Dear Senator David Vitter,

I have recently learned about U.S. drone warfare, and I am deeply concerned about this information. In the research I did on the subject, I found out that the government has been performing drone attacks in the Middle East and has even targeted and killed a United States citizen, Anwar al-Alwaki. Many people have begun to question the actions of the government, and as your constituent, I ask you to clear up the confusion for the other citizens, because the lines between right and wrong are blurred. Some citizens who are defending our Constitutional rights, such as the right to a fair trial by jury and being innocent until proven guilty, believe that a drone attack to kill the target without a trial is a violation of rights. I think you should support the administration’s use of drones because a drone attack on a known terrorist, such as al-Alwaki, should be seen as ethically and legally correct because it is an act of self-defense.

Citizens are questioning the right of the government to authorize drone attacks on United States citizens without a fair trial. They are questioning this because as of now, there is no precedent to an unmanned vehicle firing a missile at a target. I recommend you propose to Congress that a guideline be followed in authorizing a drone attack. The guidelines should include the presentation of incriminating evidence and a casualty rate of innocent civilians at as low as possible. This allows for a fast response in case a situation calls for the need to take out an aggressive group of terrorists or hostiles. While this does not provide a full trial for the terrorists, the evidence can prove later in court that the terrorists were planning an attack which called for immediate action in the form of a combat drone. With tangible proof that incriminates the target of the attack, the controversy of  using the drone or not becomes less questionable. Whenever an attack is questioned, you can refer back the structured base-line guide to assure the people that the drone attack was legal.

The moral compass is a completely different question than legality, because it spins on a central factor: intent. You need to question why the attack was authorized. The attack can be morally right only if it is used in self-defense, such as eliminating a threat that is actively planning an attack that jeopardizes national security. If the attack is used offensively on civilian targets to demonstrate power, such as using it to take out your political opponents, then the attack is morally wrong. You will always need to question the reason of attacks so that you know whether you are doing right or wrong. Even if targets are not United States citizens, killing them requires a moral decision. When you order an attack to eliminate the target, you need to be confident that you are doing the right thing; if you have any doubt that the target is not a threat, then the target does not deserve to die. The authorization of the attack effectively ends the target’s life. In order to be sure of what you are doing is right and not just a political move, you need the evidence that supports your order.

When you make this order to kill someone, the order is not something to be taken lightly. When using drones to fire missiles at targets and eliminate them, you need to make sure you are not abusing the power you have. You need to support the kill order with facts that the target is truly a hostile  posing a threat to national security, making the kill is an act of self-defense. Keeping a guideline to what is right and wrong will assist in determining whether or not the act is defensive or aggressive, right or wrong. These guidelines can prevent an abusive use of missiles, such as if you had a political opponent that posed serious competition, it would be wrong to simply wipe them off the face of the Earth with a press of a button. If you allow the drones to run rampant through the East, eventually, they would turn their sights westward to begin using drones in law enforcement. I fear the day when a drone dropping from the clouds to launch a missile at the car in front of me is a normal occurrence. This may seem radical, but it is shockingly similar to the world of 1984, written by George Orwell, where any misdeed will result in your vaporization. Your duty as a U.S. Senator is to fix our problems legally while making morally correct decisions. The guidelines I have presented to you should help you address the issues that your constituents have with the use of drones.