

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 12, 2004

Ms. Cathy Leffler
American College of Physicians
190 North Independence Mall, West
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106-1572



Dear Ms. Leffler:

On behalf of President Bush, thank you for your letter. We appreciate hearing your views.

President Bush has repeatedly affirmed our country's commitment to the worldwide elimination of torture. He believes that human dignity must be protected and that freedom from torture is an inalienable human right. Together with our friends and allies, the United States is committed to building a world where human rights are respected and protected by the rule of law.

As the President has said, America stands against and will not tolerate torture. American personnel are required to comply with all applicable United States laws, including the Constitution, Federal statutes, and our treaty obligations with respect to the treatment of detainees.

President Bush has condemned the abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq as horrific and wrong. He believes these actions were inconsistent with American values and policies as a Nation and has directed a full accounting for the abuse. Investigations are underway to review and improve detention operations in Iraq and elsewhere, and those accused of breaking U.S. military law will face a fair trial.

To assist victims of torture, the United States supports torture accountability and treatment centers, contributes to the United Nations Fund for the Victims of Torture, and supports nongovernmental organizations that work to end torture and help victims recover. Our country also provides protection, counseling, and where necessary and possible, relocation to the United States. President Bush urges all nations to join in these efforts to end torture and restore the dignity of those affected.

The United States will continue to take seriously the need to question terrorists who have information that can save lives, but will not compromise the rule of law or the values and principles that make our country strong. Torture is wrong no matter where it occurs, and under President Bush's leadership, the United States will continue to lead the fight to eliminate it everywhere. Thank you again for writing to the President about this important issue.

Sincerely,

Heidi Marquez
Special Assistant to the President
and Director of Presidential Correspondence