

Progressive Caucus Co-Chairs Hail Defeat of PATRIOT Act Reauthorization

Written by By the Offices of Reps. Raúl M. Grijalva and Keith Ellison
Tuesday, 08 February 2011 00:00



Washington, D.C.— Reps. Raúl M. Grijalva and Keith Ellison, co-chairs of the Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC), today hailed the Feb. 8 defeat of a measure to reauthorize major portions of the PATRIOT Act. Both Representatives and the CPC whip operation, headed by Rep. Hank Johnson, actively urged Members of Congress to oppose the measure, which would have extended provisions allowing roving “John Doe” wiretaps without identifying the person or facility to be tapped; allowing the government to obtain “any tangible thing” relevant to a terrorism investigation, even if there is no showing that the “thing” pertains to suspected terrorists or terrorist activities; and permitting secret intelligence surveillance of non-U.S. persons who are not affiliated with a foreign organization.

Both co-chairs and Rep. Jerrold Nadler (NY), ranking member on the House Subcommittee on the Constitution, sent [a letter](#) to every House Democrat hours before the vote highlighting concerns that the bill (H.R. 514) would “give the government sweeping authority to spy on individuals inside the United States and, in some cases, without any suspicion of wrongdoing. . . . Instead of reauthorizing these provisions, Congress should conduct robust, public oversight of all surveillance tools and craft reforms that will better protect private communications from overbroad government surveillance.”

The bill was brought up on suspension of the rules and, because of House procedures, needed two thirds of present members to approve it before it was sent to the Senate. The bill received 277 votes, 10 short of the 287 required if every Member is present, and failed to pass.

“This was a crucial victory for civil rights and restoring the Constitution to its central place in American life,” Grijalva said after the vote. “I was proud to help lead the charge against this offensive attack on our liberties, and I thank my colleagues for taking a stand when it mattered most. This is not the last time we’ll have this fight, and the CPC will push to protect the American people from unreasonable search and seizure until we return to a more justifiable and reasonable policy.”

Progressive Caucus Co-Chairs Hail Defeat of PATRIOT Act Reauthorization

Written by By the Offices of Reps. Raúl M. Grijalva and Keith Ellison
Tuesday, 08 February 2011 00:00

“Taking away liberties and spying on our citizens is not what the American people voted for last November,” Ellison said. “Instead of focusing on job number one – jobs – the Republican leadership has chosen to take away our freedoms with one hand while handing out pink slips with the other.”