

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

September 30, 1980

The Honorable Benjamin Civiletti  
Attorney General  
Department of Justice  
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

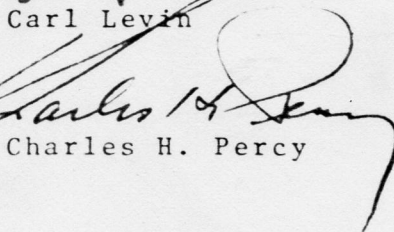
It has been brought to my attention that a hearing will be held on October 7, 1980 in the District of Columbia's Superior court to begin the prosecution of eighteen Americans of Lithuanian descent. The eighteen people were arrested on July 18, 1980 for demonstrating in front of the Soviet Embassy in support of the boycott of the Moscow Olympics and for protesting the invasion of Afghanistan. By all accounts, the demonstration was conducted peacefully and in an orderly manner. The demonstrators were charged under the District of Columbia's Code 22-1115, which makes it a misdemeanor to "congregate" within 500 feet of an embassy.

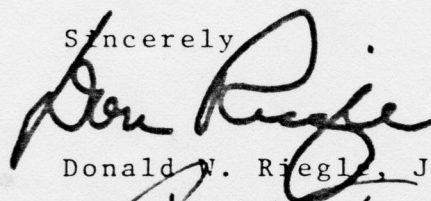
It appears that the young Americans arrested will be prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's office. This seems unusual since each of the people arrested are charged with a single misdemeanor and none have a previous record. I feel that these Americans were exercising their right of free speech to support U.S. policy and oppose Soviet aggression. I understand that prosecutors often dismiss charges for minor offenses or first offenses of this nature.

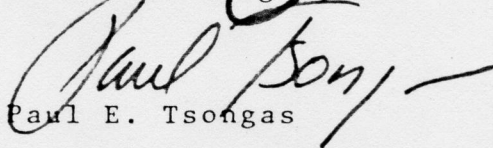
In light of the circumstances of this case, and the fact that the demonstration was non-violent, we urge that you review your decision to pursue prosecution.

Sincerely

  
Carl Levin

  
Charles H. Percy

  
Donald W. Riegle, Jr.

  
Paul E. Tsongas