

U.S. Senate Passes NSA Surveillance Bill



Washington, June 3 (RHC)-- The U.S. Senate has approved a bill that will allow resumption of the government's sweeping surveillance program after some modifications. U.S. President Barack Obama immediately signed the USA FREEDOM Act after it was approved by the Senate 67-32 on Tuesday.

With this new legislation, the NSA's spying program resumes but with a number of changes. The legislation is expected to end the NSA's collection of telephone calling records in the United States while it preserves some other surveillance authorities.

Although the USA FREEDOM Act would curtail some of NSA's now-expired powers it gained under the PATRIOT Act in the wake of the September 11 attacks in 2001, it would authorize the agency to still track those potentially deemed as "threats." Collecting the records would then be carried out by telephone companies, which, through court orders, would make specific ones available to the government.

The approval follows two years of controversy on the surveillance powers of the NSA and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Republican Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who had tried to maintain some of the NSA's powers, said the new reforms would make the U.S. an unsafe place.

Despite calls by the White House, McConnell attempted to weaken the reform through amendments, all three of which were rejected by the Senate.

The extent of the NSA's spying activities was revealed by Edward Snowden, a former NSA contractor, who began leaking classified intelligence documents in June 2013.

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