

SUSAN COLLINS: I STAND WITH CRAZY PETE THE TWIT-LEAKER IN OPPOSING INTELLIGENCE WHISTLEBLOWERS

I've been covering the misplaced priorities of Crazy Pete Hoekstra—who doesn't want federal Intelligence Community employees to have a way of alerting Congress to fraud and wrong-doing without exposing classified information and/or losing their jobs, but who is happy to Twitter sensitive information about his and Minority Leader Boehner's travels in Baghdad.

It seems that Susan Collins has the same misplaced priorities. She single-handedly axed the House-backed provision to include whistleblower protection in the stimulus package—and with it, prevented a key means of making sure taxpayer funds were spent wisely.

But, according to a person following the bill closely, Collins used today's conference committee to drastically water down the measure, **citing national security concerns as the reason for her opposition**. In the end, the protections were so weakened that House negotiators balked, and the result was that the entire amendment was removed.

According to the person following the bill, Collins was the "central roadblock" to passing the protections.

To make matter worse, Collins is the ranking Republican on the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs committee, which, as an oversight committee, might be expected to see its role as protecting whistleblowers. She

also sits on the Senate appropriations committee, giving her a strong position from which to wield influence during today's negotiations.

Though Senate leader Harry Reid supported the protections, said the source, he wasn't willing to strong-arm Collins on the issue, given her central role in negotiations over the stimulus bill as a whole. [my emphasis]

I guess that about sums up the state of Republican approaches to both Homeland Security and Appropriations that they would work hard to deprive taxpayers of the protection from fraud and wrong-doing they need.