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Senior Democrats Call for Immediate Hearings to Stop NSA Sweeps

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Three senior Democratic members of the House Judiciary Committee issued a statement yesterday denouncing the National Security Agency's "vast over-collection of metadata" and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court's approval of "the blanket and ongoing collection of telephone records — including those of everyday Americans with absolutely no ties to terrorism." A document posted on the website of Rep. Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (D-VA) says:

"Following the public revelation concerning the collection of phone records, Ranking Member of the U.S. House Judiciary Committee John Conyers, Jr. (D-Mich.), Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.), and Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (D-Va.) issued the following statement:



NSA Building in Ft. Meade, MD.

"The recent revelation that the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court has approved the blanket and ongoing collection of telephone records—including those of everyday Americans with absolutely no ties to terrorism—is highly problematic and reveals serious flaws in the scope and application of the USA PATRIOT Act. We believe this type of program is far too broad and is inconsistent with

our Nation's founding principles. We cannot defeat terrorism by compromising our commitment to our civil rights and liberties....

"We strongly disagree with those who would assert that because this type of program appears to be long standing and Members of Congress may have been briefed, that it is acceptable to us or the Congress. A classified briefing which does not permit any public discussion does not imply approval or acceptance. We believe the House Judiciary Committee should conduct oversight hearings about this situation and promptly consider legislation to help correct this matter."

The statement also emphasizes that the NSA program goes back to the George W. Bush administration and that when a small piece of this was previously revealed, all three of them opposed the program and attempted to roll back the PATRIOT act.

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