

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 10, 2015

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

We write to bring to your attention a provision of the *Every Student Succeeds Act*, signed into law today, which includes calling for the posthumous pardon of John Arthur "Jack" Johnson, a boxing great and the first African-American Heavyweight Boxing Champion. As you know, Mr. Johnson's reputation was unfairly marred for over a hundred years by an unjust and racially-motivated conviction under the Mann Act, for transporting his white girlfriend across state lines. An identical resolution was unanimously approved by both the House and the Senate in 111th Congress, the first time since 1974 that both chambers passed a concurrent resolution calling for a posthumous pardon of an individual. Additionally, this resolution passed the House in the 110th Congress and passed the Senate in the 108th and 113th Congresses.

As this law makes clear, a pardon would expunge this racially-motivated abuse of authority from our nation's criminal justice history and affirm Jack Johnson's athletic and cultural contributions to our society. And, as acknowledged in a recent New York Times column, "in a nation that promotes itself as the land of the free, there are few things more important than...correcting injustices like the imprisonment of Johnson."

While we understand that posthumous presidential pardons are rare, we know they are neither unique nor lacking precedent; both Presidents Bush and Clinton issued posthumous pardons when they believed it was appropriate. Since you were sworn in as President, you have granted a total of 64 presidential pardons. We urge you to include Jack Johnson among pardon petitions to be granted.

Sincerely,



John McCain
United States Senator



Harry Reid
United States Senator



Peter King
Member of Congress



Gregory Meeks
Member of Congress