

BACKLASH GROWS In the NEWS to the WATERED DOWN USA FREEDOM ACT



Changes to Surveillance Bill Stoke Anger

The New York Times, May 21, 2014

“Several civil liberties groups that had backed a previous version argued that the changes weakened the limits in a way that leaves the door open for the government to obtain enormous volumes of records.

“They said they were withdrawing their support.”

Restrictions placed on NSA's data store after intense talks over surveillance bill

The Guardian, May 21, 2014

“...the version that will head to the floor, at the Obama administration’s insistence, has broadened the definition, opening the door to broader data collection than the bill’s architect’s initially envisioned.

“Privacy groups had already watched with dismay as their favored bill gradually grew less restrictive on the NSA and its transparency requirements about what recipients of surveillance orders can disclose to their customers became weaker.”

Google, Facebook Warn NSA Bill Wouldn't Stop Mass Surveillance

National Journal, May 21, 2014

Several powerful tech companies join a chorus of privacy groups withdrawing support for the USA Freedom Act—which the House will vote on Thursday.

The Reform Government Surveillance coalition—whose members include Google, Facebook, Microsoft, AOL, Apple, Twitter, LinkedIn, DropBox, and Yahoo—issued a statement Wednesday announcing it was pulling its support of the USA Freedom Act...the bill has "moved in the wrong direction" of true surveillance reforms, the tech companies said.

USA Freedom Act: Oh, Well. Whatever. Nevermind.

Just Security, May 21, 2014

“The initially promising USA Freedom Act could have ended the previously secret government practices of collecting Americans’ calling records, internet transactional information and who knows what else in bulk. Today’s version would allow broad collection to continue under the guise of reform.”

Prepared by the Office of U.S. Representative Zoe Lofgren (CA-19)

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Privacy Groups Back Away From NSA Bill Over Changes

Advocates Say New Bill Murkier Than Earlier Versions on Prohibiting Mass Data Collection

The Wall Street Journal, May 21, 2014

“A fragile consensus over a legislative measure to revamp the National Security Agency's phone data surveillance program began to fray on Tuesday following changes to the definition of a key term, which critics said could significantly broaden the government's access to data.

“Privacy advocates say changes in the terms used to define the scope of an NSA search allow for broader data collection than earlier versions of the legislation and that the new bill is murkier on prohibiting mass collection of data.

“People familiar with the negotiations said the changes were sought by intelligence officials.”

As Feared: House Guts USA Freedom Act, Every Civil Liberties Organization Pulls Their Support

TechDirt, May 21, 2014

“As we feared would happen, the House, under pressure from the White House, has completely watered down the USA FREEDOM Act. After a long (and, we've heard, contentious) battle among the different players, the bill that's moving to the floor tomorrow is even less useful than the already weakened version that passed out of both the House Judiciary and Intelligence Committees.

“Following the revelation of the new version of the bill late Monday, basically every civil liberties organization pulled their support for the bill.”

House Committee Guts Key Provisions In NSA Reform Bill

The HuffingtonPost, May 20, 2014

“A key House committee close to Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) gutted crucial provisions of a National Security Agency surveillance reform bill on Tuesday. The move dismayed civil liberties advocates, some of whom immediately withdrew their support ahead of a Thursday floor vote.”

“Another change to the NSA reform bill lowers the amount of reporting that telephone and internet companies may provide to the public about government data requests. Advocates had seen those transparency procedures as the canary in the coal mine for government overreaches.”