

# THE CONSTITUTION PROJECT



*Safeguarding Liberty, Justice & the Rule of Law*

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## Poll Shows Strong Bipartisan Support for Releasing Senate Torture Report

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** -- An overwhelming bipartisan majority of Americans thinks that the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence should make public its comprehensive report on the CIA's detention and torture of terrorism suspects after 9/11, according to a new poll released today by The Constitution Project, a bipartisan legal watchdog group based in Washington, D.C.

Nearly 70% of all registered voters think a declassified version of the report should be made public so we can learn from past mistakes, while only 22% think the report might be so damaging or embarrassing that the committee should not release it. Support for releasing the report cuts across party lines, with 71% of independents, 69% of Democrats, and 67% of Republicans saying the report should be made public.

"President Obama came into office promising unprecedented government transparency, and has said repeatedly that he supports declassifying the Senate Intelligence Committee's report so that the American people can understand what was done in their name," said TCP President Virginia Sloan.

"His administration's apparent efforts to obscure key portions of the report through redactions undermine both commitments. It's time for the president to take charge of the redaction process and make good on his promises," she said.

In April 2013, TCP's own [bipartisan blue-ribbon](#) Task Force on Detainee Treatment [found](#) that the treatment of many suspected terrorists in U.S. custody after 9/11 constituted torture, which was authorized at the highest levels of government. The Task Force called for declassification of the SSCI report with minimal redactions.

The poll also shows that there is a strong sense among voters that it is important to evaluate whether the CIA's use of enhanced interrogation techniques -- or torture -- was necessary or effective, with 52% of respondents saying they think it is important for the report to be released in order to help answer this question, compared to only 39% who consider it to be unimportant.

A bipartisan majority of the Senate committee voted earlier this year to make public a declassified version of the executive summary, findings and conclusions of its more than 6,000 page report on

the CIA's post-9/11 rendition, detention and interrogation program.

Those who have read the report say it documents abuse that was far more brutal and widespread than commonly understood, and that the CIA misled the Justice Department and Congress about the program's safety, efficacy and necessity -- findings that mirror those of TCP's Task Force.

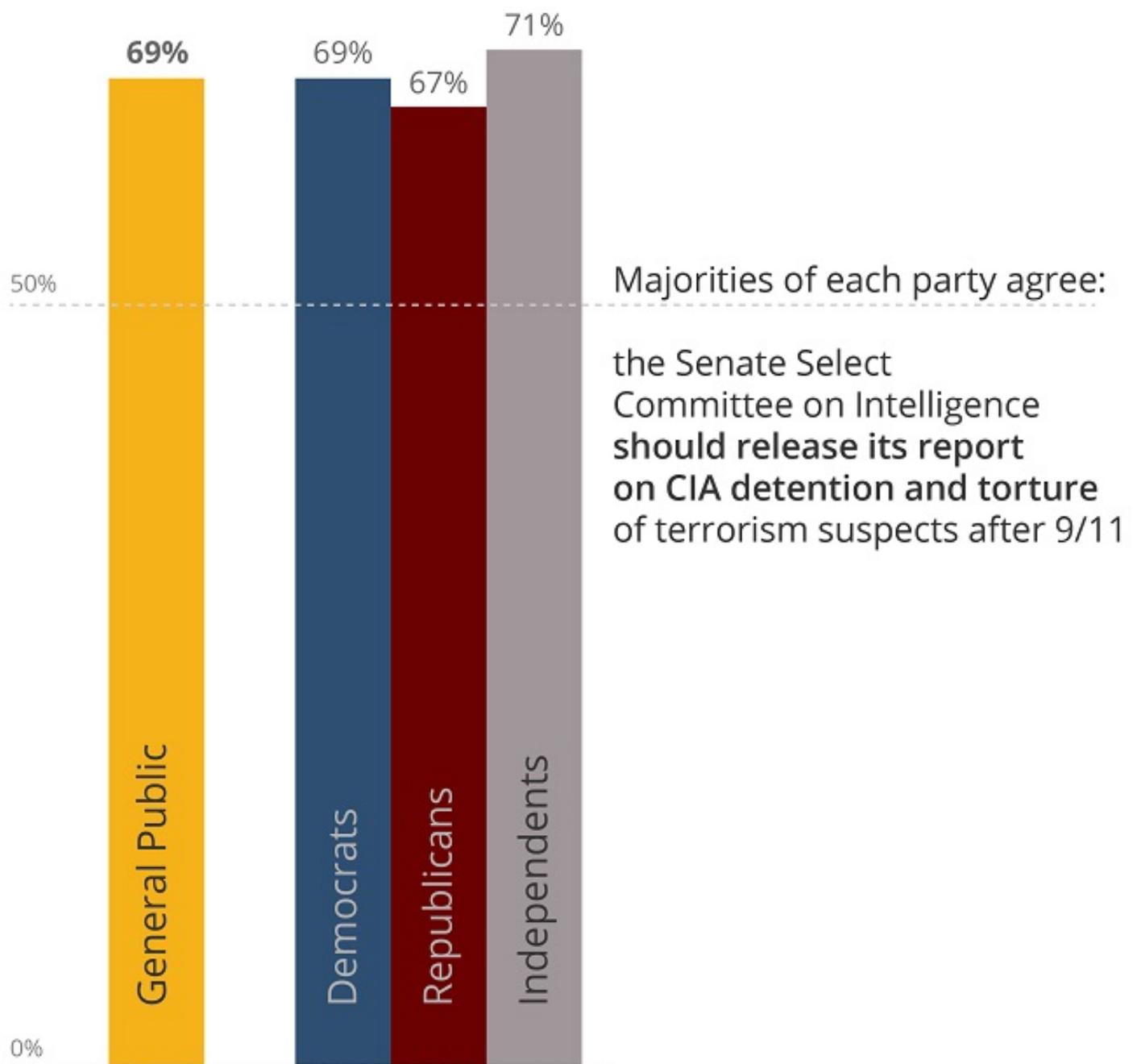
The Obama administration returned the report with proposed redactions to the committee on August 1, but the committee chair, Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), said that blacking out the material the CIA wants to keep classified would "eliminate or obscure key facts that support the report's findings and conclusions." Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin (D-Mich.) called the administration's proposed redactions "totally unacceptable" and noted they included information that was publicly disclosed in an Armed Services Committee report on detainee abuse that was reviewed by the administration and authorized for release in 2009. For the last two months, Feinstein has been negotiating with the Obama administration to reduce the amount of material to be kept secret.

