that dominated the nation immediately after Sept. 11, 2001, and that guided the Bush administration in trying to prevent attacks.

But we also are reminded that those who object most strenuously to relaxed definitions of torture and the scrapping of due process even for alien combatants were among those most familiar with war and interrogation, including Sen. John McCain and then-Secretary of State Colin Powell. As lawyers sought loopholes, our most admired warriors...

Car has more constitutional rights than teen

Is it possible that our cars are more protected from unreasonable searches by the government than our children?

Last month’s legal news, it looks like our children don’t have a chance compared to our Nissans.

On April 21 the U.S. Supreme Court significantly limited the circumstances under which the police can search one’s car. The case involved a suspect placed under arrest for driving with a suspended license. When the police searched his vehicle, cocaine and a gun were found. However, both will be thrown out as tainted evidence because the Supreme Court ruled the search was unconstitutional.

That same day, the court listened to oral arguments in a case involving the strip search of a 13-year-old girl at school. The justices indicated through their questions of the oral argument that they could very well find it constitutional for an adult whose suspiciously searched by school officials based on nothing more than the “say so” of a troubled classmate.

The startling facts of the strip-search case make the court’s position especially troubling. The child, Savana Redding, was an eighth-grade student with no disciplinary history. One day, a classmate was caught with four Nuprep and one Nagymore. When asked where she got the pills, the classmate said.

“You never go to the nurse’s office to be strip searched while an administra
tive officer was present.”

Well, maybe Justice Breyer should ask another government official, George Skumanich Jr. Skumanich is a D.A. trying to prosecute teenagers in Pennsylvania for child pornography. One of the girls was implicated based on a cell phone image of her in “an old grandma bra” taken at a slumber party when she was 12 years old.

In other words, one government official’s locker room antics is another official’s child pornography.

What is common across these incidents is how the police feel when their bodies are exposed to government officials. One of the girls targeted by Skumanich said, “The worst punishment is knowing that all you old guys saw me naked. I just think you guys are all perverts.”

After last month’s news about the two FBI employees accused of using surveillance powers to spy on teenage girls trying on prom dresses in a shopping mall, it is hard to persuade our kids that government officials really can be trusted to protect their dignity.

Coincidentally also on April 21, the Oregon Senate passed two bills that aim to protect our schoolchildren from sexual abuse by teachers and administrators. While the vast majority of our nation’s teachers and administrators are decent, respectable people, the data introduced in support of these bills suggests that the prevalence of sexual abuse in our schools is shocking.

In light of this data, one might worry that giving public school administrators and teachers the power to strip search our children with no parental supervision or involvement would create a situation ripe for exploitation and abuse, or on the flip side, false allegations by students who feel wronged and seek revenge.

Warren Biford, an assistant professor of law and director of the Criminal Law Program at Williamsburg University College of Law, wrote a guest opinion on the topic. His arguments can be found on StatesmanJournal.com.