

U.S. Lawmakers Block Senate Measure Curbing NSA Bulk Surveillance



Washington, November 19 (RHC)-- U.S. Senate Republicans have blocked a sweeping measure aimed at reining in the National Security Agency's dragnet surveillance. The USA FREEDOM Act would have ended the bulk collection of telephone records by requiring the NSA to make specific requests to phone companies for a user's data, rather than vacuuming up all the records at once.

According to reports from Capitol Hill, the act would also create a panel to advocate for privacy rights before the secret Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court. The measure was a direct consequence of the 2013 leaks by whistleblower Edward Snowden exposing unchecked government surveillance and data collection.

But on Tuesday, Republicans helped defeat the bill in a 58-to-42 vote, two short of the 60 needed to advance. The Republican-controlled House passed a watered-down version earlier this year.

The measure faces an uncertain fate next year when Republicans take full control of Congress ahead of a June deadline to re-authorize the phone records collection program.

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