



Ethical Action Report



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Ethical Action Resolution of the AEU: Statement Reaffirming Its Opposition to Torture*

The following resolution was adopted by the 93rd Assembly of the American Ethical Union in Austin, Texas, April 2008.

WHEREAS: Respect and reverence for human dignity is the foremost principle of Ethical Culture, and the use of torture is the most heinous violation of human dignity, and

WHEREAS: The American Ethical Union remains absolutely and unalterably opposed to the employment of torture by the military, intelligence agencies, law enforcement agencies, or other actors public or private, and

WHEREAS: The employment of torture in direct and willful violation of the United Nations Convention on Torture has become a component of American policy in its "War

on terror,"

THEREFORE: The American Ethical Union calls upon the Congress and President of the United States:

- To immediately and unconditionally cease the practice of torture everywhere, including the transfer of prisoners to other jurisdictions where torture may be employed, and
- To allow unfettered access and inspection of any and all sites and facilities, and
- To avow without reservation to abide by its international agreements and honor the highest standards of human rights, and
- To openly recognize and apologize for all transgressions, to allow for due process, and, whenever and wherever possible, to make restitution to their victims.

FURTHERMORE: We call upon the Leaders and members of The American Ethical Union to inspire and advocate for the end of present American policy and the “torture debate” through Sunday addresses in accord with the National Leaders' Council Paper in Support of the Resolution Against Torture.

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* UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE (Article 1) The term “torture” means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.

Gender Equality: Support the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act

Write to your Senators and demand that they end a filibuster of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. Women and others mustn't be denied the ability to sue when they are the victims of pay discrimination. It's time for Congress to stop supporting businesses over people!

BACKGROUND

The Supreme Court did women across the United States a grave injustice when they reversed decades of precedent on wage discrimination cases in the Lilly Ledbetter case. Ledbetter had sued Goodyear for proven pay discrimination due to sexist attitudes by her superiors. As a manager at Goodyear she made far less during her career than her male counterparts—far less than even the lowest man in her same position. Barred from talking about salary with co-workers, Ledbetter only discovered the discrepancy in pay after an anonymous letter tipped her off.

Lower courts ruled in Ledbetter's favor and found she was owed nearly \$225,000 in back-pay over her 19-year career. However, the Supreme Court overturned that decision, arguing that such lawsuits must be brought within 180 days of the first example of pay discrimination, rather than following previous court decisions that found each discriminatory pay check “reset” the 180 day window, and Ledbetter was denied money

that she should rightly have earned. Thus denying people their fair day in court unless they discover pay discrimination immediately, and condemning them to continue a career of lower pay.

Congress now has the opportunity to undue the damage that the Supreme Court has wrought. The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act would restore the law that “resets” the window in which a person can sue for pay discrimination based on gender, color, age, or disability. The bill has already passed in the House of Representatives; however, due to a filibuster orchestrated by Republicans, the bill has stalled in the Senate and thus denied a fair up-or-down vote.

Only three votes are needed to break the Senate filibuster. If the bill gets to the floor for a vote, it will likely pass. Please act now!

Equal Justice: Just Say NO to Extreme Judicial Appointments!

Write to Senator Harry Reid and Senator Patrick Leahy and demand that they stop confirming controversial judges. These judges, who are often hostile to separation of church and state, women’s rights, civil liberties, and many more issues important to humanists, will be able to jeopardize the rights of Americans long after President George W. Bush has left the White House.

BACKGROUND

Throughout his presidency, George W. Bush has consistently appointed federal judges who hold extreme ideological views that run contrary to the positions of mainstream Americans. These judges hold very conservative views that are detrimental to the separation of church and state, women’s rights, the environment, civil liberties, and many more issues.

It’s time to demand that only consensus nominees should move forward. A lifetime appointee to the federal bench will have a long-lasting effect on the direction of the United States. The Senate should utilize its constitutional “advice and consent” power to refuse to confirm controversial judicial nominees and to demand judges that are more in touch with most Americans’ views.

Human Rights: Protect Children in Darfur

Write to Mr. Rodolphe Adada, the Head of UNAMID—the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur—and demand that he take steps to protect children in Darfur.

WRITE TO:

Rodolphe Adada
UN-AU Joint Special Representative for Darfur
UN Headquarters
Khartoum

Email: adadar@un.org

BACKGROUND

Darfur is a region with horrible living conditions, particularly for children. Many children, some who still live in their villages and others who live in refugee camps, are traumatized by what they have seen and experienced. Many live in fear of attacks, and many have seen their schools burnt to the ground.

These children are facing an uncertain future and some have been forced to serve as child soldiers. In addition, domestic and sexual violence has started rising. Few have access to any education.

The UNAMID must implement its mandate to protect the children of Darfur whose lives have been affected by this conflict.

Justice for All: Support the Prison Abuse Remedies Act

Contact your members of Congress and ask them to stand up for equal justice for all Americans. Support the Prison Abuse Remedies Act.

BACKGROUND

In 1996 the Prison Litigation Reform Act was passed by Congress. This little-known law was originally enacted to curtail the number of “frivolous” lawsuits; however, in practice it effectively barred prisoners from seeking a fair hearing on violations of fundamental constitutional rights such free speech and religious liberty, and cases of physical and sexual abuse.

We can fix this problem! The Prison Abuse Remedies Act of 2007 would undo the damage that has been wrought. It would reinstate the rule of law in U.S. prisons and jails, while at the same time maintaining the Prison Litigation Reform Act’s stated purpose.

Contacting Elected Officials

White House

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Visit www.senate.gov or www.house.gov to
use your representatives' e-mail contact forms.

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