

Metro New York Religious Campaign Against Torture (MNYRCAT)

<http://mnyrcat.org>

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Steering Committee

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Memorandum in Support of New York State Legislation
To Bar Health Care Professionals Licensed in New York State
From Participating in Torture or Improper Treatment of Prisoners
A-6665-B and S-4495-A

The Metro New York Religious Campaign Against Torture (MNYRCAT) has worked for the last four years with the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) to end United States involvement in torture and to close the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. We strongly endorse this New York State legislation as we know that health care professionals were consulted by military and intelligence agencies in the development of the so-called 'enhanced interrogation techniques' that were employed against detainees in United States custody. We also know that health care professionals assisted in some of these interrogations. We need legislation such as this to hold health care professionals accountable to the highest ethical standards and to protect them when they do seek to act according to the highest ideals of their profession.

Representing diverse communities of faith, MNYRCAT members are one in our unwavering belief that all forms of torture, as well as cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment of prisoners, are a fundamental violation of the dignity of the human person and thus can never be justified. Health care professionals have a positive obligation to 'do no harm' and there can be no greater harm than to assist in the use of torture, or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of prisoners. Torture harms not only the victim of torture, but the torturer as well. The one who tortures can suffer long-term effects that have consequences for all whose lives intersect with the torturer. Health care professionals, therefore, must never assist in the development or application of techniques of torture or techniques that are cruel, degrading and inhuman.

We fully support the passage of this legislation and commend those responsible for introducing it.