

# TO DO JUSTICE

By Rev. Reginald Williams, Jr.

Since January of 2002, the United States government has been detaining men at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, under the banner of homeland security. In many cases, these are men who have been stolen from their home country, blindfolded and beaten, interrogated under duress, and designated as an enemy combatant. These persons have never been charged with a crime, and all evidence against them is kept secret. Legal redress appeared to be their only hope until a law was passed that prevents foreign-born prisoners seized as “enemy combatants” from challenging their detention.

This law was upheld on Tuesday of this week by the U.S. Court of Appeals in a 2-1 decision which held that civilian courts no longer have the authority to determine whether or not the military is holding prisoners illegally. This decision automatically eliminates legal access and redress for hundreds of detainees with pending cases. The result of this ruling further ensures that many may die imprisoned in Guantanamo Bay without even knowing the crime for which they have been held.

This law undermines the writ of *habeas corpus* which empowers a prisoner to challenge the legal basis of his/her detention in court. This law also further displays the hypocrisy of a government which claims a banner of freedom for all while policies and procedures ensure that real freedom is only for a few.

On Tuesday of this week, municipal elections will be held across the city of Chicago. This week’s column is simply urging you to go to the polls. The protections for the right to vote were purchased with the blood, sweat and tears of persons like Fannie Lou Hamer and Medgar Evers. In addition to those names which are well-known in the canon of the Struggle for Civil Rights, there are other names which we will never know. Yet, because of their selfless sacrifice, the protections for you and me to vote are in place.

Secondly, your vote is your voice. If you have complaints about the way this city is being run, then vote about it. Vote for the candidates who represent your interest. If you do not vote, then you have no ground on which to stand and complain when municipal matters are at issue.

Therefore, if you have not taken advantage of early voting, I urge you on Tuesday to vote.

## ***ACTION ITEMS***

1. VOTE!
2. Contact your Senator and/or Representative and demand that they fight to restore *habeas corpus* in order to preserve the rights of people to challenge their detention.
3. Boycott Wal-Mart & Sam’s Club.

## ***THOUGHT FOR THIS WEEK:***

*Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. — Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*