

September 30, 2009

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Judiciary Committee
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy,

We are writing to thank you for your tireless commitment to protecting and advancing government transparency through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). As organizations and individuals concerned with government openness and accountability, we deeply appreciate your leadership on this critical issue.

Your nearly three decades of work to ensure the public has access to the information it needs to hold leaders accountable has left a lasting mark. Thanks to legislation you authored, co-authored, and championed, FOIA reflects the reality of modern electronic recordkeeping and accountability has been injected into the system for processing FOIA requests. By fighting off unnecessary exemptions, you have kept the law strong and effective. Additionally, you have increased compliance with and attention to public access by holding thorough oversight hearings.

We are especially appreciative of your dedication to making sure that policy makers consider both the public interest and the security interest before deciding to withhold information. While secrecy across the government has grown since the terrorist attacks of September 11, we know that we would have a much more secretive and less accountable government today if not for your personal efforts.

We look forward to working with you and your staff to improve FOIA in the coming years. We particularly look forward to supporting your efforts to enact legislation that makes it easier to identify new FOIA exemptions tucked into other pieces of legislation, and to working with you to make sure the newly established Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) has the support it needs to fulfill its mission.

Thank you, again, for your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

OpenTheGovernment.org

Arizona First Amendment Coalition

American Association of Law Libraries

Association of American Publishers

American Booksellers Foundation for Free
Expression

Association of Research Libraries

American Civil Liberties Union

Atlanta Law Libraries Association

American Library Association

Bill of Right Defense Committee

Center for Democracy and Technology

Center for National Security Studies	New Jersey Law Librarians Association
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington	Northern California Association of Law Libraries
Citizens for Sunshine	OMB Watch
Collaboration on Government Secrecy	People For the American Way
DC Open Government Coalition	Political Research Associates
Defending Dissent Foundation	Project On Government Oversight
Electronic Frontier Foundation	Public Citizen
Electronic Privacy Information Center	Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility
Essential Information	Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press
Feminists for Free Expression	San Diego Area Law Libraries
First Amendment Coalition	Social Responsibility Special Interest Section (SR-SIS), American Association of Law Libraries
First Amendment Project	Society of American Archivists
Government Accountability Project	Society of Professional Journalists
iSolon.org	Southern New England Law Librarians Association
Law Librarians Association of Wisconsin	South Florida Association of Law Libraries
Law Librarians of New England	Special Libraries Association
Law Librarians Society of Washington D.C.	U.S. Bill of Rights Foundation
League of Women Voters of the United States	Utah Foundation for Open Government
Liberty Coalition	Virginia Association of Law Libraries
Minnesota Coalition on Government Information	Vermont Coalition for Open Government
National Coalition Against Censorship	Vermont Press Association
National Freedom of Information Coalition	Washington Coalition for Open Government
National Newspaper Association	
National Security Archive	

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