. Ronald Rodgers
Pardon Attorney
United States Department of Justice
1425 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, District of Columbia 20530

Dear Mr. Rodgers:

A pardon application for Mr. Charles Winters was recently submitted to your office on behalf of his son, Mr. Jim Winters, and the Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County.

Mr. Charles Winters was a Florida resident, convicted under the U.S. Neutrality Act of 1939 for his role in an effort to provide several aircraft to the Jewish armed forces for its defense during the 1948 Israeli Independence War. Had Mr. Winters and other Americans not provided this assistance at such a critical time, Israel may not have survived as an independent state.

We understand that Mr. Winters was one of a handful of Americans convicted and that he was the only one to serve a prison sentence. He was released from prison on November 17, 1949, and lived a humble and quiet life thereafter in Miami. Several others who were convicted have already received pardons, including Mr. Al Schwimmer, who was pardoned by President Bill Clinton, and Mr. Hank Greenspun, who was pardoned by President John F. Kennedy.

Unfortunately, Mr. Winters passed away in 1984 prior to the filing of this application. His obituary in the *Miami Herald* was entitled "Charles Winters, 71, Aided Birth of Israel," and noted that he had been honored by Israel Prime Minister Golda Meir, and had earned "a place of distinction among the Americans who banded together clandestinely at the end of World War II to help Jews establish a state in Palestine."

Mr. Winters' actions helped secure the independence of the state of Israel, thereby establishing a beacon of democracy in the Middle East. We know that this Administration shares our goals of strengthening the United States-Israel relationship. We ask that you give the posthumous pardon application for Mr. Charles Winters a prompt review.

Sincerely,

Bill Nelson
United States Senate

Mel Martinez
United States Senate