



November 2, 2005

United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the more than 750,000 members and activists of People For the American Way, we strongly urge you to include the McCain detainee standards language in the Defense Appropriations Bill Conference Report. Introduced into the Senate Fiscal 2006 Defense Appropriations bill (H.R. 2863) by Senator John McCain (R-AZ), this language will provide clear, unambiguous interrogation standards to guide our military personnel in their treatment of detainees. This language will help remedy the Administration's failed detention policies, which have undermined our moral credibility abroad and endanger, rather than strengthen, our national security. The need for these standards is underscored by recent published reports that the CIA is operating secret "black site" detention facilities in Eastern Europe and Asia where they are unrestricted by U.S. law in using torture tactics in their interrogation procedures at those sites.

The abhorrent abuses stemming from the Administration's current detention policies run contrary to American values and violate basic principles of human rights and dignity. The McCain detainee language embraces America's long-held belief in the principles of humane and fair treatment for all, and military officials, human rights advocates, and legislators from both sides of the aisle agree. We believe that the incorporation of this language into the administration's detention policies is a long-overdue step.

The provisions introduced by Senators McCain seek to:

- Apply the U.S. Army Field Manual on Interrogations Consistently. The Army Field Manual Regulations are standards to which all detainee interrogations should conform. The field manual offers specific, definitive guidance to our troops which will fill the current instructions void in interrogation standards. This amendment would restore much of our lost respect in the global arena and allow the United States to stand by the international human rights standards it so rigorously espouses elsewhere.
- Prohibit "Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading" Treatment. This amendment would incorporate the language found in the Convention Against Torture, which has been ratified by the U.S., into the administration's detention policies and would apply to detainees both in the U.S. and in U.S. custody worldwide. Adopting this amendment would reassure concerned American citizens and members of the international community that the United States intends to stand by our pledge to apply the Torture Convention to our policies.

We urge you to reaffirm this country's fundamental objections to the use of torture and degrading treatment against any prisoners and to allow the standards already delineated in military field manuals to apply to detainee interrogations. By reaffirming our commitment to

international human rights standards for prisoner treatment, this amendment will allay the fears of mistreatment of prisoners at the hands of American soldiers and government, and will prevent such misconduct in the future. We strongly urge you to support the McCain detainee language in the DOD Appropriations Conference Report.

Sincerely,



Ralph Neas  
President



Marge Baker  
Director of Public Policy