

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](mailto: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