The poll also shows that voters believe it is important to develop more information about the CIA spying on the committee's staff while the investigation was underway. The agency's inspector general found that CIA personnel wrongly accessed the Senate's computers and sought a criminal investigation into committee staff conduct without any factual basis for doing so. CIA Director John Brennan initially vehemently denied that the agency had interfered with the investigation, but later acknowledged the inspector general's findings and apologized to the committee.

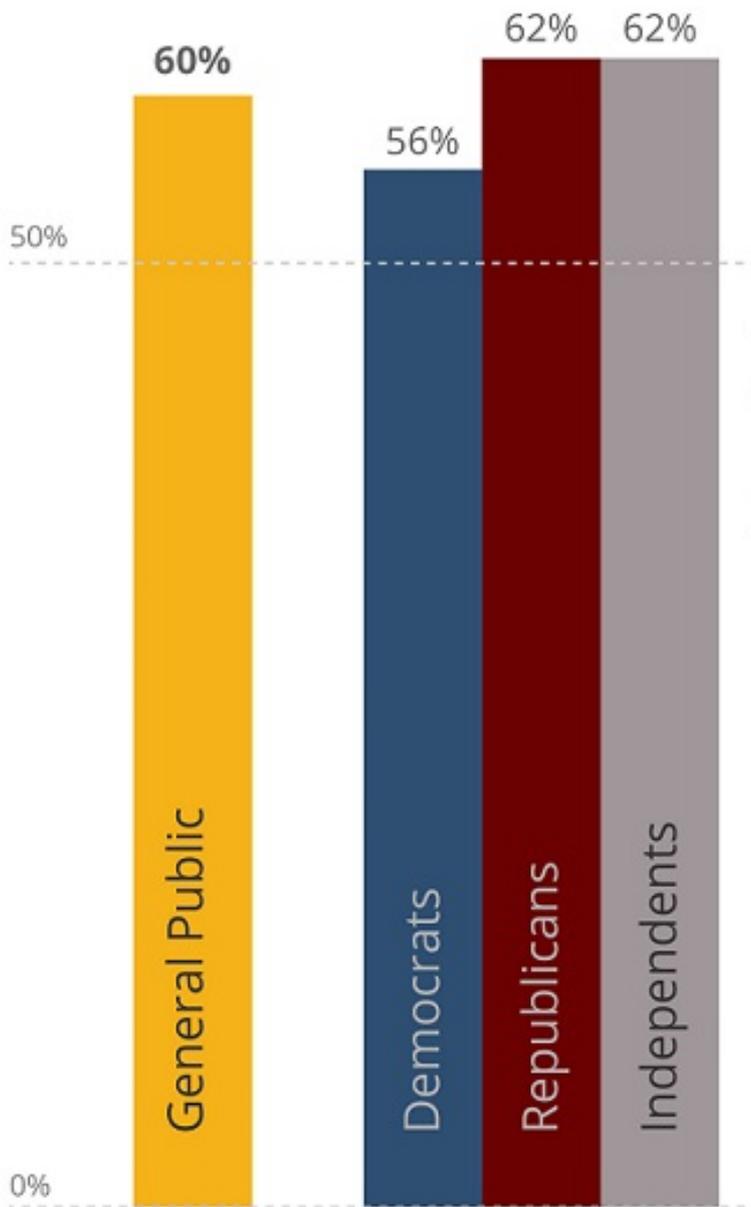
Sixty percent of the survey respondents say that such interference violates the constitutional separation of powers between the Congress and the executive branch and merits further inquiry, while only 32% say the country has spent enough time on the issue and should move on. Again, those voters wanting more information about the incident cut across party lines, with 62% of both Republicans and independents and 56% of Democrats saying more inquiry is needed.

Voters think Brennan should resign after lying to Congress and the public about the agency's interference with the investigation. More than half of registered voters (54%) think Brennan should resign, while only 25% say he should not.

The survey of 898 registered voters was conducted by Public Policy Polling from September 26 to September 28. The margin of error is +/-3.3%. Full survey results are [available here](#).



source: Survey of 898 registered voters conducted by Public Policy Polling, September 26-28. Margin of error +/- 3%.



Majorities of each party agree:

the CIA violated our system of checks and balances by hacking Senate computers and the incident merits further investigation

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**About The Constitution Project**

*Created out of the belief that we must cast aside the labels that divide us in order to keep our democracy strong, The Constitution Project (TCP) brings together policy experts and legal practitioners from across the political spectrum to foster consensus-based solutions to the most difficult constitutional challenges of our time. TCP seeks to reform the nation's broken criminal justice system and to strengthen the rule of law through scholarship, advocacy, policy reform and public education initiatives. Established in 1997, TCP is based in Washington, D.C.*