

June 17, 2011

Dear Mr. [Danilow](#),

Thank you for taking the time to contact me regarding the USA PATRIOT Act. I appreciate hearing your thoughts on this issue.

In the wake of the worst act of terrorism in U.S. history, the 107th Congress passed and the President signed into law the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-56), commonly known as the USA PATRIOT Act. The PATRIOT Act drastically increased the ability of law enforcement and foreign intelligence services ability to conduct searches on those suspected of terrorism-related acts.

Rather than examine what went wrong following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Congress hastily passed a long-standing wish list of power grabs like warrantless searches and roving wiretaps. The government greatly expanded its own power, ignoring obvious answers in favor of the permanent expansion of a police state.

In May 2011, Senator Harry Reid (D-Nev.) introduced the PATRIOT Sunset Extension Act of 2011 (S. 1038). This legislation would provide an extension of the expiring provisions of the PATRIOT Act until June 1, 2015. To prevent debate and the inclusion of amendments, Senator Reid attached S. 1038 to the Small Business Additional Temporary Extensions Act of 2011 (S. 990). I wanted to offer 11 amendments to prevent abuses of power by the federal government to S. 990. Unfortunately, the Senate did not pass or even allow a vote on most of my amendments.

Despite my strong objections and vote against the extension of the PATRIOT Act provisions, the Senate passed S. 990 by a vote of 72-23. The House of Representatives has also passed the legislation and President Obama has signed it into law.

My main objection to the PATRIOT Act is that searches that should require a warrant from a judge are performed with a letter from an FBI agent - a national security letter (NSL). Since the passage of the PATRIOT Act, over 200,000 NSL searches have been performed. In addition, the roving wiretaps allow the government to ignore requirements to name the target of the wiretap or the specific place or facility that is to be monitored.

Though the PATRIOT Act has been extended until 2015, I will continue to work with anyone who has concerns about the law to make changes to protect the privacy and rights of all Americans.

Sincerely,

Rand Paul, MD  
United States Senator