

WASHINGTON – Today, following news that the Administration intends to proceed with plans to acquire Thomson Correctional Center in Illinois in order to relocate Guantanamo Bay detainees, Congressman Mike Quigley (D-IL) issued this statement:

“The prison at Guantanamo Bay has created more terrorists than it has contained, and has placed our servicemen and women and our country into harm’s way. Major Matthew Alexander, the interrogator who found terrorist al-Zarqawi, has stated that the ‘Number one reason foreign fighters flocked to [Iraq]’ was because of ‘the abuses carried out at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo.’ Former Secretaries of State Colin Powell and Henry Kissinger have supported closing Guantanamo Bay, as has Senator John McCain. Rather than keeping us safe, Guantanamo Bay has threatened our national security even further and cost us significantly more money than if these individuals were housed on domestic soil. Our federal prisons are currently holding over 350 hardened terrorists, and where we have never once allowed a prisoner escape from a maximum security facility.

I support the Administration’s effort to close the ineffective facility at Guantanamo Bay and relocate some of the inmates to Thomson Correctional Center in Illinois. It’s a shame that the discussion up until this point has been dominated by fear-mongering instead of common-sense, and those opposing this must recognize that the most dangerous homegrown and international terrorists are already safely held in the Midwest. We have a win-win opportunity to close Guantanamo while creating jobs in a region that desperately needs them. Using Thomson will improve national security, save us money, stimulate a local economy on the brink of collapse, and demonstrate to the world our commitment to transparency and the rule of law.”