

# The Legislative Campaign

## \* Action Items \*

The legislative campaign to close the School of the Americas has a rich history, one filled with bills sponsored by leaders in both the House and Senate and amendments with successful results. The first legislative attempt to close the School of the Americas was brought to the floor in the summer of 1993, and since then, the legislative campaign continues to grow with SOA Watch supporters nationwide actively engaging Congress to close the SOA.

This year marks the first half of the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress. On March 27, 2007, Rep. McGovern of Massachusetts reintroduced legislation to suspend operations at the School of the Americas/WHINSEC. HR 1707, "The Latin America Military Training Review Act of 2007," had 71 bi-partisan introductory co-sponsors thanks to YOUR determined efforts during our February Lobby Day and National Call-in Day! By mid June of 2007, the bill had over 110 cosponsors as a result of prisoners of conscience, SOA Watch activists, and partner organizations joining the legislative working group in the legislative campaign. After a close vote in June 2007, on an amendment to prohibit funding for the School, June 2008 will be the year the SOA/WHINSEC closes and our momentum will continue to build towards further legislative successes.

### Join the Legislative Working Group!

The Legislative Working Group makes decisions by consensus about the overall legislative strategy of the movement. We are always open to new members. **Contact Pam at [pbowman@soaw.org](mailto:pbowman@soaw.org).**

### Here is how you can be involved in legislative organizing in your area:

**1** **Contact your regional representative on the grassroots Council:** They can help you identify what legislative action is happening in your community and put you in touch with others in the SOA Watch movement who are doing the same.

**2** **Set up a district meeting with your Representative:** This issue is a new one for many Members of Congress in both the House and Senate and they need our new information, need to hear from constituents, need to be visited, and need to be called. Pull together a group of 3-4 people in your area to make a visit to the district office of your Rep. before the vote. The legislative working groups can help you with contacts for folks to join your group! See the "Making Contact" flyer in this packet for more information on how to set up a meeting.

**3** **Call your member of Congress or organize a call in day with your group:** Your Member of Congress needs to hear from you in order to make sure your views are represented in Congress. Take the time to call their DC office by calling the Capitol Hill Switchboard (202-224-3121). Ask to speak with the foreign affairs legislative assistant and here is a suggested message for you to convey:

"I am a constituent from (city/zip code) calling Congressman/woman \_\_\_\_\_ to urge him/her to support any measure in Congress that would suspend operations at the School of the Americas, which is now using the acronym WHINSEC. One way you can support this issue is to add your name as a cosponsor to HR 1707, The Latin America Military Training Review Act of 2007. This bill would suspend operations at, and investigate the use of torture manuals at the School of the Americas. I urge the Congressman/woman to contact Rep. McGovern's office to become a cosponsor of this bipartisan bill. This would be one very concrete step to support human rights and promote peace and justice for the people of Latin America. As my elected official in Washington D.C., I hope you will represent me and support HR 1707."

Updates on pending legislation, upcoming votes in Congress, and more can be found on the Legislative Action Index at [www.soaw.org/legislative](http://www.soaw.org/legislative), or by contacting the Legislative Coordinator, Pam Bowman at (202) 234-3440 or [pbowman@soaw.org](mailto:pbowman@soaw.org).