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Kucinich Legislation Ends the Extrajudicial Killing of U.S. Citizens Bill Protects Constitutional Right to a Fair Trial

WASHINGTON - May 19 - Congressman Dennis Kucinich (D-OH) announced today that he will introduce legislation that would end the practice of targeting U.S. citizens for extrajudicial killing.

Earlier this year, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* revealed that the Obama Administration was continuing the Bush-era policy of including U.S. citizens on lists of people to be assassinated without a trial. Kucinich has spoken out forcefully against revoking the basic constitutional rights of American citizens for simply being suspected of involvement with terrorism, and he is currently recruiting cosponsors for his bill.

"Congress has the responsibility to protect the rights of all U.S. citizens," wrote Kucinich

The full text of the letter follows:

Dear Colleague:

Earlier this year, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* revealed that the Obama Administration was continuing a Bush-era policy of including U.S. citizens on lists of people to be assassinated by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC). These citizens have had no trial.

Under such a system, U.S. citizens are added to the list simply for being suspected of involvement in terrorism, in subversion of their basic constitutional rights and due process of law. Their right to a trial and to present a defense is summarily and anonymously stripped from them. Following the 2008 Supreme Court ruling that detainees being held indefinitely in Guantánamo Bay were to be afforded habeas corpus rights, thirty-three of thirty-nine detainees were ordered released on the grounds of insufficient evidence to support accusations of their involvement in terrorism. If a U.S. citizen is added to the targeted assassination lists based on accusations absent judicial review, their punishment is death.

In a hearing of the House Select Committee on Intelligence earlier this year, Director of National Intelligence Admiral Dennis C. Blair testified that the President authorizes such operations if it is deemed that they are seen to pose a "continuing and imminent threat to U.S. persons and interests." Leading legal scholars such as Bill Quigley, the Legal Director of the Center for Constitutional Rights, and the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary and Arbitrary Executions are among the legal voices **challenging the legal authority** for the U.S. government to conduct extrajudicial killings.

Intelligence operations that have virtually no transparency, accountability or oversight raise serious legal questions, particularly when the outcomes of such programs constitute possible violations of international law and violations of the Constitution of the United States. Congress has the responsibility to protect the rights of all U.S. citizens. We must reject the notion that protecting the constitutional rights of some citizens requires revoking the rights of other citizens. My legislation would reaffirm our commitment to upholding our nation's basic constitutional principles, and prohibit the extrajudicial killing of United States citizens abroad.

Sincerely,

Dennis J. Kucinich

Member of Congress

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