As a former tortured prisoner who later voted against a bill banning waterboarding, John McCain is uniquely qualified to serve his country in the gulags of Guantánamo Bay and San Quentin. What kind of human being who has suffered imprisonment and abuse concludes that the solution is to be on the side doing the imprisoning and abusing?

Real freedom cannot depend on others’ imprisonment and oppression, just as true wealth cannot be derived from others’ suffering and exploitation. Freedom and wealth are not limited prizes to be fought over like oil or political power, but gifts that multiply the more people share them. While McCain runs for President, the rest of us are still imprisoned in wage labor, leases and mortgages, and debt – at least, those of us lucky enough not to be in prison ourselves.

So long as there are governments, armies, and corporations, there will always be oppression, there will always be prison camps and torturers. McCain didn’t learn the important lessons of his time in Vietnam, but he deserves another chance.