

November 11, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. President:

The undersigned organizations write to express our growing concern over the lack of nominations to the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board.

The Board, first constituted as part of the Intelligence Reform Act of 2004 with duties amended as part of the Implementing Recommendation of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, was designed to play a vital independent role in oversight of privacy and civil liberties. The Board is one of the few safeguards put into place to protect privacy and civil liberties following the major legal and policy changes put in place to help fight terrorism and strengthen law enforcement.

As your own Cybersecurity Review found in May “it is important to reconstitute [the Board], accelerate the selection for its Board Members and consider to seek legislative amendments to broaden its scope to include cybersecurity-related issues.” Almost six months later, the Board still has no members selected and no staff.

We urge you to make the Board selection process a priority and ensure that nominations to the Board are made to the Senate before the end of the first session of the 111th Congress, so that a Board can be seated early next year.

Sincerely,

American Association of Law Libraries
American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression
American Civil Liberties Union
Arab American Institute
Association of Research Libraries
Bill of Rights Defense Committee
Brennan Center for Justice
Center for Democracy & Technology
Center for National Security Studies
Constitution Project
Council on American Islamic Relations
Defending Dissent Foundation
Electronic Frontier Foundation
Electronic Privacy Information Center
Government Accountability Project
Liberty Coalition

Muslim Advocates
Muslim Public Affairs Council
National Coalition Against Censorship
National Lawyers Guild – National Office
National Security Archive
Open Society Policy Center
People For the American Way
Privacy Lives
Private Citizen, Inc.
Rutherford Institute
Special Libraries Association
The Multiracial Activist
U.S. Bill of Rights Foundation