

REMEMBER WHEN OBAMA THOUGHT THE FISA AMENDMENTS ACT WAS IMPERFECT?

Four years ago, when Obama caved and supported the FISA Amendments Act, he said in part,

I want to take this opportunity to speak directly to those of you who oppose my decision to support the FISA compromise.

This was not an easy call for me. I know that the FISA bill that passed the House is far from perfect. I wouldn't have drafted the legislation like this, and it does not resolve all of the concerns that we have about President Bush's abuse of executive power. It grants retroactive immunity to telecommunications companies that may have violated the law by cooperating with the Bush Administration's program of warrantless wiretapping. This potentially weakens the deterrent effect of the law and removes an important tool for the American people to demand accountability for past abuses.

[snip]

Given the choice between voting for an improved yet imperfect bill, and losing important surveillance tools, I've chosen to support the current compromise. I do so with the firm intention – once I'm sworn in as President – to have my Attorney General conduct a comprehensive review of all our surveillance programs, and to make further recommendations on any steps needed to preserve civil liberties and to prevent executive branch abuse in the future.

[snip]

I do promise to listen to your concerns, take them seriously, and seek to earn your ongoing support to change the country. That is why we have built the largest grassroots campaign in the history of presidential politics, and that is the kind of White House that I intend to run as President of the United States – a White House that takes the Constitution seriously, conducts the peoples' business out in the open, welcomes and listens to dissenting views, and asks you to play your part in shaping our country's destiny.

Since that time, Obama's DOJ has litigated the FISA Amendments Act so aggressively that it has, in fact, completely gutted the deterrent effect of the law. It has refused to share with all of Congress what activities the government actually conducts under the law, much less with American citizens. It has refused to tell Congress—even the Intelligence Committees—how many Americans have been spied on under the program. And it has been caught violating the Fourth Amendment.

And yet here's what Obama's Administration said today about the extension for the FISA Amendments Act, which essentially will extend the bill Candidate Obama once admitted still had problems for five years, all the way through his second term.

The Administration strongly supports H.R. 5949. The bill would reauthorize Title VII of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), which expires at the end of this year. Title VII of FISA allows the Intelligence Community to collect vital foreign intelligence information about international terrorists and other important targets overseas, while providing protection for the civil liberties and privacy of Americans. Intelligence collection under

Title VII has produced and continues to produce significant information that is vital to defend the Nation against international terrorism and other threats. The Administration looks forward to working with the Congress to ensure the continued availability of this critical intelligence capability.

Change we can believe in.