Dear Senator:

I am writing you this letter concerning the assassination of Anwar al-Awlaki in 2011. In this case, al-Awlaki was murdered by a CIA drone while in a vehicle in Yemen. The drone was ordered into position by the former president, Barack Obama. Although defended by the administration, based on the Fifth Amendment, these actions were completely unjustified and illegal, as al-Awlaki was a U.S. citizen.

An investigation must be called into the legality of Obama’s decision, as it is a clear violation of the Fifth Amendment. This amendment states that U.S. citizens cannot be “deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.” Even if it was believed that al-Awlaki was a prominent threat to the U.S., as a citizen, he was entitled to a fair trial. Obama defended this violation by stating that the act was carried out during a “time of war,” and was therefore excused. This is blatantly false, because when this criminal assassination occurred in 2011, it was not considered a true time of war.

Additionally, an executive order issued in 1976 by President Ford further contradicts Obama’s actions. Section 5 of the order, titled “Prohibition on Assassination,” states that no one in the U.S. government “shall engage in...political assassination.” Therefore, the Fifth Amendment and this executive order converge on the idea that every U.S. citizen, including those who are politically distinguished, deserves the right to protection. Although both the executive order and the Fifth Amendment were in effect, al-Awlaki was killed  this resulted in not one but two laws being broken and causing his death to be illegal on two accounts. Constitutionally, the U.S. had no right to kill al-Awlaki. In this case, Obama was acting as judge, jury, and executioner.

To further analyze President Ford’s order, the term “assassination” must be delved into. There is a rather stark difference between an assassination and a murder. Webster’s Dictionary defines that an assassination denotes the murder of “a politically prominent person.” al-Awlaki, known to be an imam and lecturer for recruiting, is clearly not a typical individual. Based on this fact, Obama’s decision, although defended as al-Awlaki being an “imminent danger,” seems suspiciously close to the criteria for the assassination that President Ford banned.

In closing, we must take Obama’s decision into thinking with both a legal and logical mindset. Is the policy legal? If not, we must call for an investigation into the decision that fits both the amendment of the Constitution and the executive order. In this case, al-Awlaki had no chance to defend himself against the accusations made, which is unconstitutional. Regardless of al-Awlaki being a threat to the U.S. , the Fifth Amendment makes no exception regarding the person at hand being dangerous and is very broad in saying that *any* citizen cannot be killed without trial by jury. If al-Awlaki can be murdered without a just trial as a U.S. citizen, then what is the purpose of the Fifth Amendment?

Sincerely,

A Concerned Citizen