

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee
United States Senate
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Room 224
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Specter,

We want to thank you for your leadership and work on the Patriot Act legislation and commend you for obtaining Senate passage of a bill that makes important contributions to the defense of civil liberties. We recognize that there are many issues before the conference committee and therefore wanted to let you know that we are all agreed that preserving the Senate amendment to section 215 of the Patriot Act is the highest priority.

The Senate amendment limiting section 215 court orders to seizures of information about an individual suspected of being a terrorist or a spy, his or her activities, or an individual in contact with such a person is a critical step in protecting the privacy rights of Americans, and at the same time provides the government with an effective counter-terrorism tool. Although the amendment doesn't go as far as many urged -- the SAFE Act, for example, would have limited seizures only to records pertaining to the agent himself and applied that standard to NSLs as well -- we agree that this would be a substantial advance for civil liberties and privacy.

Therefore we could not support a conference committee bill that did not contain the Senate amendments to section 215.

Thank you for considering our views. We would be happy to discuss them with you further.

Sincerely,



Caroline Fredrickson
Director
American Civil Liberties Union
Washington Legislative Office



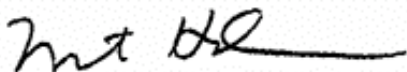
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