

The USA PATRIOT Act and YOU

On October 26, 2001, President Bush signed into law the USA PATRIOT Act, which forfeits many rights guaranteed to citizens and noncitizens by the Bill of Rights of our Constitution.

The USA PATRIOT Act:

- Gives the FBI and the CIA greater rights to wiretap phones, monitor e-mail, survey medical, financial and student records, and break into homes and offices without prior notification.
- Allows noncitizens to be deported or detained indefinitely without judicial appeal, and often without access to legal counsel.
- Creates a new crime of “domestic terrorism” which threatens to transform protestors into terrorists if they engage in conduct that “involves acts dangerous to human life.”
- Makes association with a “domestic terrorist” a criminal act: you could become a domestic terrorist by letting a friend stay at your house, or lending them bus fare (material support).
- Gives the FBI records of purchases at bookstores and borrowing from libraries of books, and places a gag order to prevent anyone from disclosing that they have been ordered to produce such documents.

Additionally:

- A Bureau of Prisons order allows federal agents to eavesdrop on conversations between lawyers and their clients held in federal custody.
- The Justice Department has dismantled regulations against FBI COINTELPRO-type operations (covert activities that in the past targeted domestic groups and individuals such as civil rights protestors and peace activists).
- The Administration has ordered secret military tribunals for suspected terrorists.
- Ashcroft has issued an edict nullifying the Freedom Of Information Act (FOIA), under which citizens and groups can request unclassified information from the government.
- The Total Information Awareness program, under the direction of Admiral Poindexter, plans to establish a database tracking all people in the United States, whether or not they are suspected of any crime.

In November 2002, Congress passed the Homeland Security Act, which continues the disturbing trends of reduced privacy for the government and increased secrecy and power for the federal government. Even now, the “PATRIOT Act II” is being considered for passage in Congress, which will further curtail your freedom.

Although the new regulations were passed in the name of counteracting terror, **not one terrorist** has been caught or held under the Acts provisions.

*Don't forget! If you've read all the way to here, **you** are a domestic terrorist!*

Help Defend the Bill of Rights

The Federal government is large, and I'm just one person. What can I do?

Make your city a Civil Liberties Safe Zone.

It's trite, but it's true. Think globally, act locally. All over the country, cities and towns are passing legislation to resist the PATRIOT Act and other crackdowns against our constitutional rights.

Join your local Bill of Rights Defense Committee

- **Somerville** is just getting started! We need your help! Sign up at <http://municipalfreedom.org> or email info@municipalfreedom.org
- **Arlington** is in the process of passing a resolution.
- National BORDC Headquarters is at <http://www.bordc.org>

Other things you can do:

- Talk with your friends and neighbors about organizing a Bill of Rights Defense Committee in your city or town. Feel free to borrow from our Tools page and Local Efforts page the ideas, timeline, petitions, resolutions, and press releases that Northampton and other cities have developed. Host meetings in your community. Contact us about your progress, so we can post it on our web page.
- Write a letter to the editor about this issue.
- Support proposed legislation to help restore civil liberties.
- Copy fliers about the issue and distribute them at events (or give them to drivers stuck in traffic and in need of some reading material!).
- Sign on to a letter to remove Ashcroft as Attorney General.
- Prepare yourself and members of targeted populations, such as Iraqi students and Iraqi Americans, for visits by the FBI, INS, or police.
- Call or write your senators and representatives in Washington
- Purchase and send Bill of Rights get well cards to your legislators.
- Stay Informed!

"They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

- Benjamin Franklin, 1759

Somerville Bill of Rights Defense Committee: <http://municipalfreedom.org>