

# The USA PATRIOT Act

The [USA PATRIOT Act](#) broadly expands law enforcement's surveillance and investigative powers and represents one of the most significant threats to civil liberties, privacy and democratic traditions in U.S. history. *(Note: Many believe this was enacted under false pretense and should be repealed entirely)*

## What is PATRIOT?

The USA PATRIOT Act (officially the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act) was quickly developed as anti-terrorism legislation in response to the September 11, 2001 attacks. The large and complex law received little Congressional oversight and debate, and was signed into law by President Bush Oct. 26, 2001.

*(NOTE: Many view this Act as too far reaching to be created in a matter of weeks and was certainly created far in advance of 9/11)*

PATRIOT gives **sweeping search and surveillance** to domestic law enforcement and foreign intelligence agencies and **eliminates checks and balances** that previously gave courts the opportunity to ensure that those powers were not abused. PATRIOT and follow-up legislation now in development threaten the basic rights of All Americans.

## What should I do?

Use our [Action Center](#) and tell Congress to protect Americans' privacy and free speech rights. Or, be your own Action Center and write your Representatives often.

## Learn More

- [Summary of How PATRIOT Threatens Online Civil Liberties](#)
- [EFF Analysis Of The Provisions Of The USA PATRIOT Act That Relate To Online Activities 2001](#)
- [Sunset Provisions Analysis](#)
- DeepLinks post: [PATRIOT Renewal Rubber Stamped March 13, 2006](#)

## Related Links at EFF

- [Analysis of the Protecting the Rights of Individuals Act](#)
- [Analysis of the SAFE Act](#)
- [Security and Freedom Ensured Act of 2003 \(SAFE Act\) \[Download PDF \(37k\)\]](#)
- [PATRIOT Act Bills](#)
- [EFF review of May 20 TIA report](#)
- [Full EFF archive - "Censorship & Privacy - Terrorism"](#)

## Offsite Resources

- [List of Communities Against the PATRIOT Act](#)
- [Electronic Privacy Information Center PATRIOT page](#)
- [American Civil Liberties Union PATRIOT page](#)

# The Fight for PATRIOT Reform

## Congressional Reform

EFF has pushed Congress to reform PATRIOT. Though its dangerous "[sunsetting](#)" provisions were unfortunately renewed, EFF continues to press for more substantive civil liberties protections.

## EFF's PATRIOT FOIA

[FOIA Request to DOJ Concerning Pen-Trap Surveillance](#) [PDF]

## Doe v. Gonzales

(Doe v. Ashcroft) Defending free speech and privacy, EFF has helped the ACLU and an unnamed Internet service provider (ISP) challenge the constitutionality of "National Security Letters" (NSLs), a key power under the USA PATRIOT Act.

- [2nd Circuit Decision](#) [PDF, 78K] *May 23, 2006*
- [Decision in Doe v. Ashcroft](#)
- [EFF Amicus Brief filed in Doe v. Ashcroft](#)
- [Amicus Brief of EFF et al. in Doe v. Gonzales, in support of Appellees](#) *Aug 3, 2005*

## EFF Media Releases About PATRIOT

[Can the FBI Monitor Your Web Browsing Without a Warrant?](#)

*January 14, 2005*

[Court Strikes Down Key USA PATRIOT Power](#)

*September 29, 2004*

[Draft 9/11 Legislation Goes Too Far, Revives PATRIOT II](#)

*September 27, 2004*

[EFF Urges Court to Find USA PATRIOT Act Powers Unconstitutional](#)

*May 25, 2004*

[Federal Judge Rules That Part of the USA PATRIOT Act Is Unconstitutional](#)

*January 26, 2004*

[EFF Supports the Benjamin Franklin True Patriot Act](#)

*September 28, 2003*

[Patriot II](#)

*February 8, 2003*