

AN OPEN INTERFAITH LETTER TO SENATOR SPECTER

**SEEKING SUPPORT TO PREVENT THE INDISCRIMINATE USE
OF CLUSTER MUNITIONS BY CO-SPONSORING S.594,
THE CLUSTER MUNITIONS CIVILIAN PROTECTION ACT OF 2007**

March 31, 2008

The Honorable Arlen Specter
U.S. Senate
711 Hart Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Specter:

Our faith calls us to work for peace and to protect the poor and the innocent. As religious leaders in our communities, we are alarmed by the many well documented reports detailing the huge numbers of civilian casualties that have resulted from the use of indiscriminate cluster munitions around the world.

These indiscriminate weapons scatter deadly explosives over wide areas of land, making it very difficult to avoid civilian casualties. Moreover, while designed to explode on impact, many of the submunitions initially fail to detonate, leaving behind large numbers of hazardous explosive “duds” that are akin to landmines which injure and kill civilians and contaminate the land long after conflict has ended. The U.S. has used cluster bombs in civilian populated areas of three countries in the last 10 years and the cluster bombs the U.S. dropped in Laos more than three decades ago are still killing civilians today.

The use of cluster bombs has been condemned by Arch-bishop Desmond Tutu, Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon, the International Committee of the Red Cross, UNICEF, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Christian relief group World Vision, and the 138 governments that met in Vienna on December 5-7, 2007 to discuss a global treaty banning the weapon.

We welcome this international movement and join with these world leaders in calling on the United States and the international community to take action to prevent the deaths of innocent civilians. As part of this effort, we, the undersigned members of Pennsylvania’s faith community, urge you to co-sponsor the Cluster Munitions Civilian Protection Act of 2007 (S.594). Introduced by Senators Dianne Feinstein and Patrick Leahy, this legislation prohibits both the use of cluster munitions in or near civilian populated areas and the use, sale and transfer of cluster munitions with a failure rate of over one percent.

After forty years of use, the devastating impact of cluster munitions on civilian populations is overwhelming. All of our faith traditions call for us to act when we have opportunities to protect human life and dignity. Moral teachings and international humanitarian law insist that the use of force during wars be discriminate. The indiscriminate nature of this weapon violates these accepted principles. In addition to the tragedy of civilian casualties, unexploded cluster submunitions create long-term social and economic problems for countries attempting to recover from war.

You are a leader in the Senate in working on international issues. You were a leader in the Senate

against another indiscriminate killer, landmines. Now we urge you to become a leader in the Senate working to prevent the indiscriminate use of cluster munitions by co-sponsoring S.594. Passage of the Cluster Munitions Civilian Protection Act of 2007 is the right thing to do.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent matter.

Respectfully yours,

Organizations

American Friends Service Committee—PA
Scilla Wahrhaftig, Program Director
Pittsburgh

Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting
Dion Lerman & Kathy Miller
Co-Clerks, Peace & Social Concerns
Committee
Philadelphia

Eastern District & Franconia Mennonite
Conferences
Anne Yoder
Member of the Peace & Justice Committee

Gwynedd Monthly Meeting
Religious Society of Friends
Gwynedd

Harrisburg-Hiroshima-Nagasaki Committee
Deborah Davenport
Camp Hill

Norristown Friends Meeting
Norristown

Pax Christi Harrisburg
Harrisburg

Pennsylvania Council of Churches
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Director of Public Advocacy
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St. Paul's United Methodist Church
Rev. Bruce Gascoine, Associate Pastor
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Wellspring Church of Skippack
Michael A. Meneses, Pastor
Skippack

Western Pennsylvania Conference
United Methodist Church
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Cranberry Twp

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State College

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United Methodist
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Joy Bergey
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Flourtown

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
New Columbia

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Brethren
Spring Mills

Virginia Byers
Religious Society of Friends
Spring Mills

Gladys and Lorenzo Canizares
Roman Catholic
Harrisburg

Brian Case
Mechanicsburg Church of the Brethren
Camp Hill

Darlene Clark
State College Friends Meeting
State College

Rosemary K. Coffey
Religious Society of Friends
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Penn Central Conference
United Church of Christ
Harrisburg

John Cooper
Lewisburg

Lila E. Cornell
Religious Society of Friends
Cranberry Twp.

