

Support McCain Amendment Against Torture

July 27, 2005

Speak out to stop torture! The August congressional recess is an ideal opportunity to contact your senators while they are home from Washington. Urge your senators to support the McCain amendment (#1557, as modified) to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006 (S. 1042).

Torture -

is inhumane; doesn't reflect our country's moral values;

undermines human rights standards worldwide;

creates legions of enemies of the U.S.;

brings danger of retaliation on U.S. troops and travelers abroad; and

does not work - it does not produce reliable intelligence information.

Act Now

Write or call your senators in their district offices nearest you. You can find your senator's district contact information here. <http://capwiz.com/pcusa/home/>

Tell them to send a message loud and clear to the U.S. military that no intelligence information is worth spoiling our country's long-standing moral position that we in the U.S. do not condone torture, ever. Urge them to support Sen. McCain's amendment.

Below are some talking points that you can use in your message. You may also want to identify yourself as part of your community (where you live, your occupation) and include a sentence about why you care about this issue. The more specific you can be the better.

* I am deeply appalled to know that my government condones and participates in torture. This must be stopped.

* I urge you to support Sen. McCain's amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (FY 2006) requiring that U.S. armed forces must observe the humanitarian standards in international, national and military law - the Geneva Conventions, the U.N. Convention Against Torture, our own U.S. Constitution, and our military's effective rules governing military interrogations.

* Civilized cultures treat all human beings with dignity. The rule of law must be recognized as governing the behavior of our troops and agents overseas. Torture by U.S. agents is morally wrong. It puts our soldiers overseas in danger of retaliation. It doesn't yield reliable intelligence information because those being tortured will say anything, true or not, to make the torture stop.

Please, make it clear that the U.S. does not and will not condone the use of torture.

Background

Sen. McCain's amendment #1557 provides a clear directive to the military that torture is an unacceptable technique to use for intelligence gathering anytime, anywhere, and under any circumstances.

Sen. McCain (AZ), himself subjected to more than five years of torture as a POW during the Vietnam War, introduced the "Uniform Standards for the Interrogation of Persons Under the Detention of the Department of Defense." The amendment provides that: (1) all U.S. military interrogations must be governed by the Army Field Manual on Intelligence Interrogation; (2) no interrogation technique may be included in the manual that would constitute torture or cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment prohibited by the Constitution, laws, or treaties of the U.S.; and (3) all U.S. military detainees must be registered with the International Committee of the Red Cross.

In addition, Sen. McCain plans to introduce a second amendment to the Defense Department authorization bill. Amendment #1556 (printed but not yet introduced - wording under scrutiny as of this legislative action alert) would prohibit cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment of persons under custody or control of the U.S. government. The amendment uses the definitions of the U.S. Constitution, the Geneva Conventions, and the U.N. Convention Against Torture.

--Catherine Gordon

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