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Dear Senator,

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As the U.S. Senate considers the conference report for H.R. 2082, the FY 2008 Intelligence Authorization legislation, I write on behalf of the American Bar Association to voice our strong support for the inclusion of language in the conference report to establish uniform interrogation standards for detainees in U.S. custody.

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The revelations of abuses by United States personnel of prisoners detained in the fight against terrorism dismayed the American public and severely damaged our nation's reputation as a leader in promoting human rights and the international rule of law. American interrogation standards must adhere to basic democratic values as well as to the letter and spirit of both U.S. and international law regarding the treatment of detainees.

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The U.S. military has moved to correct the policies and practices that led to abuses, most notably with the adoption in September 2006 of the U.S. Army Field Manual on Human Intelligence Collector Operations (the "Army Field Manual"). However, a July 2007 Executive Order permits civilian agents, such as those employed by the Central Intelligence Agency, to engage in "enhanced interrogation techniques" on individuals imprisoned in their custody. The ABA is deeply concerned by this double standard and urges Congress to require that anyone acting under the color of U.S. authority abide by the principles of humane treatment contained in Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and the Army Field Manual.

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To accomplish this goal, the ABA strongly supports the inclusion of Section 327 in the conference report for H.R. 2082. Section 327 extends to the intelligence community the ban on engaging in interrogation techniques that are not sanctioned by the Army Field Manual.

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In condemning and outlawing cruel and inhumane treatment of prisoners, military leaders have acknowledged that torture does not yield reliable information, and could give our enemies legal justification for abusing captured Americans. More fundamentally, torture violates our nation's own values of decency—values that date back to George Washington, who ordered Revolutionary soldiers not to mistreat captured British enemies.

EDITOR WASHINGTON LETTER  
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Our nation's challenge, in this dangerous age, is to be strong, unyielding champions of the rule of law, even as we defend our security. The Executive Branch has publicly pledged that our government is complying with the Geneva Conventions, but the lack of uniformity and the secrecy over the scope of allowable treatment of captured enemies inevitably create doubts and uncertainty.

It is time for our nation to have one law that provides for all U.S. personnel a single gold standard for the humane treatment of detainees. The Army Field Manual has a demonstrated track record of success and we welcome its establishment as the minimum standard for all interrogations going forward. We urge you to oppose any efforts to strike this important provision from the conference report and to expeditiously advance the conference report intact.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Denise A. Cardman". The signature is written in black ink and has a fluid, connected style.

Denise A. Cardman  
Acting Director