

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Tuesday, July 31, 2007

American Freedom Campaign Launched

**MoveOn.org, Human Rights Watch, Center for Constitutional Rights, Others
Announce Grassroots Movement to Defend Democracy,
Fight Growing Executive Power, and Protect Constitution**

**Campaign Seeks Broad Support from Public, Presidential Candidates to Restore
Checks and Balances, Strengthen Congressional Oversight, Fight Torture, Wiretaps,
Secret Evidence, Indefinite Detention, Other Abuses of Power**

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WASHINGTON In response to an Administration acting above the law and ignoring the Constitution, the [Center for Constitutional Rights](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), [MoveOn.org](#) and others today launched a campaign to help citizens defend democracy. The [American Freedom Campaign](#) (AFC) is an on- and off-line grassroots effort to restore checks and balances and reverse abuses of power by the executive branch.

The Campaign is launching at a moment of unparalleled challenge to America's constitutional system. In just the past month, the Bush Administration has ordered employees to ignore congressional subpoenas, asserted broad new parameters for executive privilege, and issued an executive order that could permit seizing assets of Americans deemed at its discretion to be hurting the war effort in Iraq. At the same time, the Administration continues to spy on its own citizens, including widespread data mining of telephone records and e-mails.

The Campaign is asking all Americans to take the American Freedom Pledge to "fight to protect and defend the Constitution." The pledge begins, "We are Americans, and in our America we do not torture, we do not imprison people without charge or legal remedy, we do not tap people's phones and emails without a court order, and above all we do not give any President unchecked power."

The Campaign is asking all Presidential candidates to take the Pledge as well.

"This Campaign responds to the unconstitutional behavior of the current Administration," offered one of AFC's co-founders, Naomi Wolf, author of the forthcoming "The End of America: A Letter of Warning to a Young Patriot" (Chelsea Green Publishing). "Therefore, our first order of business is to get commitments from those running to be the next occupant of the White House. The American people need to know that executive power will not be similarly abused in the future."

The American Freedom Campaign will be an online hub for Americans concerned about their democratic system and ready to act to protect the Constitution and the principles on which the country was founded. The Campaign expects to build a grassroots base of

hundreds of thousands of Americans who will make their voices heard when issues of excessive executive power arise.

AFC will launch a war room operation to help prominent experts respond to future executive branch abuses or power grabs.

“If there was ever a time for a true grassroots movement in America, it is now,” offered Wes Boyd, co-founder of MoveOn.org. “With our leaders in Washington failing in their constitutional roles, the people need to band together to defend the democracy established on their behalf over 200 years ago. Through the online component of this campaign, hundreds of thousands of Americans will fight to protect our freedoms and our liberties.”

“This is not a partisan or ideological issue,” Boyd continued. “Similar to the conservatives who have joined former Reagan Administration official Bruce Fein in calling for a reversal of excessive executive power, we all join this campaign as Americans first. We would be equally outspoken if a Democrat treated the Constitution like an advisory memo, rather than one of the most important documents in history.”

The American Freedom Campaign endeavors to preserve the vision of the nation’s Founders - that no President shall be above the law. In doing so, AFC seeks to protect Americans’ constitutionally guaranteed liberties and ensure that this nation demonstrates respect for human rights.

“For the last six years we have been taking the Bush administration to court to hold them accountable for the many ways they have broken the law,” said Vincent Warren, executive director of the Center for Constitutional Rights. “In case after case, they have tried to hide behind ‘state secrets,’ create loopholes to make themselves immune from prosecution, and treat the prohibitions on torture and coercive interrogation the way a particularly creative tax lawyer might treat the tax code. The American Freedom Pledge is an opportunity for everyone to stand up and say we have had enough of an executive branch that thinks it is above the law.”

“The Bush Administration’s ‘war on terror’ is not making Americans safer. It’s making Americans less safe,” added Carroll Bogert, associate director of Human Rights Watch. “What’s more, these policies are a gift to dictators everywhere. They significantly undermine America’s moral credibility, which should be the cornerstone of any effort to combat terrorism.”

The full set of AFC policy objectives is detailed in the American Freedom Campaign Agenda, included at the end of this email.

The American Freedom Campaign was founded by MoveOn.org co-founder Wes Boyd, scientist and social entrepreneur William Haseltine, Fenton Communications CEO David Fenton, and Naomi Wolf, author of the forthcoming "The End of America."

To learn more about the American Freedom Campaign, please visit <http://www.americanfreedomcampaign.org>.

About the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR): The Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) has cases against Bush, Rumsfeld, Gonzales and other high-level officials for torture, rendition, warrantless spying and ghost detention and will be representing the Guantanamo detainees in the Supreme Court in the coming term. CCR is committed to the creative use of law as a positive force for social change and is dedicated to advancing and protecting the rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

About Human Rights Watch: Human Rights Watch is dedicated to defending and protecting the human rights of people around the world. We conduct on-site investigations of human rights abuses in more than seventy countries worldwide and publish our findings in reports that are known for uncompromising accuracy. These reports are used in high-level advocacy discussions and in the media to shape the public agenda, shame abusers and press for change. Through this methodology, Human Rights Watch seeks to improve the lives of countless people and secure justice and human dignity for all.

About MoveOn.org: MoveOn.org is a 3.2 million-member online progressive public policy organization.

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The American Freedom Campaign Agenda

At critical moments in our history, Americans have been called upon to protect our Constitutional guarantees of liberty and justice. We face such a moment today. The American Freedom Campaign is a non-partisan citizen's alliance formed to reverse the abuse of executive power and restore our system of checks and balances with these ten goals:

Fully restore the right to challenge the legality of one's detention, or habeas corpus, and the right of detained suspects to be charged and brought to trial.

Prohibit torture and all cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

Prohibit the use of secret evidence.

Prohibit the detention of anyone, including U.S. citizens, as an "enemy combatant" outside the battlefield, and on the President's say-so alone.

Prohibit the government from secretly breaking and entering our homes, tapping our phones or email, or seizing our computers without a court order, on the President's say-so alone.

Prohibit the President from "disappearing" anyone and holding them in secret detention.

Prohibit the executive from claiming "state secrets" to deny justice to victims of government misdeeds, and from claiming "executive privilege" to obstruct Congressional oversight and an open government.

Prohibit the abuse of signing statements, where the President seeks to disregard duly enacted provision of bills.

Use the federal courts, or courts-martial, to charge and prosecute terrorism suspects, and close Guantanamo down.

Reaffirm that the Espionage Act does not prohibit journalists from reporting on classified national security matters and that they may do so without fear of prosecution.

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