

THE CONSTITUTION PROJECT



Safeguarding Liberty, Justice & the Rule of Law

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Watchdog Group Backs Feinstein on Gitmo Transfers

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- A bipartisan constitutional watchdog group today endorsed the call of Senator Dianne Feinstein to transfer many of the current detainees out of the prison at Guantánamo Bay.

Feinstein (D-CA), the chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, wrote to National Security Advisor Tom Donilon yesterday urging the Obama administration to renew its efforts to transfer the 86 detainees at the Guantánamo Bay detention facility who were cleared for transfer by military and intelligence agencies over three years ago. She further called for the appointment of a senior administration official charged with facilitating the steps necessary to close the prison.

"We applaud Senator Feinstein's leadership on this issue," said Virginia Sloan, president of The Constitution Project, "and reiterate her call to immediately renew efforts to transfer those prisoners who have long been cleared."

"We are extremely concerned," Sloan continued, "about the ever-growing hunger strike and increasing number of detainees subject to the abusive practice of force feeding. Rather than force feeding detainees in restraint chairs, we need to give them some hope of leaving the prison alive."

According to a variety of reports, 97 of the 166 detainees who remain at Guantánamo are now participating in the hunger strike. Nineteen are being force fed, and five are hospitalized.

On April 16, TCP released the report of its Task Force on Detainee Treatment, which similarly urged the administration to "move swiftly to release or transfer those detainees at the Guantánamo Bay detention facility who have been cleared for release or transfer."

The Task Force was co-chaired by Ambassador James R. Jones, a former Democratic Congressman from Oklahoma and Ambassador to Mexico under President Bill Clinton, and Asa Hutchinson, a former GOP Congressman from Arkansas and Undersecretary of the Department of Homeland Security under President George W. Bush. Members were charged with examining the treatment of suspected terrorists in U.S. custody during the Clinton, Bush and Obama administrations.

The Task Force report is available at www.detaineeetaskforce.org.

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Created out of the belief that we must cast aside the labels that divide us in order to keep our democracy strong, The Constitution Project (TCP) brings together policy experts and legal practitioners from across the political spectrum to foster consensus-based solutions to the most difficult constitutional challenges of our time. TCP seeks to reform the nation's broken criminal justice system and to strengthen the rule of law through scholarship, advocacy, policy reform and public education initiatives. Established in 1997, TCP is based in Washington, D.C.



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