

Chair Dianne Feinstein
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
211 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Vice Chair Saxby Chambliss
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
211 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Chair Mike Rogers
House Permanent Select Committee on
Intelligence
Capitol Visitor Center HVC-304
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Dutch Ruppersberger
House Permanent Select Committee on
Intelligence
Capitol Visitor Center HVC-304
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Feinstein, Vice-Chair Chambliss, Chair Rogers, and Ranking Member Ruppersberger,

The undersigned organizations, concerned with government openness and accountability, write to urge you to protect the interests of an open government and informed public in any legislation to address the leaks of highly classified information. Congress' goal of protecting the United States' legitimate secrets is honorable, but it would be unwise to accelerate the process without due consideration to the range of issues entangled in addressing the leak issue.

The legislation will necessarily touch on a number of delicate issues that merit careful consideration. These issues include the balance between reducing security clearances and rightful disclosure, as well as ensuring that classified systems are not clogged with information that does not need rigorous protections. Additionally, the legislation must protect people who blow the whistle on waste, fraud and abuse in the federal government. Seeking input from the public and experts in the field will help Congress ensure that any legislation intended to stop leaks of classified national security information appropriately addresses the potential ramifications of language to address the unauthorized disclosures of highly classified information.

We understand you intend to attach your legislation to the Fiscal Year (FY) FY 2013 Intelligence Authorization Bill. While we recognize that leaks of appropriately and properly classified information are a serious problem, the American public requires access to some information about government conduct in order to foster an informed and meaningful national discussion, particularly about such issues as the use of drones to kill American citizens and other persons. We ask Congress to address these leaks with the most serious of consideration and widest possible public input. We strongly urge you to not rush such important legislation even if the needed careful consideration is not possible before the FY 2013 Intelligence Authorization bill must be passed.

We thank you for your consideration and urge you to address the leaks of highly classified information with the widest possible public input into any legislation and with the most open process possible.

Sincerely,

American Civil Liberties Union

Bill of Rights Defense Committee

American Library Association

Brennan Center for Justice

Article 19

Brown Center for Public Policy

Center for Media and Democracy

The Center for Financial Privacy and Human Rights

Common Cause

The Constitution Project

Defending Dissent

Electronic Frontier Foundation

Electronic Privacy Information Coalition

Federation of American Scientists

Government Accountability Project

iSolon.org

Liberty Coalition

National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers

National Freedom of Information Coalition

National Security Archive

National Whistleblowers Center

No More Guantanamos

OpenTheGovernment.org

Project on Government Oversight

Progressive Librarians Guild

Society of American Archivists

Society of Professional Journalists

Sunlight Foundation

Utah Foundation for Open Government

Washington Coalition for Open Government