

Demands reversal of Gonzales torture policies

Washington, DC - Rep. Peter Welch, a long-time critic of the Bush administration's torture policies, assembled over 50 members of Congress to join him in a letter to Attorney General designee Michael Mukasey urging he reverse interrogation policies of former Attorney General Alberto Gonzales.

The letter, authored by Welch, states that "We are extremely concerned about the revelation of two secret Justice Department memos issued under your predecessor that sanction many of the most severe forms of torture... As the nominee to be the next Attorney General, we urge you to commit to withdraw these memos on your first day in office, should you be confirmed."

"A policy permitting torture is not only morally reprehensible, but it puts our men and women serving in uniform at risk," said Welch. "Our next Attorney General must stand for what is morally just, legal, and for policies that protect our citizens. U.S. sanctioned torture meets none of these."

The *New York Times* reported earlier this month that Gonzales issued secret memos which "provided explicit authorization to barrage terror suspects with a combination of painful physical and psychological tactics."

The letter with signers is below (a PDF is available upon request):

October 11, 2007

The Honorable Michael Mukasey
Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LLP
1133 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10036

Dear Mr. Mukasey,

As you prepare for your confirmation hearings, we would like to bring your attention to the important matter of our nation's interrogation policies. In particular, we are extremely concerned about the revelation of two secret Justice Department memos issued under your predecessor that sanction many of the most severe forms of torture. According to *The New York Times*, these memos

"provided explicit authorization to barrage terror suspects with a combination of painful physical and psychological tactics, including head-slapping, simulated drowning and frigid temperatures."

Not only is use of torture by the U.S. Government morally reprehensible, it has done immeasurable damage to our nation's ability to conduct foreign policy and has put our own men and women in uniform in greater danger. While we must seek to gather as much information as possible from captured terrorists, it is the job of the Attorney General to ensure that interrogation policies follow all relevant U.S. and international law.

As the nominee to be the next Attorney General, we urge you to commit to withdraw these memos on your first day in office, should you be confirmed. In addition, we hope that you will dedicate yourself to returning the Department of Justice to policies consistent with U.S. law and the Geneva Conventions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Welch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning.

[REDACTED] (GA)