



April 29, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

As the oldest and largest independent organization of physicians-in-training in the United States, the American Medical Student Association (AMSA) **encourages the New York State legislature to pass A-6665-B and S-4495-A** to prohibit participation in torture and mistreatment of prisoners by health care professionals licensed by the State of New York.

AMSA strongly believes in creating and upholding policies that prevent the inhumane treatment of prisoners and detainees under any circumstances. A health care professional who comes to the aid of a prisoner is fulfilling an ethical principle of beneficence. However, a health care professional who attends to a prisoner in order to allow torture or mistreatment to commence or continue, or who explicitly aids or participates in torture or mistreatment of a prisoner, is violating the ethical principles of medicine.

We strongly condemn the mistreatment of prisoners and detainees, encourage medical professionals to speak out against torture, and condemn interrogation techniques that inflict physical or psychological harm as a means of obtaining information. As future physicians, we are compelled to protect and promote the ethical duties of all healthcare personnel.

AMSA is committed to promoting the highest attainable quality of health care for our patients, and supporting the integrity, professional development, and well-being of young medical professionals. This legislation will help protect these values by establishing a mechanism for health care professionals to safely report cases of torture or suspected torture to proper authorities, and to refuse participation on account of their medical licensure. We hope that this bill will act as a model for other states and mark the beginning of legislative efforts across the country banning healthcare professional participation in torture.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauren S. Hughes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "L" and "H".

Lauren Hughes, MD, MPH  
National President