

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 11, 2017

Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Mr. President,

As President-elect Trump prepares to take office, we write to you to express our grave concerns over his public declarations in support of torture, which would violate U.S. and international law, and his ability to act on these stated pledges. We admire your leadership in having guided our country away from the Bush administration's reliance on this barbaric practice, and therefore appeal to you to cement that legacy by urgently deploying strategies at your disposal to prevent torture's resurgence.

As you know, Mr. Trump routinely issued disturbing pronouncements throughout his campaign, promising that he "would absolutely authorize something beyond waterboarding," which he considered a "minimal form of torture." He argued, "We're going to have to do things that are unthinkable, almost." Mr. Trump also vowed to keep the Guantanamo Bay detention camp open and "load it up with some bad dudes."

For this reason, we propose two immediate actions to avert this threat, which build upon your laudable recent efforts. First, we encourage you to engage in a bold, renewed push to shut down the Guantanamo facility. We have admired your thoughtful and determined leadership on this front in the face of unprecedented legislative obstructionism. We applaud your skillful diplomatic efforts to transfer a majority of the 22 detainees held in Guantanamo who were already cleared for release. But with only days before your term ends, we ask that you definitively close the site by rapidly pursuing any and all options within your existing authority to seek lawful disposition of all of the 55 remaining individuals languishing in the camp. Mr. Trump must be deprived of the use of Guantanamo Bay.

Secondly, while we congratulate you on your recent decision to archive a copy of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence's full study on the Central Intelligence Agency's Detention and Interrogations Program, far more must be done. The Justice Department's instructions to federal agencies to keep this 6,700-page report on CIA torture sealed and inaccessible remain in effect. We ask that you direct federal agencies to immediately open, read, and internally promulgate copies of the classified report to relevant officials in the State Department, Defense Department, Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Justice Department. Given that the public is prevented from

accessing for 12 years the specific copy of the report that you have preserved, we also encourage you to declassify and release at minimum its table of contents.

Federal agencies, without delay, must take stock of the wide array of Bush-era interrogation techniques detailed in the Senate report, such as sleep deprivation, "rectal feeding," and near-drownings; recognize their lack of efficacy and lawfulness; and issue clear directives in response. Immediately disseminating the Senate torture report and circulating new guidelines will immunize these agencies from executing potentially unlawful directives on behalf of the executive branch in the future. Although changes in U.S. law designed to prevent the resumption of torture already mandate compliance from all federal agencies, a review of the Senate report and reaffirmation of torture's illegality will empower federal employees to resist any possible effort by the president-elect to undermine torture's prohibition.

In closing, we wish to commend you for your endeavors to uphold the rule of law, our Constitution, and American values during your presidency. Mr. Trump seems determined to dismantle these efforts, having argued that he would approve of torture against detained suspects even "if it doesn't work," as they "deserve it anyway for what they do to us." The moral imperative to avert the potentially disastrous consequences of Mr. Trump's objectives could not be clearer. We respectfully ask that you proceed to close the Guantanamo detention camp and direct officials to disseminate the Senate torture report to federal agencies with utmost urgency.

Sincerely,




Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



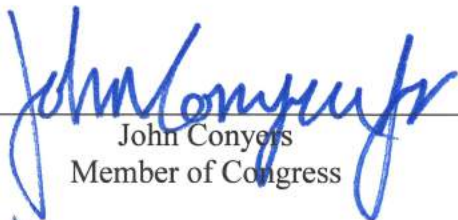
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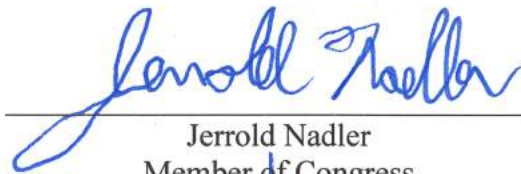
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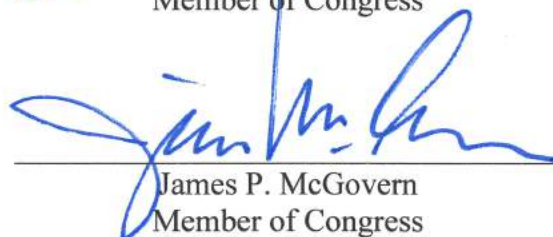
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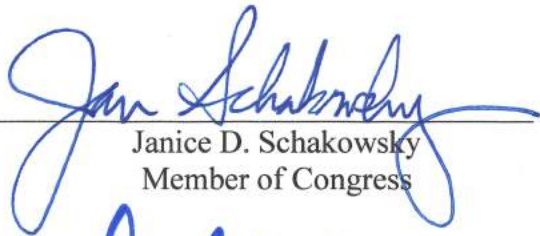
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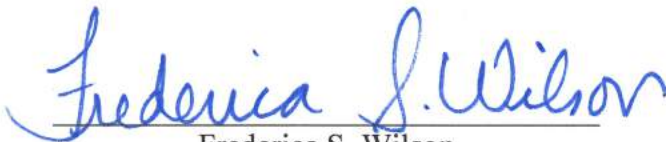
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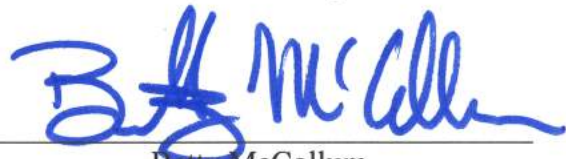
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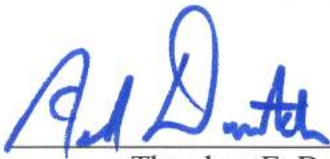
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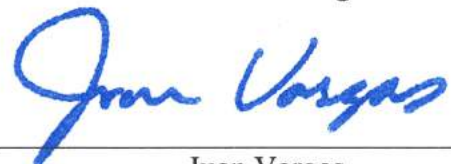
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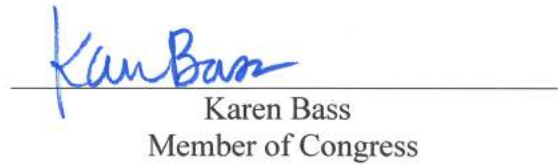
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