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CENTER FOR DEMOCRACY  
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1634 Eye Street, NW  
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Washington, DC 20006

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
437 Russell Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James Sensenbrenner  
2449 Rayburn House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.  
2426 Rayburn House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

October 29, 2013

Dear Senator Leahy and Reps. Sensenbrenner and Conyers:

CDT is pleased to endorse the Uniting and Strengthening America by Fulfilling Rights and Ending Eavesdropping, Dragnet Collection, and Online Monitoring Act, the "USA FREEDOM Act."

The USA FREEDOM Act would restore balance to intelligence surveillance authority by raising the standard for collection of items pursuant to Section 215 of the PATRIOT Act – a critically needed reform aimed at ending the bulk collection of telephony metadata. Under the bill, information the government could collect under Section 215 would have to pertain to a terrorist, spy, or other agent of a foreign power (AFP), or to a person in contact with or known to such AFP, or to the activities of the AFP. The reform would extend not only to phone records, but also to financial records, location data, medical records, credit card data other information and things the government may attempt to gather in bulk for intelligence purposes. Further, this legislation would raise the standard for collection under the Pen Register/Trap and Trace and National Security Letter statutes to prevent the government from shifting bulk collection to another authority.

In addition, the USA FREEDOM Act would permit companies to be more transparent about the intelligence surveillance demands they receive, require the government to be more transparent about such demands, close the "backdoor search loophole" in FISA, and insert a Special Advocate in FISA Court proceedings to provide balance.

The USA FREEDOM Act is critical to protecting privacy and civil liberties. We look forward to working with you to advance these and other needed intelligence surveillance reforms.

Sincerely,

Leslie Harris,  
President and CEO

Gregory T. Nojeim  
Director of CDT's Project on Freedom  
Security, and Technology

