



Congressmen Refute Obama Claim that Congress Was "Informed" of NSA Spy Program

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Reps. Justin Amash (R-MI) and Rush Holt (D-NJ) both refuted the Obama Administration claim that the Congress was briefed on the scope of the NSA spy program before the 2011 vote to reauthorize the Patriot Act. Rep. Amash reported today on his Facebook page that a classified document (subsequently declassified in July of this year) with a reference to the massive data mining, was given to the leaders of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence with the instructions that the hundreds of members of Congress who did not serve on the intelligence committee were to be told they could read the document in a secured facility.

However, Amash said that members elected in 2010, of which Amash is one, did not see this classified document when they came into office. Amash also claimed that other members of Congress were not privy to the document, either. Rep. Holt, elected in 1998, vouched for Amash's claim saying, "I was not aware of the document."

The document does not include much detail but did acknowledge that NSA is collecting phone records in "bulk" from Americans. The Obama administration and intelligence agencies have pointed to the availability of the document as an example of keeping Congress fully informed about controversial NSA surveillance.

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