

# THE CONSTITUTION PROJECT



*Safeguarding Liberty, Justice & the Rule of Law*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - April 18, 2012

Contact: Larry Akey, Director of Communications, (202)580-6922 [o] or (202)580-9313 [c], [lakey@constitutionproject.org](mailto:lakey@constitutionproject.org)

## **Groups Want Quick Action on Privacy Board Confirmations**

*TCP's Franklin: Cybersecurity Legislation 'More Dangerous' Without PCLOB*

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- As the Senate Judiciary Committee held confirmation hearings today on President Obama's nominees to the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board, a diverse coalition of sixteen groups led by The Constitution Project urged the legislators on.

"While many of our organizations do not take positions endorsing or opposing any specific candidates, we all agree it is critical that this Committee and the full Senate act quickly to move forward with the confirmation process and allow the Board to begin its important work," the groups wrote to Senators Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Charles Grassley (R-IA), the committee's chairman and ranking member.

Created by Congress based on the recommendations of the bipartisan 9/11 Commission, the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board (PCLOB) is intended to play a vital, independent role in overseeing the privacy and civil liberties implications of national security programs and policies. However, no members have yet been confirmed to serve on the PCLOB and, at present, the Board does not exist.

"Our intelligence community needs tools to ensure our nation's safety, but that power must be balanced with the need to protect privacy and civil liberties. In recent years, our nation has adopted a variety of new programs and policies designed to combat terrorism. However, without the Board, there is no built-in mechanism to ensure independent review of these programs," the groups pointed out.

For example, many of the major legislative proposals to strengthen cybersecurity protections currently pending in Congress rely on the Board to ensure that any new government programs combatting cyber threats do not infringe unnecessarily on the individual privacy rights of internet users, noted Sharon Bradford Franklin, senior policy counsel at The Constitution Project (TCP).

"Without a functioning Board, these cybersecurity bills become significantly more dangerous to the civil liberties and privacy rights of all Americans," Franklin said.

In addition to TCP, some of the groups signing the letter include: American Civil Liberties Union, American Library Association, Bill of Rights Defense Committee, Consumer Action, Defending

Dissent Foundation, Liberty Coalition, Muslim Public Affairs Council, National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, OpenTheGovernment.org and Privacy Times.

A copy of the [letter with a full list of signatories](#) is available on the TCP website.

### **About The Constitution Project**

*Created out of the belief that we must cast aside the labels that divide us in order to keep our democracy strong, The Constitution Project (TCP) brings together policy experts and legal practitioners from across the political spectrum to foster consensus-based solutions to the most difficult constitutional challenges of our time. TCP seeks to reform the nation's broken criminal justice system and to strengthen the rule of law through scholarship, advocacy, policy reform and public education initiatives. Established in 1997, TCP is based in Washington, D.C.*

