



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

June 4, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing on behalf of the American Psychological Association (APA) to once again commend you for your bold actions within days of taking office to outlaw abusive interrogations and to protect the legal rights of detainees in U.S. custody. We regard these steps as important symbols to the world of your administration's dedication and commitment to safeguarding basic human rights for U.S. citizens and others at home and abroad.

Last summer, our membership voted to adopt a referendum to limit the roles of psychologists in unlawful detention settings. This new policy entitled, "Psychologists and Unlawful Detention Settings with a Focus on National Security," prohibits psychologists from working in detention settings that are in violation of the U.S. Constitution or international law (e.g., the Geneva Conventions and the U.N. Convention Against Torture), unless they are working directly for the persons being detained or for an independent third party to protect human rights, or providing treatment to military personnel.

For the past 20 years, APA policy has unequivocally condemned torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, which can arise from inappropriate interrogation procedures or conditions of confinement in unlawful detention settings. It is now a violation of APA policy for psychologists to work in such settings, with the few exceptions noted above.

Following the recent release of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee report and the Justice Department memos, the public spotlight has focused on disturbing reports of torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment of detainees during the Bush administration. Regrettably, we have learned that some psychologists were involved in designing and advocating harsh interrogation techniques for use with detainees as part of the "war on terror." As a result, we have recommitted ourselves to safeguarding the welfare and human rights of individuals detained by the U.S. government. In these difficult times, we fully recognize the significant challenges that your administration faces. APA applauds and strongly supports your administration's commitment to protecting the legal rights of detainees and to ensuring that interrogations never involve torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.

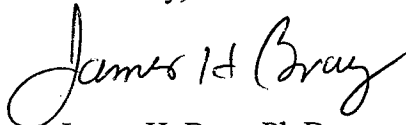
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In these and other related matters, we urge you and your administration to ensure that the highest ethical standards are being upheld and that detainees are granted all rights guaranteed to them under the U.S. Constitution, the U.N. Convention Against Torture, and the Geneva Conventions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James H. Bray".

James H. Bray, Ph.D.
President

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Norman B. Anderson".

Norman B. Anderson, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer