

September 30, 2013

Chair Dianne Feinstein
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
211 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Vice Chair Saxby Chambliss
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
211 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Dear Chair Feinstein and Vice-Chair Chambliss,

The undersigned organizations write to urge you to make the text of your proposal to address the National Security Agency's (NSA) surveillance programs available to the public prior to this week's scheduled mark-up of the legislation.

As you know, the public was shocked to learn that the NSA's surveillance programs were much broader than previously believed, and more invasive of purely domestic communications and digital activities of US persons than the limited statutory authority was understood to permit. The recently revealed report noting that the NSA graphs the social networks of Americans has added to the growing concern that secret programs applying secret interpretations of the law have undermined fundamental liberties. In order to pass a bill that adequately protects public interests, the process itself must be as public, open and transparent as possible. The public has a right to know and must be given the opportunity to fully understand what changes Congress intends to make to the law, particularly when such important values are at stake. Making the text of your legislation available to the public before the mark-up will help make sure that there is a more robust debate about the proposal and a better understanding of the law.

We thank you for your consideration and urge you to make the text of your proposal available to the public as soon as possible in advance of any mark-up of the legislation.

Sincerely,

American Civil Liberties Union – ACLU

American Library Association

Arab American Institute

Association of Research Libraries

Center for Democracy and Technology

Center for Effective Government (formerly OMB Watch)

Center for National Security Studies

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington – CREW

Cyber Privacy Project

The Constitution Project

Defending Dissent Foundation

DownsizeDC.org, Inc.

Electronic Frontier Foundation – EFF

Government Accountability Project – GAP

iSolon.org

National Coalition Against Censorship

National Security Counselors

OpenTheGovernment.org

PEN American Center

Project On Government Oversight – POGO

Public Citizen

Public Knowledge

Society of American Archivists

Society of Professional Journalists

Sunlight Foundation

Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse – TRAC

Understanding Government