

Resolution Opposing Patriot Act II

proposed by the Legislative Affairs Committee Passed October 8, 2003

Dear Senator (Murray, Cantwell),

The 34th District Democrats respectfully request that you actively advocate for the repeal of the USA Patriot Act while vigorously opposing any attempt to pass the Domestic Security Enhancement Act (Patriot II) or the Consumer Aviation Prescreening Act.

As patriotic Americans, we are deeply troubled by the diminution of our constitutional rights under these acts. The USA Patriot Act attacks our 1st, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 14th amendment rights. The government may now monitor religious and political institutions without suspecting criminal activity. Individuals may now be detained indefinitely, without knowledge of the charges against them and without access to an attorney. Trials in immigration cases are now held in secret. In addition, the conversations between attorneys and their clients may now be monitored. The government may now monitor the reading habits of its citizens and prosecute librarians who notify patrons that their reading records have been subpoenaed. Citizen's papers and effects may now be searched and seized without probable cause. Even if these measures are never used, they create a distressing chilling effect on constitutionally protected civil rights.

As if this was not enough, the administration is now seeking the authority to wiretap American citizens without a warrant and to carry out electronic searches of all information available about a citizen without probable cause or notice to the citizen being investigated. And most incredibly, they want the authority to strip American citizens of their citizenship for unknowingly helping a group that the government at some point deems is connected to a "terrorist" organization even though the definition of terrorist remains vague. The administration also proposes prohibiting American citizens from flying because some government employee has determined that they are a national security risk. Once on this "no fly" list, the citizen is unable to find out why he or she has been blacklisted or to have their name removed.

While there is no doubt that the United States government must have the tools necessary to protect us from terrorism, there must be a careful balance between giving the government the authority it needs to protect the citizenry and granting the government carte blanche to spy on, detain and deport ordinary American citizens and legal aliens whom it deems merely undesirable.

Thank you for your vocal support on these matters of critical importance to all Americans.

Sincerely 34th District Democrats