

LARSON OPPOSES PRESIDENT'S SECRET WIRETAPPING PROGRAM

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WASHINGTON, D.C. Congressman John Larson (CT-1) late last night voted against H.R. 5825, the Electronic Surveillance Modernization Act, which authorizes and expands the President's secret domestic wiretapping program. The bill passed the House by a vote of 232 to 191.

Once again, Congress is voting to grant the President authority that is unconstitutional and unaccountable, stated Larson. First, they rubberstamp the President's military tribunal program and now they're rubberstamping his illegal wiretapping program, both of which have been ruled unconstitutional. This Congress is completely ignoring its responsibilities of oversight and accountability.

It is the duty of Congress to provide our intelligence community with the tools to track terrorists, but within the confines of our laws and the Constitution. If the Republican leadership really wanted to improve our intelligence efforts, it would be bringing up the remaining 9/11 Commission recommendations. Instead we're doing nothing substantive while Osama bin Laden runs free.

H.R. 5825 allows the President to authorize electronic surveillance of suspected terrorists without obtaining warrants from a secret court, as required by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 (FISA). The President's program was first revealed in December 2005, and was ruled unconstitutional by a US district court last month.

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