

Congressman David Price introducing the Amazon Prime film “The Report” at the advance screening,
2 November 2019, North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC

Thank you, Jennifer [Copeland, Executive Director, North Carolina Council of Churches, who introduced Rep. Price] for those kind words and for inviting Lisa [Price, his wife] and me. Lisa is with me tonight. We are very glad to be here, glad to see this degree of interest and support for this film and its message and for the related cause in North Carolina which this film illuminates.

I really wanted to be here to underscore the particular relevance of this national story to the movement and the efforts that have gone on in North Carolina for many, many years. The film is directed, as you know, by Scott Burns. It follows the story of how Senator Dianne Feinstein and Senate Intelligence Committee staffer Dan Jones worked to uncover the dark truths about CIA rendition, detention, interrogation after the September 11th attacks. The brave and thorough work of Senator Feinsteins team led to the committees 2014 report, commonly known as “The Torture Report,” which found that the CIAs “enhanced interrogation techniques were not effective, that the program was poorly managed, and that the CIA intentionally misled Congress and the American public about the program.”

This film emphasizes the continuing role and obligation of Congress to bring light to the mistakes of our countrys past. We saw this again in the Armenian genocide debate this last week in the House. One of the hardest things for a country is to deal honestly with its negative past. There are many examples of that in different eras in our countrys history. This is a very proximate time of shame and a betrayal of our countrys values. It is one that could recur. For all these reasons it is important to acknowledge this, to get the truth out and to come to grips with what our country – those people who speak for us, and who represent us – what theyve done, and also to honor those who have uncovered this and have resolved to not let it happen again.

Which brings us to an exceptional group of North Carolinians, the North Carolina Commission of Inquiry on Torture. This is a great, engaged group of citizens that established a non-governmental, non-partisan commission to investigate North Carolinas participation in that CIA rendition program. The Commissions seminal report “Torture Flights” refers to the specific North Carolina role. Released in 2018, it found that in the first stage of the rendition program, a private company based in North Carolina used publicly funded infrastructure to conduct over 80% of the identified CIA rendition flights, between September 2001 and March 2004. Therefore, North Carolina public infrastructure was involved in the detention and rendition of at least 49 individuals, without regard to the role of law, without regard to due process. According to the report, some of these individuals were ultimately cleared of having ties with terrorism. So these individuals continue to suffer from their mistreatment without acknowledgement from the U.S. government, and Id say *all* of them continue to suffer from the failure to acknowledge, the failure to even accept the truth and make it public. I was happy to insert the Executive Summary of the North Carolina report in the Congressional Record [...applause ...] These two reports are critical to facing our past, finding accountability, and moving forward with integrity.

So, its appropriate for all of us to acknowledge and commend Senator Feinstein, Dan Jones, and the others who courageously worked on the 2014 Senate report, and similarly to applaud NCCIT for their steadfast commitment to bringing transparency and accountability to our states role in this national program. Even in our darkest moments, we must cling fast to basic American values, to the rule of law, and to human rights, and find the courage speak out when those values and rights are threatened or violated. We must learn from mistakes of the past. We must be honest in accounting for the past. But the point of that is to chart a more positive course forward, and not to let the dark past recur, and this is a time in our history where I say that with particular emphasis. This must not recur no matter who the President is. This must not recur.