



Department of Social Development and World Peace

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

May 1, 2007

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein:

As Chairman of the Committee on International Policy of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I would like to thank you for introducing the Cluster Munitions Civilian Protection Act of 2007 (S. 594).

The Catholic Bishops of our country have been vocal supporters of efforts to reduce and ultimately ban the use of landmines, and the indiscriminate nature of failed cluster bomb “duds” – which makes them akin to landmines – is deeply troubling to the Conference. Catholic moral teaching on just war insists that noncombatant immunity be respected and that the use of force be discriminate. The Conference fears that cluster munitions, if unchecked, could become the next generation of landmines. Cluster munitions pose serious risks to civilians in conflict and post-conflict situations.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops stands with the Holy See in its call to address the harmful effects of cluster munitions. This commitment flows from the Church’s teaching on the protection of human life and dignity. In June 2006, the Holy See declared, “The disastrous humanitarian impact of cluster bombs needs no further demonstration. ... Their victims can be counted by the million, the regions affected continue to be prohibited to displaced persons for years after the end of wars, nor can they be used by the inhabitants.”

The Conference supports restrictions on the use or export of existing, inaccurate stockpiles of cluster munitions. Additionally, we support restricting the use of these weapons in civilian areas. The Cluster Munitions Civilian Protection Act addresses both of these concerns. Passage of this legislation is the right thing to do and will strengthen the moral standing of our nation in the world.

Once again, thank you for your leadership in introducing this important legislation.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas G. Wenski
Bishop of Orlando
Chairman, Committee on International Policy



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The Honorable James McGovern
U.S. House of Representatives
438 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative McGovern:

As Chairman of the Committee on International Policy of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I would like to thank you for introducing Cluster Munitions Civilian Protection Act of 2007 (H.R. 1755).

The Catholic Bishops of our country have been vocal supporters of efforts to reduce and ultimately ban the use of landmines, and the indiscriminate nature of failed cluster bomb “duds” – which makes them akin to landmines – is deeply troubling to the Conference. Catholic moral teaching on just war insists that noncombatant immunity be respected and that the use of force be discriminate. The Conference fears that cluster munitions, if unchecked, could become the next generation of landmines. Cluster munitions pose serious risks to civilians in conflict and post-conflict situations.

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Dear Representative:

As Chairman of the Committee on International Policy of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I urge you to co-sponsor the Cluster Munitions Civilian Protection Act of 2007 (H.R. 1755). Senators Dianne Feinstein and Patrick Leahy have introduced this legislation that prohibits both the use of cluster munitions in or near civilian populated areas and the use, sale and transfer of cluster munitions with a failure rate of over one percent.

Cluster munitions, while designed to explode on impact, often fail to detonate initially, leaving behind widespread hazardous explosive “duds” that are akin to landmines. The Catholic Bishops of our country have been vocal supporters of efforts to reduce and ultimately ban the use of landmines, and the indiscriminate impact of failed cluster munitions on civilian populations is deeply troubling to the Conference. Catholic moral teaching on just war insists that noncombatant immunity be respected and that the use of force be discriminate. The Conference fears that cluster munitions, if unchecked, could become the next generation of landmines.

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The Conference supports restrictions on the use or export of existing, inaccurate stockpiles of cluster munitions. Additionally, we support restricting the use of these weapons in civilian areas. The Cluster Munitions Civilian Protection Act addresses both of these concerns. Passage of the Cluster Munitions Civilian Protection Act of 2007 is the right thing to do and will strengthen the moral standing of our nation in the world.

As the world moves nearer to a comprehensive band on landmines, let us not ignore the similar, insidious threat of cluster munitions. I urge you to co-sponsor H.R. 1755. Your leadership can help build momentum for this important humanitarian issue.

Sincerely yours,

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