



Former U.S. Senator Praises Snowden as "Courageous Whistleblower"

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While many U.S. officials are vilifying Edward Snowden, former Sen. Gordon Humphrey (R-NH) is praising him as a "courageous whistleblower." Humphrey sent an email to Snowden on July 15 which stated:

"Provided you have not leaked information that would put in harm's way any intelligence agent, I believe you have done the right thing in exposing what I regard as massive violation of the United States Constitution.

"Having served in the United States Senate for twelve years as a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, the Armed Services Committee and the Judiciary Committee, I think I have a good grounding to reach my conclusion.

"I wish you well in your efforts to secure asylum and encourage you to persevere."

In an interview with The Associated Press, Humphrey said he was not expecting the emails to be published. But now, he said, "I'm trying to rally former members of Congress" behind Snowden.

When contacted by the *Guardian's* Glenn Greenwald for verification of the email, Humphrey wrote to Greenwald, saying: "Yes. It was I who sent the email message to Edward Snowden, thanking him for exposing astonishing violations of the U.S. Constitution and encouraging him to persevere in the search for asylum," Humphrey wrote Greenwald. "To my knowledge, Mr. Snowden has disclosed only the existence of a program and not details that would place any person in harm's way. I regard him as a courageous whistleblower," he continued. "I object to the monumentally disproportionate campaign being waged by the US government against Edward Snowden, while no effort is being made to identify, remove from office and bring to justice those officials who have abused power, seriously and repeatedly violating the Constitution of the United States and the rights of millions of unsuspecting citizens." [EWS]

Broad Coalition of Groups Sues Obama Administration over NSA Surveillance

A group of 19 organizations, representing 900,000 people, has joined a suit filed by the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), challenged the constitutionality of the Obama Administration's "dragnet electronic surveillance" program, and seeks to halt the NSA program, on the grounds that the Administration is violating their First Amendment rights

by collecting telephone call records.

The plaintiffs, ranging from liberal advocacy groups to gun owners, are demanding an injunction against the NSA, Justice Department, FBI, and various individual government officials, including Attorney General Eric Holder. Plaintiffs included the First Unitarian Church of Los Angeles, Calguns, the Council on American Islamic Relations Foundation, Greenpeace, Human Rights Watch, and others.

"You don't have to have anything to hide in order to be incensed by the state taking your money to watch everything you're doing," Shahid Buttar, the executive director of the Bill of Rights Defense Committee, one of the plaintiffs, said at a teleconference Tuesday afternoon. "[The] surveillance is offensive in itself."

As least five other cases have been filed since details of the NSA spying program were disclosed last month.

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