Dear Senator Vitter,

Unknowingly to most of the country, in 2011, the United States government assassinated Anwar al-Awlaki, a highly ranked member and extremely important senior recruiter for the terrorist group “al Qaeda”, with an unmanned aerial combat drone on foreign soil. As drones fall under the authority of the CIA, the average person would assume that this action was both in the interest of national security (not motivated by personal, political, or religious issues) and with the consent of the White House. After much deep thought over the details that have now come to light, I conclude that the CIA and the White House have acted in a most shameful and criminal manner.

Although most recognized as a member of al-Qaeda, al-Awlaki was later revealed to have been an American citizen. As American citizens, we are entitled to inalienable rights defined in the Constitution. Among these rights, is the right to a fair trial by jury, as stated in Article 3, Section 2 of the Constitution, “The trial of all crimes, except in cases of impeachment; shall be by jury…”. al-Awlaki was never granted these privileges assumedly because of his involvement in the infamous terrorist group, but can any elected official say “they are not deserving of their rights”? Is it morally acceptable to strip a person of their basic rights that were promised to them when they first became a citizen? If the rights were not granted by the CIA to God who then gave them to us, they can not be taken away by the CIA (or any other service structure erected by the people to serve their needs). The functions of our government are to protect these rights, not arbitrarily revoke and honor. At no point in the Constitution is it stated that a citizen shall not be granted their rights if they engage in terrorist activities against our country. We capture, try, and imprison the convicted in this country; a “shoot first and ask questions later” mentality was abandoned with the six gun and Pony Express.

A principle reason for declaring our independence was to escape tyranny that sought to deny citizens basic “inalienable” rights, rights that could not be taken away. The CIA acted in such a tyrannical manner by assassinating an American citizen with a drone without giving him a trial by jury. This flies in the face of (no pun intended) the rules this country was founded upon.

A policy that better reflects these ethics is only using drones in actual combat, decreasing civilian casualties. Another way to minimize civilian casualties would be to use the drones only in situations where there are several targets in the same area.

The CIA and the Obama administration broke the law and violated al-Awlaki’s constitutional rights as a citizen (even a rotten one) These actions should not go without consequences. Therefore, I am asking you to begin an investigation that would seek to hold those involved accountable.

Respectfully,

Angela Bennett