

MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

A. 6665 (Gottfried)

S. 4495 (Duane)

An Act to amend the public health law, the education law and the labor law, in relation to prohibiting participation in torture and improper treatment of prisoners by health care professionals

January 20th, 2010

An Act to amend the public health law, the education law and the labor law, in relation to prohibiting participation in torture and improper treatment of prisoners by health care professionals.

The American Friends Service Committee supports A.6665/S.4495 amending the public health law prohibiting participation in torture and mistreatment of prisoners by health care professionals in or outside of New York State.

Since the 1930's the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) has worked with thousands of persons both incarcerated and released from prison throughout the United States. We have provided professional and peer counseling, monitored prison conditions, and advocated for a paradigm shift in the legislation and public opinion regarding crime and punishment. We have given focused attention to tortuous treatment of prisoners in United States federal, state, and county facilities, including youth detention houses, and uplifted international standards of treatment of prisoners. We participate in the National Religious Coalition Against

Torture. A recently republished AFSC document, “Inalienable Rights, Applying International Human Rights Standards to the U.S. Criminal Justice System” is widely circulated.

A major recommendation proposed in A.6665/S.4495 is the need to establish general obligations of health care professionals in relation to the treatment of incarcerated and detained persons, consistent with generally applicable legal, health and professional standards. We encourage the passage of this bill to eliminate and complicity in the involvement of health care professionals in the commission of torture.

As a nationally recognized service and advocacy organization working on behalf of people involved in the criminal justice system, AFSC carries a spiritual and moral commitment to protect this population against torture and other cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment.

Should you wish any additional information, please feel free to contact me at 212-598-0950 or through my email eenloe@afsc.org.

Yours sincerely,

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Cc: Bonnie Kerness, Healing and Transformative Justice Program