

# THE CONSTITUTION PROJECT



*Safeguarding Liberty, Justice & the Rule of Law*

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## TCP Supports Legislation to Increase Transparency of Government Surveillance

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** -- The Constitution Project, a nonpartisan legal watchdog group, welcomed the August 1 introduction of the Surveillance Transparency Act of 2013, legislation designed to increase transparency for government surveillance programs. The legislation would expand reporting on the scope of surveillance programs, helping to provide Americans the opportunity to become part of an informed debate about domestic surveillance - while still protection national security.

Senator Al Franken (D-MN), Chair of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Privacy, Technology and the Law, introduced the bill on August 1, stating, "I believe the government should give proper weight to both keeping America safe from terrorists and protecting Americans' privacy."

"This bill is an important step forward in providing much needed transparency regarding the extent of government surveillance programs," said Sharon Bradford Franklin, Senior Policy Counsel at The Constitution Project.

The Surveillance Transparency Act of 2013 would require the government to annually report on the number of Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISC) orders issued under various surveillance laws, the general categories of information collected, the number of U.S. persons whose information was collected under the categories and the number of U.S. persons whose information was actually reviewed by federal agents. The bill also includes less detailed reporting requirements and disclosure provisions for three surveillance authorities under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), that do not involve the bulk collection of Americans' records.

Sen. Franken's legislation is cosponsored by Judiciary Committee Chair Patrick Leahy (D-VT), as well as Senators Tom Udall (D-NM), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Mark Udall (D-CO), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Jon Tester (D-MT), Edward J. Markey (D-MA), and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA).

On July 18, a coalition of over 60 Internet companies and advocacy groups -- including The Constitution Project -- [wrote](#) to the President and congressional leaders to demand more surveillance transparency from the government, including allowing companies to voluntarily disclose aggregate statistics about the information they are being compelled to produce to the government. This bill includes provisions designed to address these recommendations.

TCP's Liberty and Security committee has previously called for the [reform of Section 215](#) of the Patriot Act and for [greater transparency](#) in orders issued by the FISC.

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### [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.*



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