

COELHO-FREEMAN FAMILY RE-UNIFICATION PETITION

To the Minister of Immigration and the House of Commons; the undersigned Canadian citizens desire to draw your attention to the following extraordinary situation:

Douglas Gary Freeman (the former Joseph Pannell), an African American, is married to a Canadian, and they have four Canadian-born children. He has been a well-loved and respected member of the community since his arrival in Canada in 1974.

The Canadian government is trying to prevent Mr. Freeman, who has lived the majority of his life in Canada, from returning home.

In 2004, Mr. Freeman was sought for extradition to the US to face decades-old charges stemming from an incident involving a white police officer in the racially and politically charged Chicago of 1969.

Court documents proved that Mr. Freeman’s presence and location in Canada was known to authorities since 1974, yet U.S. authorities waited 30 years to seek his return.

After 3 years and 7 months of pre-extradition custody in Canada, Mr. Freeman voluntarily returned to Chicago in February, 2008, where he accepted a prosecution proffered plea bargain agreement of a guilty plea to a single count of Aggravated Battery for a sentence of 30 days in the Cook County Jail, 2 years of probation, and a major contribution to a Chicago police charity.

Mr. Freeman was released from custody in March 2008 and successfully completed his probation without incident in February 2010.

Mr. Freeman began the process of applying to return to Canada while on probation during which Mr. Freeman’s family was struck by the death of his father-in-law in Montreal on October 31, 2009.

Mr. Freeman sought and received permission from U.S. authorities to attend the funeral but the Canadian government refused him entry for reasons of “serious criminality”.

Further, the Canadian government has deemed Mr. Freeman “inadmissible” to Canada on “national security grounds” due to the false, unsubstantiated allegation that Mr. Freeman had been a member of the Black Panther Party (BPP) which the government of Canada alleges, again without supporting evidence, “is an organization which has engaged in terrorism”.

The Black Panther Party is not listed anywhere in the world as a terrorist entity, either by the U.S., Canada, or the United Nations, and former high-profile members and associates of the group continue to travel freely to Canada for speaking engagements.

Court documents corroborate Mr. Freeman’s assertion that he was not a BPP member, and former Conservative Minister of Justice Vic Toews wrote in 2006 that the US would have to prove the BPP allegation essentially conceding that the government of Canada had no proof.

Before Superior Court of Ontario Justice Ian Nordheimer in 2004 Canadian government prosecutors essentially conceded that Mr. Freeman was NOT a threat to society.

Mr. Freeman holds a U.S. passport and has already flown twice since his 2008 release so he is definitely NOT on a no-fly list.

We therefore request of this House:

To direct the Immigration Minister to exercise ministerial discretion under Section 25 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act in granting a temporary resident permit on humanitarian and compassionate grounds so that Mr. Freeman can be re-united with his family;

SIGNATURE	NAME	ADDRESS	EMAIL
(Sign your own name - do not print.)	(Print your name – first/last name)	(Give your city, province and postal code.)	(Print your email address.)

