



## **Americans Want Congress to Bolster U.S. Laws Against Torture**

*Strong support across parties to strengthen and clarify anti-torture laws, including 56% of Republicans*

On June 9, 2015, Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.) introduced an amendment to the FY 2016 National Defense Authorization Act that would strengthen and clarify U.S. law prohibiting torture and cruel treatment. The amendment is co-sponsored by Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Jack Reed (D-R.I.).

The amendment requires all U.S. government interrogations that occur outside a law enforcement context to abide by the Army Field Manual on Interrogations. This manual contains a specific set of interrogation techniques that interrogators can use and prohibits all others. The amendment also provides important mechanisms to ensure that the manual includes only lawful, humane, and effective techniques, and mandates that the International Committee of the Red Cross be notified of, and given prompt access to, any detainee in U.S. custody or control.

**A strong bipartisan majority of Americans (67%) supports strengthening and clarifying laws against torture.**

In January 2015, The Constitution Project released a [poll](#) on Americans' attitudes towards torture that found widespread approval across the political spectrum for "strengthen[ing] U.S. laws against torture by making it clearer to the CIA and to the military what behavior is legal, and what is illegal, when interrogating people who may have information about terrorists."

**75% of Democrats, 69% of independents and 56% of Republicans said they would approve of such a proposal.**

An even stronger bipartisan majority of Americans (69%) thinks that torturing people is immoral, with 78% of Democrats, 72% of independents and 56% of Republicans in accord with that position.

An overwhelming bipartisan majority of Americans (76%) thinks that torturing people should not be done if the government might have other ways to obtain information about terrorists. More than three-quarters of the respondents (76%) said they agreed with that sentiment, including 86% of Democrats, 78% of independents and 69% of Republicans.

The [full survey](#) is available [online](#).<sup>1</sup> It was conducted from January 8 to 11, 2015 by ORC International, and questioned 1,023 Americans over the age of 18. It has an overall margin-of-error of +/- 3%.

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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 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 through scholarship, advocacy, policy reform and public education initiatives. Established in 1997, TCP is based in Washington, D.C.*

<sup>1</sup> See [http://detaineeataskforce.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/TCP-Poll-for-release-Jan-2015.pdf?utm\\_source=PR%3A+Torture+Poll+Release&utm\\_campaign=PR+--+Torture+Poll+&utm\\_medium=email](http://detaineeataskforce.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/TCP-Poll-for-release-Jan-2015.pdf?utm_source=PR%3A+Torture+Poll+Release&utm_campaign=PR+--+Torture+Poll+&utm_medium=email)