

I voted Yes for H.R. 5949, the FISA Amendments Act Reauthorization Act of 2012.

H.R. 5949 would extend provisions of the FISA Amendments Act until December 31, 2017. These provisions are currently set to expire on December 31, 2012. Specifically, this bill would provide extensions for the electronic surveillance of certain specific persons outside the United States for foreign intelligence information purposes, and is focused strictly on foreign agents or foreigners outside of the U.S. This legislation has been in place to protect our national security since 1978 and is not the PATRIOT Act, provisions of which I oppose and have voted against. This bill does not involve nor authorize the targeting of domestic surveillance on U.S. citizens, and all intelligence collection that takes place under this law requires the approval of a federal judge who must determine that there is probable cause any such surveillance.

Intelligence collected under the FISA Amendments Act provides information on the plan and identities of terrorists, information about the functioning of terrorist groups like al Qaeda, information on the intentions and capabilities of weapons proliferators, and other critical intelligence about foreign adversaries that threaten our nation. Our security requires attentive oversight and technology to protect us from the threats of the 21st century, and such deterrents are important tools to effectively reduce the possibility of another foreign terrorist attack against the United States. I cannot support any policies that would jeopardize the Constitutional rights of Americans, and this bill preserves civil liberties while providing new protections and maintaining oversight by both Congress and the Executive Branch.

The bill was approved by a vote of 301 – 118.