



Military Commissions Act

The Military Commissions Act of 2006 gives the president absolute power to decide who is an enemy of our country and to imprison people indefinitely without charging them with a crime.

■ Eliminates due process.

This law removes the Constitutional due process right of habeas corpus for persons the president designates as unlawful enemy combatants. It allows our government to continue to hold hundreds of prisoners more than four years without charges, with no end in sight.

■ Rejects core American values.

Habeas corpus, the basic right to have a court decide if a person is being lawfully imprisoned, is what separates America from other countries. To do away with this American value makes us more like those we are fighting against. It is time to restore due process, defend the Constitution, and protect what makes us Americans.

■ The last Congress was asleep at the wheel.

The only thing scarier than a government that would take away our basic freedoms is a Congress that would let it happen. Congress must correct that mistake and restore habeas corpus and due process, and define enemy combatants as only those who engage in hostilities against the United States.

■ Permits coerced evidence.

The act permits convictions based on evidence that was literally beaten out of a witness, or obtained through other abuse by either the federal government or by other countries.

■ Turns a blind eye to past abuses.

Government officials who authorized or ordered illegal acts of torture and abuse would receive retroactive immunity for their crimes, providing them with a 'get out of jail free' card.

■ Makes the president his own judge and jury.

Under the Military Commissions Act, the president has the power to define what is — and what is not — torture and abuse, even though the Geneva Conventions already provide us with a guide.

■ Congress must fix the Military Commissions Act.

By giving any president the unchallenged power to decide which non-citizen is an enemy of our country — and eliminating habeas corpus due process for them, we allow the government to imprison people indefinitely without charging them with a crime. It is time for Congress to restore due process, defend the Constitution and protect what makes us Americans.