

# Society of American Law Teachers SALT

Public Advocacy Center, Room 223

Touro Law Center

225 Eastview Drive, Central Islip NY 11722

631 650 2310

www.saltlaw.org

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July 6, 2010

The Honorable John G. Koeltl

United States District Court

Southern District of New York

500 Pearl Street

New York, NY 10007

Re: Resentencing of Lynne Stewart

Dear Judge Koeltl:

The Society of American Law Teachers (SALT), an organization of law faculty, deans, and administrators with members at more than 170 law schools across the country, has been dedicated to promoting justice, diversity, and excellence in the legal academy and the legal profession for more than thirty years. On behalf of SALT's Board of Governors, we write to express our concern regarding the resentencing of Lynne Stewart.

In July 2005, we were among the individuals and organizations who wrote this Court, urging you to consider factors we deemed particularly relevant to this case. At that time we noted, among other things, that although Ms. Stewart was convicted on terrorism-related charges for making a statement to the media in violation of Special Administrative Measures imposed upon her client, all of the actions at issue occurred in the course of her representation of a client. She did not subscribe to the political beliefs of her client, did not advocate terrorism, and did not engage in any action which resulted in violence. Having been disbarred, there is no danger that she will violate any restrictions placed on clients in the future.

Ms. Stewart devoted her life to obtaining justice for clients often considered "undesirable," perhaps because of their race, socioeconomic status, or political beliefs. As law professors, we are acutely aware that the legitimacy of the criminal justice system rests on the availability of defense lawyers willing to represent unpopular clients. We are concerned that both the prosecution of Ms. Stewart and the lengthy sentence recommended by the government in this case have already had a chilling effect on lawyers who might otherwise be willing to represent those charged with terrorism-related offenses.

The sentence you initially imposed sent a clear message to Ms. Stewart and defense lawyers generally that violations of oaths to abide by restrictions placed on clients must be taken with utmost seriousness. The impact of incarceration on Ms. Stewart has been severe. We believe that any increase in her sentence would not further justice but, instead, serve only to deter lawyers from representing those who most need competent counsel.

Sincerely,



Raquel Aldana  
Co-President



Steven Bender  
Co-President