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DEMOCRATS TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO CREATE SELECT COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE PRISONER ABUSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Today Rep. Henry A. Waxman, along with Democratic Leader Pelosi, Armed Services Ranking Member Skelton, and other senior congressional leaders, announced plans to introduce legislation to create a House select committee to investigate the abuses of detainees held in U.S. custody in connection with the war in Iraq and the global war on terrorism. The resolution would charge a bipartisan group of 14 Members with thoroughly investigating evidence of detainee abuse and torture in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Guantanamo Bay.

“We first introduced this resolution a year ago after the Republican majority refused repeated requests to investigate the accounts of prisoner abuse in Abu Ghraib,” said Rep. Waxman. “Since then, the scope of the problem has exploded. Nearly every week brings new reports of horrific abuse of individuals in U.S. custody. Yet still there has been no serious congressional investigation. The failure of Congress to conduct responsible oversight, which is our constitutional duty, is shameful.”

In just the past week, new evidence emerged of the desecration of the Koran at Guantanamo Bay, the involvement of Navy Seals in beating detainees in Iraq, and the gruesome, ultimately fatal torture of Afghans at the U.S. detention center in Bagram, Afghanistan.

The select committee would conduct a full review of the alleged abuses of detainees, investigate who is responsible, and assess whether legislative or executive action should result.

Current sponsors of the legislation:

Rep. Henry A. Waxman, Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Government Reform
Rep. Nancy Pelosi, Democratic Leader
Rep. Steny H. Hoyer, Democratic Whip
Rep. Robert Menendez, Chairman of the House Democratic Caucus
Rep. James E. Clyburn, Vice Chairman of House Democratic Caucus
Rep. John M. Spratt, Jr., Assistant to the Democratic Leader
Rep. Ike Skelton, Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Armed Services
Rep. Jane Harman, Ranking Minority Member, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
Rep. Tom Lantos, Ranking Minority Member, Committee on International Relations
Rep. John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Minority Member, Committee on the Judiciary
Rep. John D. Dingell, Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Rep. David R. Obey, Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Appropriations
Rep. Charles B. Rangel, Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Ways and Means
Rep. George Miller, Ranking Minority Member, Committee Education and the Workforce
Rep. Maurice D. Hinchey, Committee on Appropriations

For more information, visit <http://www.democrats.reform.house.gov>

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