

September 7, 2007

Chairman Ike Skelton
House Armed Services Committee
2206 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-2504

Chairman John Conyers Jr.
House Judiciary Committee
2426 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-2214

RE: Support of H.R. 2826, the Skelton/Conyers habeas corpus reform bill

Dear Chairman Skelton and Chairman Conyers:

The National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) is a campaign of over 130 religious organizations working together to abolish U.S. policy permitting torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of anyone, without exception. NRCAT members include representatives from the Catholic, evangelical Christian, mainline Protestant, Orthodox Christian, Unitarian Universalist, Jewish, Quaker, Muslim, and Sikh communities.

NRCAT seeks passage of legislation that prohibits torture and policies that establish the circumstances in which torture and cruel, inhumane or degrading conduct can occur. One important piece of legislation that is being considered by your committee in this respect is legislation to restore the authority of U.S. federal courts to hear petitions of *habeas corpus* filed by U.S.-held detainees, citizen and non-citizen alike.

H.R. 2826, the Skelton/Conyers habeas corpus reform bill, would restore the habeas corpus authority of federal courts in such cases, an authority that was stripped from the federal courts when Congress passed and the President signed into law the Military Commissions Act last year. We believe this bill is important, because the right of habeas corpus gives our federal courts an opportunity to discover and address acts of U.S.-sponsored torture upon U.S.-held detainees.

Torture violates the basic dignity of the human person that all religions, in their highest ideals, hold dear. It degrades everyone involved - policy-makers, perpetrators and victims - and it contradicts our nation's most cherished values. Any policies that permit torture and inhumane treatment are shocking and morally intolerable. Nothing less is at stake in the torture abuse crisis than the soul of our nation.

We ask you to please support passage of H.R. 2826, the Skelton/Conyers habeas corpus reform bill. A complete list of our membership is enclosed for identification purposes only. If you have any questions, please contact me at 202-363-3928 or by email at linda.gustitus@verizon.net. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Linda Gustitus
President

cc: House Armed Services Committee members
House Judiciary Committee members