

THE CONSTITUTION PROJECT



Safeguarding Liberty, Justice & the Rule of Law

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TCP Joins Open Government Groups to Push More Transparency for CIA Torture Programs

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The Constitution Project joined more than a dozen open government groups in urging President Obama to be more transparent about the way the CIA treated suspected terrorists held in American custody after the 9/11 attacks.

In a [letter](#) delivered to the White House today, the groups called on the president to declassify the CIA's post 9/11 detention and interrogation program and to support a Senate Intelligence Committee vote to release to the public its comprehensive report based on a nearly four year investigation into that program.

"This president promised to have the most transparent administration in history but, more than a decade after many of the events took place, most of the official documentation of the CIA's torture and abuse of detainees remains classified and hidden from public view," said Virginia Sloan, president of The Constitution Project, the nonpartisan legal watchdog group that organized the letter.

In a report released in April, The Constitution Project's bipartisan independent Task Force on Detainee Treatment found that the "high level of secrecy surrounding the rendition and torture of detainees since September 11 cannot continue to be justified on the basis of national security."

The groups signing the letter acknowledged that "discrete items of operational information" might need to remain secret, but noted that "does not justify ongoing classification of the program writ large."

The groups also asked the president to support the public release of the report of the Senate Select Intelligence Committee's examination of the program. The report is based on the review of millions of pages of classified documents.

The committee's chair, Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), called the roughly 6,000-page report "the most definitive review of this CIA program to be conducted." Committee members who have read the report say it debunks the claims of those who say that torture and other abusive interrogation techniques were necessary to save lives or to defuse other terrorist plots.

The groups pointed out that a similar Senate Armed Services Committee report examining the

military's treatment of detainees in U.S. custody was declassified and made public in 2009.

"The public deserves to know the full scope and scale of what was done in its name and to decide for itself whether claims about torture's efficacy stand up in light of the actual facts," the groups wrote to the president. Sloan said she believes some of the worst abuses of the CIA's program have already been reported, but she noted that declassification and release of the SSCI report will allow a broader and better informed public debate.

In addition to The Constitution Project, other groups joining in the letter include: Bill of Rights Defense Committee (BORDC), The Brennan Center for Justice, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), Federation of American Scientists, Friends Committee on National Legislation, The Government Accountability Project, OpenTheGovernment.org, Project on Government Oversight (POGO) and Society of American Archivists.

The Task Force on Detainee Treatment's full report is available at www.detaineeetaskforce.org.

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[About The Constitution Project](#)

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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