August 29, 2014

To President Obama and Members of the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board:

We, the undersigned former government officials, organizations, and members of Congress, write to express our concerns about the U.S. government’s surveillance activities conducted under the authority of Executive Order 12333. Many involve communications that are protected by the U.S. Constitution, and all implicate international human rights law, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which the United States is a party. These activities undermine the fundamental rights of internet users everywhere.

We call on the President to declassify and make public all current and future legal opinions or interpretations concerning surveillance under Executive Order 12333 and the surveillance-related regulations issued thereunder. Secret law is a threat to democracy.

We further call on the President to ensure that there is no disproportionate or unnecessary collection or retention of users’ communications and personal information and to implement meaningful privacy protections for all users, U.S. and foreign, in surveillance activities conducted under E.O. 12333, including the privacy recommendations of the President’s Review Group on Intelligence and Communications Technologies.

We call on both the President and the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board to engage in a searching examination of surveillance under E.O. 12333, to insist upon declassification of information that would help the public understand the nature and extent of this surveillance, and to suggest mechanisms and specific steps to implement the above recommendations as soon as possible.

We will continue to work to build support for further privacy protections for all users in surveillance activities conducted under E.O. 12333.

For questions or followup, please contact Amie Stepanovich: amie@accessnow.org

Sincerely,

**Members of Congress**
Representative John Conyers
Representative Alan Grayson
Representative Rush Holt
Representative Zoe Lofgren

**Former Government Officials**
Ed Felten, former FTC Chief Technologist
Ian Schuler, former State Department official
John Tye, former State Department official

**Organizations**
Access
Advocacy for Principled Action in Government
American Civil Liberties Union
American Library Association
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)
Amnesty International
Association for Progressive Communications
Avaaz
Campaign for Digital Fourth Amendment Rights
Center for Democracy and Technology
Center for Digital Democracy
Constitutional Alliance
Council on American-Islamic Relations
Cyber Privacy Project
Defending Dissent Foundation
Demand Progress
DownsizeDC.org
Electronic Frontier Foundation
Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC)
Free Press Action Fund
Freedom of the Press Foundation
Global Network Initiative
Government Accountability Project
Human Rights Watch
Libertarian Party
Media Alliance
National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
National Coalition Against Censorship
National Security Counselors
Open Net (Korea)
Open Technology Institute at New America Foundation
OpenMedia.org
OpenTheGovernment.org
PEN American Center
Project on Government Oversight (POGO)
Restore the Fourth
RootsAction.org
Samuelson-Glushko Canadian Internet Policy & Public Interest Clinic (CIPPIC)
Silent Circle
Student Net Alliance
Sunlight Foundation
ThoughtWorks
World Press Freedom Committee
World Privacy Forum
World Wide Web Foundation
X-Lab at New America Foundation