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August 27, 2013

The Honorable Senator Richard Burr  
217 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Burr:

We are writing to you as fellow people of faith to support the release of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) report on U.S. treatment of detainees in the post-9/11 period.

Every day, we learn of fresh turmoil in Syria, North Africa, Afghanistan, and other lands. Such dangers to global stability make it more important than ever to seek allies and increase U.S. influence in these regions. However, our relations with the Muslim world have deteriorated, and a major reason is that our credibility on human rights is under question. The U.S. does not condone torture, but torture has been done by our citizens and in our country's name. Our national security would be improved by restoring the world's respect for U.S. integrity on human rights and adherence to the rule of law.

Sen. John McCain has spoken out repeatedly about the need for the U.S. to come to terms with the truth about detainee abuse. (Sen. McCain's remarks can be found in full at <http://1.usa.gov/SXsUyc>.) In so doing, the U.S. will display moral integrity to the world and show the respect due to all human life. A new report by The Constitution Project's bipartisan Task Force on Detainee Treatment, which was made public on April 16, highlighted certain acts of torture committed by the U.S. (the full report is at [www.detaineetaskforce.org](http://www.detaineetaskforce.org)). As important as that report is, though, it cannot replace the U.S. government's obligation to be transparent about its past. Our nation needs to learn from the 6,000-page SSCI report. Understanding our past will help us recommit ourselves to respecting human life in the future.

We know you face an important decision. As a strong supporter of the U.S. Armed Forces and its veterans, you can do nothing more valuable in restoring the world's respect for our service members, and in making the world a safer place for them, than to help make public the SSCI report on detainee treatment.

As Christians, . . . [w]e care deeply about human-rights violations around the world. Now it is time to raise our voice and say an unequivocal no to torture, a practice that has no place in our society and violates our most cherished moral convictions.

- David Gushee, "5 Reasons Torture is Always Wrong," *Christianity Today*

Senator Burr, we thank you for your service to our state and our country.

Sincerely,  
The Undersigned

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Raleigh, NC

**ADDENDA**

**From the Offices of Rabbis Friedman, Malino, and Solomon**

We wish to add the following statement to the letter above to describe our sentiments regarding the Senate Intelligence Committee's report and its release to the public.

Torture is always wrong and always immoral. It violates the biblical mandate that we treat every single person as a creation in the image of God. And torture does nothing to protect us or to prevent future terrorist attacks. The release of the Task Force report helps us begin to close this dark chapter in U.S. history. The next step will be the release of the Senate Intelligence Committee's report. Finally, we will need to commit to ensuring that our country never again resorts to harming and degrading human beings through torture.

- Rabbi Jill Jacobs, "The Public Deserves Clarity On Torture,"  
*The Jewish Week*, June 6, 2013

Sincerely,

Rabbi John Friedman  
Judea Reform Congregation  
Durham, NC

Rabbi Eric Solomon  
Beth Meyer Synagogue  
Raleigh, NC

Rabbi Jonathan Malino  
Professor of Philosophy, Guilford College  
Greensboro, NC

**From the Office of Bishop Michael Burbidge, Catholic Diocese of Raleigh**

In a letter written on April 26, 2013, to Senators Feinstein and Chambliss urging the release of the SSCI report, Bishop Richard Pates, Chairman of the Committee on International Peace and Justice, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, noted:

The U.S. bishops have long registered their absolute opposition to torture. In Catholic teaching, torture is an intrinsic evil that cannot be justified under any circumstances. Torture violates the human dignity of each person. It is degrading to all involved, not only the victim. It also compromises the perpetrator and the society that tolerates its practice. It has a corrosive effect and diminishes our moral credibility in the world.