

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 23, 2016

The President  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

At the end of World War II, Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer was one of America's preeminent physicists and an important advisor on the United States' nascent nuclear policy. For his work as director of the Manhattan Project, he was awarded the Medal for Merit, the highest honor the U.S. government bestows on a civilian.

Despite Dr. Oppenheimer's contributions to the war effort and his expertise as a scientific advisor, in 1954 he was denied security clearance after a McCarthy era trial that involved unsubstantiated accusations of disloyalty, questionable evidence and politically motivated judges. The Atomic Energy Commission's hearing *In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer* resulted in the revocation of Dr. Oppenheimer's security clearance and deemed one of America's most talented scientists as untrustworthy and unfit for public service.

The Department of Energy recently released un-redacted transcripts of the AEC's secret hearings that provided additional disclosures that reaffirm the once-questioned loyalty of Dr. Oppenheimer. These documents and history have shown that the Oppenheimer trial was unnecessary and unfair as well as politically motivated. The Commission held Oppenheimer's opposition to the further development of the hydrogen bomb against him and used trial standards that had no basis in law. Even more troubling, the Commission used the Federal Bureau of Investigation, led by Director J. Edgar Hoover, to tap Oppenheimer's and his lawyer's telephones and pass privileged information to the prosecution.

The judgment and the decision making process in the trial of J. Robert Oppenheimer were unfortunate products of their time. However, it may be an even graver injustice that the Commission's decision remains on the public record despite our well-documented knowledge of their biases.

We can never fully right the wrongs of history. Nonetheless, we urge you to vacate the Atomic Energy Commission's decision that Dr. Oppenheimer was untrustworthy and unfit

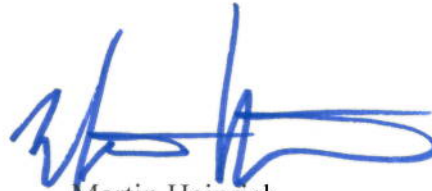
to serve his country. In addition to righting this particular wrong, this step would also signal support for other government employees who risk their careers and livelihoods to warn of safety, security or other concerns.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Patrick J. Leahy  
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Jeff Merkley  
United States Senator