

TESTIMONY STATEMENT BY SENATOR DEAN HELLER, JUDICIARY SUBCOMMITTEE  
ON PRIVACY, TECHNOLOGY, AND THE LAW HEARING ON "THE SURVEILLANCE  
TRANSPERANCY ACT OF 2013"; NOVEMBER 13, 2013;  
(as prepared for delivery)

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Good Morning, it is a pleasure to be here. I would like to begin my remarks by thanking Chairman Franken for inviting me to testify today.

I also want to thank you for holding this hearing and for your leadership to bring more transparency to the bulk collection programs run by the National Security Agency.

This is a strong bill rooted in the belief that Nevadans, Minnesotans and all Americans should be provided access to reports that explain the personal communication records the government is collecting and how many Americans' have had their information caught up in that collection.

By now, most people are well aware of the bulk collection practices by the federal government that are authorized by sections of the PATRIOT Act and sections of the FISA Amendments Act.

I am confident the full Judiciary Committee will have a robust debate on the bulk collection practices and whether or not those programs should continue.

I believe the bulk collection programs mostly authorized under section 215 of the PATRIOT ACT should come to an end. Subsequently, I agreed to join Judiciary Chairman Leahy as a principal sponsor with Senator Lee and Senator Durbin on the USA FREEDOM Act.

While there is disagreement on whether that program should continue, I am confident all of us can agree that these programs demand more transparency.

That is why I joined Senator Franken to introduce the Surveillance Transparency Act of 2013.

This legislation would call for reports by the Attorney General detailing the requests for information authorized under the PATRIOT ACT and the FISA Amendments Act.

The reports would detail the total number of people whose information has been collected under these programs, how many Americans have had their information collected and also how many Americans actually had their information looked at by the NSA.

Furthermore, this legislation would allow telephone and Internet companies to tell consumers basic information regarding the FISA Court orders they receive and the number of users whose information is turned over.

The principles outlined in this bill to increase transparency for Americans and private companies would clear up a tremendous amount of confusion that exists with these programs.

That is why transparency reform is included in multiple NSA reform proposals including the Intelligence Oversight and Surveillance Reform Act introduced by Senator Wyden, the USA FREEDOM ACT introduced by Chairman Leahy and myself, and the FISA Improvements Act introduced by Senator Feinstein.

Mr. Chairman, while positions on the bulk collection program may differ, many of us agree on the need for more transparency.

This is why I urge support for the Franken Heller legislation before the Sub-Committee today.

We are talking about millions of Americans' call records that are collected and stored by the NSA and Americans should have access to some basic information regarding the amount of data collected and what is actually being analyzed so that my constituents can determine for themselves whether they believe this program is worthy to continue or not.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today, and Mr. Chairman, thank you for your leadership on this issue.