

February 24, 2014

Senator Dianne Feinstein
Chairman
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
211 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Saxby Chambliss
Vice Chairman
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
211 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Feinstein and Vice Chairman Chambliss:

As advocates for a more open government, we write to urge you to support declassification and release of your Committee's report on the CIA's post 9/11 rendition, detention and interrogation (RDI) program. The public needs access to the facts about the RDI program in order to debate meaningfully some of our government's most controversial practices and to evaluate effectively the actions of our political leaders. Secrecy in government undermines our constitutionally-established system of checks and balances and the accountability that system brings.

Defenders of the RDI program – and the use of “enhanced interrogation techniques” in particular – continue to claim that the program was necessary and saved lives. Former CIA officials with a clear stake in the program's legacy have written books on the subject and made their case throughout the media. Popular fiction, like *Zero Dark Thirty* and the television show *24*, fuels that narrative. Yet the official 6,300 page assessment prepared by the Committee charged with program oversight remains secret. Public debate thus rests on carefully crafted messaging and entertainment rather than fact. That is no way for a democracy to function.

The public deserves to know the full scope and scale of what was done in its name after 9/11 and to decide for itself whether claims about the RDI program's necessity and efficacy stand up in light of the actual facts. Transparency is also in the CIA's institutional interests. The agency cannot be effective over the long haul if Americans do not trust it, and unjustified secrecy breeds mistrust. To best serve both ends – an informed public and the CIA's long-term institutional legitimacy – the full Committee report and the agency's response should be released.

We understand that the report is the product of more than three years of work and that producing it – under conditions the CIA attached to security-cleared Committee staff in the conduct of their oversight responsibilities – cost more than 40 million dollars. [In the words of John Rizzo](#),¹ former Acting CIA General Counsel who had a direct hand in the “enhanced interrogation” program: “It's taxpayer money. Let's see it.”

More than a decade after September 11, and five years since the CIA detention facilities were shuttered, the official secrecy surrounding the RDI program cannot be justified on the basis of national security. We recognize that it may be necessary to continue to protect certain discrete items of operational information that retain their need for classification. But that can be accomplished through minimal redaction of relevant documents and does not justify ongoing classification of the report in its entirety.

¹ The exchange, during which Mr. Rizzo expressed support for releasing the Committee's report, and the CIA response, begins at minute 26:23 of the linked video.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Bill of Rights Defense Committee (BORDC)
The Brennan Center for Justice
Center for Effective Government
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)
The Constitution Project
Federation of American Scientists
The Fund for Constitutional Government
The Government Accountability Project
National Coalition Against Censorship
National Security Archive
OpenTheGovernment.org
Project on Government Oversight (POGO)

CC: Members of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence