

THE BLUE DOGS (SOME OF THEM, AT LEAST) COME HOME

Update: We win, 213-197-1, with the 10 Dem no votes a mix of Blue Dogs and Progressives. Good work, Congress!!

Some time ago, 21 Blue Dog Democrats wrote a letter in support of the Senate bill on FISA. The Republicans (including Doc Hastings in today's debate) have pointed to that letter in support of their argument for the Senate bill.

But the Blue Dogs—at least some of them—are starting to come home (perhaps because of the pressure that Blue America is preparing to put on them for voting against civil liberties). Today, Leonard Boswell spoke in favor of the vastly better House bill on FISA, calling for the others that signed the letter to support the Democratic bill as well.

So yes, I like 20 others, signed a letter of concern. By the way, it was not a Blue Dog letter, a Blue Dog position but individuals, some of whom were Blue Dogs. Over the course of past weeks, a credit to Chairman Reyes and Chairman Conyers and our super staff, an acceptable solution has been found. It makes FISA – supports FISA and gives protection to those who assist within the provisions of the law. For example, those who feel their civil rights have been violated can seek justice and telecoms who feel they have complied with the law, a judge can review the classified evidence and decide. This means to me that the Constitution and civil rights are protected and telecoms who are asked under pressure to assist in an emergency can know that classified evidence will be seen by a judge... The bill provides telecom companies a way to

present their defense in secure proceedings in a district court without the administration using state secrets to block the defense. A company simply doing its duty following the law, this bill ensures they they will not be punished and I urge everyone who signed the letter with me to support this resolution.

Welcome home Congressman Boswell—I hope you're back to stay.