Senate Committee Approves ECPA Reform Bill

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With Strong Bipartisan Support, Judiciary Committee Approves ECPA Reform Bill

Washington - Today the Senate Judiciary Committee took a critical step toward updating the Electronic Communications Privacy Act (ECPA) by approving the ECPA Amendments Act cosponsored by Committee Chairman Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT). The bill would require the government to get a warrant from a judge before gaining access to the contents of email or documents stored in the cloud.

ECPA, which has not been updated to protect Americans' privacy since it first passed in 1986, currently allows government agents to read email and other online documents with a mere subpoena, issued without judicial approval.

"With the vote today, Congress took a huge step toward finally updating ECPA to ensure emails and documents we store in the cloud receive the same Fourth Amendment Protections as postal mail and documents we store in desk drawers in our homes," said CDT Senior Counsel Greg Nojeim. "The bipartisan vote today shows that the time to update ECPA is now. Never before have we seen such wide support from Republicans, Democrats, tech companies of all sizes, advocates, and the public to pass this commonsense update to ensure Constitutional privacy protections for Americans' most personal communications."

Diverse technology groups and companies across the political spectrum have long called for an update to ECPA: Digital Due Process [1]

For more analysis, see CDT's blog post ECPA Reform Takes a Giant Leap Forward **[2].**

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[1] http://digitaldueprocess.org/index.cfm?objectid=DF652CE0-2552-11DF-B455000C296BA163
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