



## Department of Social Development and World Peace

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194 • FAX 202-541-3339  
WEBSITE: WWW.USCCB.ORG/SDWP

October 14, 2005

Dear Conferee:

As you work to settle the differences between the House- and Senate-passed versions of H.R. 2863, I urge you, on behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, to adopt and retain, in their entirety, sections 8154 and 8155 of the Senate-passed version of H.R. 2863, the FY 2006 Defense Appropriations Act. Section 8154 would prescribe uniform standards for the interrogation of persons under detention of the Department of Defense. Section 8155 would prohibit cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment of persons under custody or control of the United States government.

As events unfold in Afghanistan, Iraq and other places, we recognize that combating terrorism remains a top priority for Congress and the Administration. We also recognize, however, that the reported instances of prisoner abuse by members of the U.S. armed services could seriously undermine that effort and compromise human dignity. We believe that a respect for the dignity of every person, ally or enemy, must serve as the foundation of the pursuit of security, justice and peace. There can be no compromise on the moral imperative to protect the basic human rights of any individual incarcerated for any reason.

The United States has a long history of leadership and strong support for human rights around the world. Ratifications of the Convention on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention Against Torture embody our nation's commitment to establishing standards of conduct and prohibiting torture and other acts of inhumane treatment of persons in U.S. custody. Tragically, our nation's record has been marred by reported instances of abusive treatment of enemy combatants held in military prisons in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The lack of clarity regarding the procedures governing the treatment of prisoners makes it necessary to adopt more specific and stringent guidelines. Sections 8154 and 8155 of the Senate-passed version of H.R. 2863 would confirm our nation's resolve to ensure that these serious abuses cease and never recur.

We share the concerns of lawmakers and citizens for the safety of U.S. soldiers and civilians abroad in these times of great uncertainty and danger. In the face of this perilous climate, our nation must not embrace a morality based on an attitude that "desperate times call for desperate measures" or "the end justifies the means." The inherent justice of our cause and the perceived necessities involved in confronting terrorism must not lead to a weakening or disregard of U.S. and international law.

In a time of terrorism and great fear, our individual and collective obligations to respect basic human dignity and human rights, even of our worst enemies, gains added importance. The guidelines and mechanisms contained in these amendments (or this section) reflect a conviction that our nation must treat our prisoners as we would expect our enemies to treat our own military personnel. We urge you to adopt sections 8154 and 8155 of the Senate-passed version of the FY 2006 Defense Appropriations Act in its entirety. Congress' adoption of these section would represent a significant step in restoring the moral credibility of the United States at a crucial time.

Thank you for your consideration of our views on the just treatment of prisoners and detainees.

Sincerely yours,

Most Reverend John H. Ricard, S.S.J.  
Bishop of Pensacola-Tallahassee  
Chairman, Committee on International Policy

**The Letter was send to the following Senators:**

The Honorable Christopherr S. "Kit" Bond  
The Honorable Conrad Burns  
The Honorable Robert C. Byrd  
The Honorable Thad Cochran  
The Honorable Byron L. Dorgan  
The Honorable Richard J. Durbin  
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
The Honorable Judd Gregg  
The Honorable Tom Harkin  
The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison  
The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye  
The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy  
The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski  
The Honorable Harry Reid  
The Honorable Richard C. Shelby  
The Honorable Arlen Specter  
The Honorable Ted Stevens

**The Letters was send to the following House Representatives:**

The Honorable Henry Bonilla  
The Honorable Randy "Duke" Cunningham  
The Honorable Pete V. Domenici  
The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen  
The Honorable Kay Granger  
The Honorable David Hobson  
The Honorable Jack Kingston  
The Honorable Todd Tiahrt  
The Honorable Roger Wicker  
The Honorable Don Young