Douglas and Laurel Costa
Merion Monthly Meeting,
Religious Society of Friends
Bala Cynwyd

Robert Crauder
Quaker
State College

Daniel Doyle
Roman Catholic
Member, United Churches of Lycoming
County's Board and Social Concerns
Committee
Member, Social Concerns Committee, Church
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Muncy

Polly Dunn
State College Friends Meeting
State College

Theresa Eshbach
Mechanicsburg Church of the Brethren
Dover

Lucretia W. and William E. Evans
Religious Society of Friends
State College

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Carol Everhart
United Methodist
Three Springs

Emily and Bruce Johnson
All Saints Episcopal Church
Selinsgrove

Abbe Forman
Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting
Philadelphia

David Johnston
Harrisburg

Victoria Garcia
Villanovans for Peace
Philadelphia

Rev. Karl Jones
St. John Union Church
Auburn

Henry J. Gonzalez
Carol J.S. Gonzalez
Pittsburgh Christian Life Community
(CVX-CLC - International Lay Ignatian
Community)
Pittsburgh

Ann Marie Judson
Roman Catholic
Lemoyne

Dr. John Judson
Roman Catholic
Lemoyne

Lloyd Guindon
Religious Society of Friends
Wallingford

Michael Kachur
Religious Society of Friends
Philadelphia

Rev. Gary L. Harke
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Harrisburg

Cathy Drapcho Klein
Religious Society of Friends
Port Matilda

Judith W. Heald
Religious Society of Friends
Spring Mills

Kevin R. Klein
Religious Society of Friends and United
Methodist
Port Matilda

Linda Hensel
Religious Society of Friends
Havertown

Richard A. Klein
Religious Society of Friends
University Park

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Lyle Horn
Episcopal
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Jacqueline Lamb, Ph.D., R.N.
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Eric Laurenson
Religious Society of Friends
Glenshaw

Marcia Lehman
Justice & Peace "Reaching Out for God"
Ministry Team
Community of Reconciliation Church
Pittsburgh

Emily Lippert
Roman Catholic
Pittsburgh

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Religious Society of Friends
Indiana

Karen Lundy
United Methodist
Mechanicsburg

Rev. Sandra R Mackie
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Gettysburg

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State College Friends Meeting
State College

Melissa Carley Manning, RN, BSN
United Methodist
Mechanicsburg

Joseph Manzi
Christian
Lewisburg

William R. Marlow
Beaver United Methodist Church
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Lynn Mather
Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting
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Unitarian Fellowship of West Chester
West Chester

Irene McHenry
Millville Monthly Meeting
Religious Society of Friends.
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Rev. Fredrica K. Meitzen
Lutheran
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Religious Society of Friends
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Martha Oliver
Trinity United Methodist Church
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Helen Ortman
Roman Catholic
Pittsburgh

Virginia C. Parkum
Buddhist
Blue Mountain Lotus Society
Harrisburg

Bonnie Peckham
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Mechanicsburg

Robert Pickle
Christian
Collegeville

Suzanne Polen
Roman Catholic (St. Charles Lwanga Parish)
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Jo Ann F. Pratt
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First United Church of Christ
Carlisle

Carlana Rhoten
Pittsburgh

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Rev. Janel Rice, Pastor
Central Moravian Church
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Carolyn Speranza
Non Denominational
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Gettysburg United Methodist Church
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Virginia G. and Richard D. Rivers
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Susan Stedman
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Sensei Anthony Stultz
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Quaker
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