

JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN
CONNECTICUT



UNITED STATES SENATE
WASHINGTON . D. C. 20510

March 18, 2003

Dear Friends,

It is a pleasure to send greetings and best wishes on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of *Gideon v. Wainwright*.

The landmark case of *Gideon v. Wainwright* in 1963 clarified a basic constitutional right, the right of all defendants in criminal cases to legal representation. The case was a turning point in our legal system for it guaranteed that every citizen, rich or poor, is entitled to a lawyer. It established the role of the public defender in providing an advocate for those who do not have the resources to afford a lawyer.

As public defenders you are part of a proud tradition that ensures that all Americans will have access to a legal defense and that their rights under our Constitution will be protected. You are charged with a serious and awesome task that strengthens our democracy.

On this historic anniversary, I commend you for your dedication, skill, and hard work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Lieberman".

**Joseph I. Lieberman
UNITED STATES SENATOR**