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## NC Stop Torture Now asks McCrory to investigate state's role in CIA 'torture report'

By Colin Campbell

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The group N.C. Stop Torture Now held a rally Friday morning at the governor's mansion calling on Gov. Pat McCrory to investigate the state's role in CIA interrogation practices detailed in a U.S. Senate report.

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RALEIGH — In the wake of the Senate report on the CIA's use of torture, a group tracking the North Carolina ties wants Gov. Pat McCrory to investigate the state's role in the practices.

N.C. Stop Torture Now held a rally Friday and delivered a binder full of information to McCrory's office.

The group's letter asks the governor to launch a State Bureau of Investigation probe "into the use of state and county facilities in support of the RDI program."

RDI – which stands for rendition, detention and interrogation – was the CIA practice of secretly transporting detainees to foreign countries where they were questioned using techniques considered to be torture.

Aero Contractors, which is based at the Johnston County Airport in Smithfield, was one of the aviation firms that operated the flights, according to human rights investigators. The company also flew larger planes from the Global TransPark in Kinston.

"I would like to see the governor do everything in his power to investigate what has gone on," said Chuck Fager, a member of Stop Torture Now.

Fager and other group members have called on state and local officials to take action for years; most have said the issue should be addressed at the federal level.

The Senate report further confirms the North Carolina connection. While Aero Contractors isn't specifically named, the report lists 17 detainees who were transported by the company, Stop Torture Now says.

"It was wrong for our state to be an enabler of these unspeakable acts," George Reed, executive director of the N.C. Council of Churches, said Friday at the rally.

#### Accountability

Stop Torture Now also asks McCrory to hold officials "accountable" for what they term the "misuse" of state facilities. The letter doesn't list specific officials, but the group repeatedly called on Johnston County Commissioners – who oversee the airport that hosts Aero Contractors – to ban the company.

Commissioners declined, with one saying that "I'm not going to touch that thing, not as long as they are a good job provider."

The group wants a state investigation to result in the public release of the names of torture survivors with links to North Carolina and a formal apology and restitution payments from the state.

Deborah Weissman, the UNC law professor who issued a report on Aero's torture involvement, said the detainees should be recognized by the state, including an Italian citizen who she said was released "without one shred of evidence to show he was involved with terrorist activity."

"He wants an apology," Weissman said. "He is entitled by law to have an apology."

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