

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 13, 2005

Dear Colleague,

Yesterday we introduced legislation, S. 2082, to extend the expiring provisions of the PATRIOT Act and the lone wolf provision of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act for three months, to March 31, 2006. We invite you to join us and Senators Craig, Rockefeller, Murkowski, Kennedy, Hagel, Levin, Durbin, Stabenow, Salazar and others in co-sponsoring this legislation.

The reauthorization of the PATRIOT Act and the lone wolf provision is a significant event. It raises important issues that have become increasingly important to the American people. Security and freedom are not and should not be mutually exclusive goals in a nation conceived in liberty. It is our job to work as hard and as long as necessary to protect both the security and the freedom of the people we represent. The year-end deadline should not be a barrier to achieving the best bill we can forge together.

It is unfortunate that we find ourselves in the position of having to introduce this legislation. In July, S. 3199, The USA PATRIOT Act Improvement and Reauthorization Act, passed the Senate by unanimous consent. This remarkable legislative feat was attained because the bill added civil liberty protections to the original PATRIOT Act without eroding in any way the tools given to law enforcement to fight terrorism under the original law. It struck the balance that the American people rightfully demand.

The conference report for S. 3199 disrupted the balance of the Senate bill by retreating from important civil liberty protections in the Senate measure. The conference report also fails to address issues that came to light after passage of the Senate bill, with respect to National Security Letters. This unbalanced conference report lacks the support of many members in both chambers from both parties. The American people are insisting that we keep working on PATRIOT Act reauthorization legislation to restore the balance between security and civil liberty protections.

This is a critical debate over vital issues. If more time is needed to produce better legislation, then by all means, let us give ourselves that time. For further information about S.2082, or to cosponsor, please contact us, or have staff contact David Cuzzi (Sununu) at 4-8718, or Julie Katzman (Leahy) at 4-0957.

Sincerely,


JOHN E. SUNUNU
United States Senator


PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator