

## Major Bill Assignment

### Close Guantanamo Bay

Guantanamo Bay is a lawless sanctuary for torture. President-Elect Barack Obama has called Guantanamo “a sad chapter in American history.” It is time for this chapter to be concluded. While we claim to be advocates of human rights, and consistently apply pressure on violating nations, our case is weakened by our current hypocrisy in southeastern Cuba. There have been statements by members of the United States armed forces indicating that over half of Guantanamo’s current prisoners are in fact innocent, and yet they remain trapped. There have been trials and repercussions for the atrocities committed at Abu Ghraib, convictions regarding misconduct and torture at Bagram air base in Afghanistan, and yet GTMO remains untouched.

How can these actions be justified? While logistical loopholes have allowed the current incumbent to justify not applying the Geneva Convention to GTMO, I will not stand to watch the torture take place any longer. Since 2001, there have been 775 “enemy combatants” imprisoned at the Halliburton built facility. Only one has been convicted. Of the 270 remaining detainees, only 60-80 are expected to stand trial. There have been fourth deaths at GTMO since it’s opening, all suicides. The cost of transport of the prisoners would be minimal, and the complete elimination of GTMO would open up billions in new funds. It is difficult for me to find an argument justified in opposition.

The “Close Guantanamo Bay Act” addresses the problem of unjust torture at Guantanamo by eliminating U.S. government facilities there.

This is an appropriate activity for the federal government because it would save 125 million dollars annually, bolster our international approval, and conclude that operation that houses our most disgusting human rights violations. The Geneva Conventions are being ignored and even though the Supreme Court ruled that GTMO prisoners are entitled to protections under Common Article 3, it is not enough. Legislation demanding the conclusion of operations in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba as requested by the UN and nations far and wide, is imperative. The international community believes that we have violated international law and the federal government must respond.

The average annual cost of prison incarceration for an inmate in a maximum-security prison is \$32,547. If all 270 GTMO detainees were held in federal penitentiaries, the annual cost would be 8.8 million, a fraction of the 125 billion spent annually to keep up GTMO.

I chose to sponsor this bill because it is a serious matter worthy of national concern, gaining global scrutiny. The UN has called for its closure along with much of Western Europe. All members of this great nation should support the ending of hypocritical atrocious acts of torture. I’m choosing to ride the wave of change coming in with our President-Elect and conclude our embarrassing operations at Guantanamo.

Individuals living in areas of potential prisoner relocation could be opposed to such action. A “Not In My Back Yard” problem could realistically emerge. If tried in a federal or military court, detainees could argue that their right to a speedy trial was violated, or that they were never read their Miranda rights, making convictions difficult. Other than that, perhaps the

U.S. government officials currently enjoying their lives in Cuba as they will have to relocate to the slightly cooler United States. Additionally Halliburton will perhaps suffer the most, as they will no longer have billions of government dollars pouring in from the operation.

The beneficiaries will be plentiful. Trials for the incarcerated will take place in an efficient manner, and their living conditions will improve considerably. The United States will end what many consider to be its greatest current human rights violation. Soldiers will not have to continue operating under orders that are deliberately vague. The money saved can go to chipping away at our incredible national debt incurred through the war on terror. The international community will be impressed by our actions, and in turn every traveling citizen will benefit through better relations.

It is possible that the closure of Guantanamo Bay will only act as a band-aid. Bagram air base is expanding, and many consider it too to be a lawless place of torture. There are also many other classified locations of questionable jurisdiction where CIA interrogations take place. The worst possible consequence would be the mere relocation rather than elimination of the disgraceful actions currently taking place at GTMO. I hope that instead, the conclusion of GTMO would be a big step towards justice in international law.

PREAMBLE: The UN and nations around the globe have called upon the United States to stop violating international law and shut down facilities in Guantanamo Bay. Whereas 125 million dollars is budgeted for operations at Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp to hold 270 detainees, those same 270 federal prisoners cost 8.8 million dollars annually. There has been one conviction since the facility reopened in 2001

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This act may be cited as the "Close Guantanamo Bay Act"

#### SECTION 2. "THE CLOSE GUANTANAMO BAY ACT"

Cease all operations at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base and Detention Camp in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba no later than June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

#### SECTION 3.

Current detainees awaiting trial are to be relocated to maximum-security prisons within U.S. borders. Those currently detained that do not face charges are to be released.

Trials for the currently incarcerated are to be conducted in a timely manner. Trials must commence before December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009.

#### SECTION 4.

All logistical details of detainee relocation are to be addressed by the Department of Defense.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/leading-articles/leading-article-president-obama-must-end-the-scandal-of-guantanamo-1012230.html>

<http://www.doc.state.nc.us/dop/cost/>

<http://www.newsweek.com/id/168022>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guantanamo\\_Bay\\_detention\\_camp](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guantanamo_Bay_detention_camp)

[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qn4176/is\\_/ai\\_n19342637](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4176/is_/ai_n19342637)