



DID YOU THINK YOU LIVED IN A FREE COUNTRY? (HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE USA PATRIOT ACT?)

The USA PATRIOT Act and related executive orders, crafted by Attorney General John Ashcroft, was rammed through Congress and signed into federal law by President Bush in the name of national security on October 26, 2001, just six weeks after 9/11, in a time of fear and great confusion. Few Congresspeople even read the 342-page document, yet it puts severe restrictions on the Bill of Rights. Here are a few examples:

Amendment I: Freedom of Speech.

- Contains an overly broad and vague definition of “domestic terrorism” that may be used against people exercising their right to dissent
- Opens the door to COINTELPRO operations to monitor and surveil religious and political groups without evidence of wrongdoing

Amendment IV: Right to Privacy.

- Allows FBI access to a person’s bank records, library use, bookstore purchases, and email upon “suspicion of terrorism.” Allows Pentagon access to high school students’ records.
- Allows the secretary of state to designate any group that has engaged in violence as “terrorist,” opening way to peaceful groups being so designated as the result of an action by an agent provocateur.
- Allows for “sneak and peek” of homes to be searched without being given notice or viewing of search warrant

Amendment V: Due Process

- Allows people to be held in detention indefinitely and denied communication with outsiders or judicial review. Can be used to racially profile certain ethnic groups.

PATRIOT ACT II (the Domestic Security Enhancement Act of 2003) was recently leaked to the public. It tightens and extends some of the provisions in the existing USA PATRIOT Act, such as:

- Strips even native-born Americans of all of the rights of U.S. citizenship if they support organizations labeled as terrorist by our government
- Provides for summary deportations without evidence, even of permanent residents, whom the Attorney General decides are a threat to national security.
- Eliminates many of the checks and balances that remained on government snooping even after passage of the USA PATRIOT Act.

THIS ACT HAS NOT YET BEEN PASSED!

ARE YOU SCARED YET?

What you can do:

- Sign the petition to our elected officials supporting the Bill of Rights and calling for the repeal of the Patriot Act.
- Call your congresspersons and tell them to repeal the Patriot Act and **NOT** to pass “Patriot Act II.”
- Go to the webpage of the **Bill of Rights Defense Committee** (www.bordc.org) or phone them at 413-582-0110 to learn how to organize against these acts.
- Contact the Civil Liberties Defense Coalition at CLDC2003@aol.com for more information about local organizing against the Patriot Act.