

The Ghost of Patriot Past

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It seems like the debate over health care reform has sucked all the oxygen out of the public dialog, as if nothing else were happening here in Washington. Think again. Perhaps one of the most significant "behind the scenes" actions happened late last week when the Obama Administration failed to support significant changes to the Patriot Act that would have given Americans stronger civil liberties protections. More disturbing, it appears that the Administration took an active part in opposing changes supported by civil liberties groups, such as CDT, that would have gone a long way toward correcting several flaws in the Patriot Act. CDT President Leslie Harris outlines the Obama Administration's missteps in her latest [Huffington Post piece](#) [1] titled: Obama vs. Obama on the Patriot Act. Harris notes that the moves by the Administration to maintain the Patriot Act status quo directly contradicted [positions](#) [2] Obama himself took as a freshman Senator. Harris writes:

"With Democrats in charge of Congress and strong civil libertarians at the helm of the House and Senate Judiciary Committees, the time for PATRIOT Act reform is now. But with the Administration pushing in the wrong direction, the chances for reform have been diminished. Now it's up to the House Judiciary Committee to stand its ground. The opportunity for real reform will not come again anytime soon. Congress needs to do the right thing, even if Obama will not."

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Links:

[1] <http://bit.ly/KLyzW>

[2] <http://cdt.org/security/ObamaDearColleague121405.pdf>