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## Thousands of Americans Demand Transparency Around Bush-Era Torture

Pablo Mayo Cerqueiro and NationAction

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Carrying a heavy white box with the signatures of more than 165,000 Americans, Carissa Miller led a handful of fellow transparency and civil-liberties advocates into Democratic Senator Mark Udall’s office in Washington on December 4 to urge him to disclose the full extent of what the Senate has learned about torture by the Central Intelligence Agency during the Bush administration.

“We came here to show our support for Senator Udall releasing the entire CIA torture report,” said Miller, a campaign manager for the political website Daily Kos. “We want him to know we appreciate that and look forward to him taking that step.”

The petition—which was sponsored by thirteen organizations, including NationAction (the activism arm of *The Nation*)—comes amid rising criticism of how little the government appears ready to disclose about Bush-era torture.

Despite disputes between senators and the intelligence agency, a redacted version of the torture report, which the Senate Intelligence Committee began preparing in 2009, is expected to come out early next week, as reported by Reuters. But activists question whether the document will actually see the light of day and consider the redacted version insufficient.

“We have heard that before,” said Shahid Buttar, executive director of the Bill of Rights Defense Committee, one of the organizations pushing for disclosure. “The report, at this point, remains secret.”

Udall is a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee but lost his seat in the November elections. Udall has told the media he’s considering making the information public under the “Speech or Debate Clause” of the US Constitution. The privilege allows lawmakers to read classified documents into the congressional record and was used in the 1970s by Senator Mike Gravel of Alaska to release the Pentagon Papers on the Vietnam War.

“As the only member of the intelligence committee with a modicum of independence and nothing to fear from the agencies he’s overseeing,” Buttar said, “he is in a unique position to...disclose to the public the most sensitive intelligence document in his generation.”

Upon entering office, President Barack Obama signed an executive action banning torture as an interrogation method. But the notion of torture as a legitimate information-gathering means to address national-security threads must be eradicated, activists say.

“There will be other Administrations, and there will be other emergencies,” said Greg Thielmann, a former senior staffer on the Senate Intelligence Committee who visited Udall’s office to support the petition. “And it’s very important to help people learn the right lessons from the torture that occurred during the decade that followed 9/11 in order to prevent recurrence.”

For her part, Miller, the campaign manager, says the full original torture report needs to come out to hold people accountable. “Names,” she said. “The reason that’s important that the entire 6,000-page report comes out is names.”