

Interchurch Center, Suite B ■ 0245 SW Bancroft Street ■ Portland, Oregon 97239
phone (503) 221-1054 ■ *fax* (503) 223-7007 ■ *Web site* www.emoregon.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: Feb. 15, 2008

Contact: Kevin Finney: cell (503) 250-0937

Office (503) 221-1054, ext. 204

kfinney@emoregon.org

Faith leaders thank Senators Gordon Smith, Ron Wyden for their vote to end U.S. use of torture

Leaders of an interfaith effort to ban the use of torture by the CIA and all U.S. government agencies expressed their appreciation to Oregon Senators Gordon Smith and Ron Wyden for their vote for passage of HR 2082, the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008, which passed the Senate on a vote of 51-45 on Feb. 13. They also called on President George Bush to sign HR 2082 and put the use of torture by the CIA firmly in the past.

David Leslie, the executive director of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, issued the following statement on behalf of this Oregon interfaith coalition against torture:

We thank Oregon Senators Ron Wyden and Gordon Smith for their strong stand against the use of torture by the CIA. The U.S. must set a standard for the world that the use of torture is wrong under all circumstances. We recognize that Senator Gordon Smith was one of only five Republican Senators who voted to ban the use of torture by the CIA, and we want to acknowledge his continuing leadership in the Senate on issues of human rights and the rule of law. Now we call on President Bush to sign HR 2082 and make the use of torture by the United States illegal for all agencies and at all times.

In January 2008, roughly 175 Oregon faith leaders had sent an Interfaith Letter Opposing Torture to Senator Gordon Smith. That letter stated in part:

Torture violates the basic dignity of the human person that all religions, in their highest ideals, hold dear. It degrades everyone involved: policy-makers, perpetrators and victims. It contradicts our nation's most cherished ideals. Any policies that permit torture and

MEMBER DENOMINATIONS

African Methodist Episcopal Church ■ American Baptist Churches of Oregon ■ Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ■ Christian Methodist Episcopal Church ■ Church of the Brethren ■ Community of Christ
Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon ■ Episcopal Diocese of Oregon ■ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ■ Greek Orthodox Church ■ Presbyterian Church (USA)—Presbytery of the Cascades
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) ■ Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland ■ United Church of Christ ■ United Methodist Church ■ Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

inhumane treatment are shocking and morally intolerable. Nothing less is at stake in the torture abuse crisis than the soul of our nation. What does it signify if torture is condemned in word but allowed in deed? Let America abolish torture now -- without exceptions.

The complete letter and a full list of signers is available online at www.emoregon.org.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a statewide association of Christian denominations—including Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox bodies—congregations, ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians through community ministry programs, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, environmental ministry and public policy advocacy.