

July 7, 2016

Democratic National Committee
430 South Capitol Street Southeast
Washington, DC 20003

To the Members of the Democratic Platform Committee:

As retired military leaders of the U.S. Armed Forces, we committed our professional lives to defending the national security of the United States and to upholding the Constitution. We write to urge you to reiterate in the 2016 Democratic Party platform a plank unequivocally rejecting the use of torture and other official cruelty in the treatment of prisoners.

This is not, and should not be, a partisan issue. Last year, Congress—with an overwhelming bipartisan vote that included the support of the Republican and Democratic leaders of the Senate armed services, intelligence, homeland security, foreign affairs, and judiciary committees—passed an amendment solidifying the ban on torture by restricting all military and intelligence interrogators to the approaches outlined in the Army Field Manual on Human Intelligence Collector Operations (FM 2-22.3). Waterboarding and other so-called “enhanced interrogation techniques” are also prohibited by the Geneva Conventions and other sources of international law, and therefore are not lawful or appropriate to use in the fight against terrorism.

We have diverse political affiliations and opinions, but we are in firm and unanimous agreement that the United States is strongest when it remains faithful to its core values. We are asking the platform committees of both major parties to send a clear message that the next President of the United States will uphold our obligations under international and domestic law, and reaffirm the United States’ long-standing and proper role as a world leader on human rights.

Sincerely,

GENERAL JOHN R. ALLEN, USMC (RET.)
GENERAL PAUL J. KERN, USA (RET.)
GENERAL DAVID M. MADDOX, USA (RET.)
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