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To the Editor:

November first will witness what may seem like a strange ritual. People from Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and other faith communities will wend their way into Congressional offices here and around the country and begin reading names out loud. They are the names of the nearly 2000 American soldiers who have died in Iraq, and the names of an equal number of Iraqis from among the tens of thousands who have died under the American occupation.

We are compelled to this public witness by our religious commitments. We believe that all people of faith are called to speak out for the sacredness of human life. We believe that the war in Iraq is not only a strategic mistake – as a majority of our fellow Americans also believe – but that it is morally wrong. We believe it is our responsibility to call our government back to the ideals and commitments that first shaped our nation.

We are demanding that our Congressional representatives give us direct and honest answers to three central questions: Will you publicly demand an end to the war so our sons and daughters can return home? Will you publicly demand that our government renounce the use of torture, and return to the guidelines of the Geneva Conventions? Will you publicly demand that the massive drain of resources to the war effort be redirected to true homeland security, so we do not see a repeat of the catastrophic response to Hurricane Katrina?

Sometimes the essence of moral leadership is as simple as saying ‘yes’ and saying ‘no’. It is time that we demand these answers from our leaders.

Sincerely,