

News *From the* LIBERTARIAN PARTY

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Warning: FBI planning sneak attack on privacy with dangerous "wish list"

Frightening new powers would include warrantless wiretaps, seizures

WASHINGTON, DC — While Republicans are busy attacking Bill Clinton, the FBI is busy planning a sneak attack on your privacy, the Libertarian Party warned today.

"The FBI wants more power to tap your phone, read your computer messages, and seize your car," said the party's national director, Steve Dasbach. "And as this Congressional session draws to a close, they're scheming for a way to sneak it into legislation without a recorded vote."

This past week, secret documents were leaked to Congress by an employee of the Department of Justice, revealing an FBI "wish list" of legislation it wants to tack onto larger bills at the last minute to allegedly combat "domestic terrorism."

According to Rep. Bob Barr (R-GA), the FBI wants the power to conduct roving wiretaps without a court order, force telecommunications companies to disclose information about customers, and expand its ability to confiscate cars and other property.

"Only two categories of Americans should be worried by this legislation: People who have committed a crime and people who *haven't*," Dasbach said. "If this domestic police agency has its way, every American who talks on the phone, uses a computer, or drives a car will fear having their conversations monitored or their property seized by federal agents."

The powers requested by the FBI would be in addition to the current Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) secret courts, which already have the power to authorize FBI wiretaps and clandestine searches — and are doing so at a record pace.

Over the past three years, the number of secret surveillance operations approved by FISA courts has jumped by 38%. Created in 1978 to fight terrorism and domestic spies, the FISA courts operate out of a sound-proof room on the sixth floor of the Justice Department.

Astonishingly, even though the FISA courts already grant almost every FBI request — the secret courts have approved 11,950 applications for wiretaps and searches, while turning down only one for lack of evidence — the FBI wants more power.

But isn't fighting terrorism a laudable goal? "Of course it is," Dasbach said. "But, as demonstrated by the fact that FISA secret courts grant 99.99% of the government's wiretap requests, federal law enforcement already has *too much power*."

"That's why we have our own wish list: We wish the FBI would stop spying on us, invading our privacy, seizing our property, and demanding more invasive powers. A War on Terrorism should not be used as an excuse for another war on Americans' rights."

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