Dear Mr. Fleming,

Casualty is a cost of war. History has taught us that conflict brings about destruction, and despite precautions and protection, innocent beings will be caught in the crossfire. Recent events have brought to light the drone program, where unmanned aerial vehicles attack specific targets. Terrorist leader Anwar al-Awlaki was killed in such an attack. He was a United States citizen, subject to the rights of the Constitution, and, without warning, he was shot down next to his young, uninvolved son. The drones are powerful and useful, but cloudy moral and legal debates surround decisions about its use. The end, some freedoms must be sacrificed for security, but discretion should be used to minimize the loss of innocent human life.

As Spock told Kirk, “The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.” This sounds harsh and callous at first, but it rings true when we consider major threats like terrorists. Al-Awlaki was an American citizen, so he was promised due process of law for his crimes. He did not receive that, but he committed treason and threatened the lives of all American, and in our country’s early history, treason was an offense punishable by death. Legally, killing him was a crime, but morally, such a heinous crime should suspend, if not terminate, all obligations the United States has to grant amnesty. Removing him from the picture protected the lives of millions, even if a handful of lives had to be sacrificed. We believe that you should support the use of drones in order to continue to safeguard our country. However, certain restrictions must be in place to prevent this weapon from being used incorrectly, and we would like you and the security officials to consider them.

America was founded on the principle that all men are created equal; everyone deserves basic human rights. Freedom of expression, liberty, and justice form the foundation of American democracy. Using drones, particularly on American citizens, is a moral violation of our codes of conduct if the victim has not actively committed any crimes. In the 2014 movie *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*, Captain America, mirroring America’s values, says, “I thought the punishment usually came after the crime.” It is easy to imagine that the drones could become a bit “trigger happy,” but we should not attack targets that are suspected of committing crimes rather than being proven threats.

The drones also shouldn’t be used in populated areas where innocent civilians are present. As stated previously, it is inevitable that lives will be lost, but that loss should be kept at a minimum. If a target is in a crowded location, a Special Forces team should be sent in to extract him or her, or the drone strike should be held off until the person moves to a more secluded area. This restraint will help minimize the moral problem of collateral damage. America values the potential in every human to be great, and the fewer lives that are accidentally snuffed out, the more we reflect America’s position on freedom.

It is important to be able to defend what we value, and the drone program allows us to do so in an efficient manner. However, this power must be used responsibly, or we will sacrifice our country’s core values. Imagine the terror and chaos that would occur if someone turned this technology against our country. It is essential that we remember that there are living, breathing human beings on the ends of those missiles because it is easy to fall into a habit of just pushing a button when the opportunity arises. Some people, the terrorists, have forfeited the privilege of mercy, but some just happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. If there were good, American families in the crossfire of those missiles, would we still pull the trigger?