

Representative Michael  
McCaul 903 San Jacinto Austin,  
Texas 78701 Tel: 512473-  
2357 Fax: 5124730514

Dear Representative Mc Caul:

We write to urge support for human rights in Latin America. Please support legislation HR 3368, to suspend the authority for the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, formerly the United States Army School of the Americas (SOA).

The graduates of this school have a long history of human rights violations. From the atrocities in El Salvador and Guatemala in the 1980's to recent violations in Columbia, SOA/WHINSEC training has resulted in civilian massacres, assassinations, disappearances, death threats, and coups of democratically elected governments in the hemisphere. Most recently, the schools graduates are suspected of drug related murders in Texas.(See the Dallas Morning News, 02/22/05 and The Brownsville Herald, 10/22/03 for details.)

Despite efforts to silence opposition through a name change and cosmetic changes, it is still a combat training school that provides skills and dangerous weaponry to countries with serious human rights problems. The proliferation of skills like counterinsurgency and psychological warfare in countries like Columbia, where impunity is offered to paramilitaries, only perpetuates the cycles of violence.

Keeping the school open under any name sends powerful antihuman rights messages. Establishing reasonable living conditions for the people of Latin America and strengthening civil institutions will do more to stabilize the region than training militaries. Closing the SOA/WHINSEC would demonstrate that the United States has made a clean break from the tragic history of the school and its graduates.

We urge you to take the legislative action needed by cosponsoring HR3368 to suspend the authority for the SOA/WHINSEC.

Sincerely,