

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

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| 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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