

Washington, D.C. - Rep. Peter Welch (VT-AL) issued the following statement on his opposition to H.R. 6304, the FISA Amendments Act:

"I simply do not believe any president, especially this president, should have unilateral or unchecked authority to conduct surveillance without judicial oversight. Congress has an obligation to protect our national security without sacrificing basic rights provided in our Constitution.

"While this compromise reflects improvements over previous flawed proposals, it is a compromise I will not support. I have consistently opposed any legislation that grants retroactive immunity for telecommunication companies that cooperated with the Bush administration's warrantless wiretapping. Regrettably, this latest proposal fails to hold the administration and the companies accountable for their actions. The American people deserve to know exactly what happened and they deserve to know who is accountable. This bill fails that test."

Background:

On November 15, 2007, Welch supported and the U.S. House passed The Responsible Electronic Surveillance That is Overseen, Reviewed, and Effective (RESTORE) Act, [H.R. 3773](#), despite opposition by the Bush administration and House Republicans. This legislation refused to give retroactive immunity.

In August, 2007, Welch voted against both a temporary FISA extension offered by the House leadership (H.R. 3356) as well as a compromise version supported by the White House (S.1927), which passed the U.S. House.