March 25, 2015

We the undersigned represent a wide range of privacy and human rights advocates, technology companies, and trade associations that hold an equally wide range of positions on the issue of surveillance reform. Many of us have differing views on exactly what reforms must be included in any bill reauthorizing USA PATRIOT Act Section 215, which currently serves as the legal basis for the National Security Agency’s bulk collection of telephone metadata and is set to expire on June 1, 2015. That said, our broad, diverse, and bipartisan coalition believes that the status quo is untenable and that it is urgent that Congress move forward with reform.

Together, we agree that the following elements are essential to any legislative or Administration effort to reform our nation’s surveillance laws:

- There must be a clear, strong, and effective end to bulk collection practices under the USA PATRIOT Act, including under the Section 215 records authority and the Section
214 authority regarding pen registers and trap & trace devices. Any collection that does occur under those authorities should have appropriate safeguards in place to protect privacy and users’ rights.

- The bill must contain transparency and accountability mechanisms for both government and company reporting, as well as an appropriate declassification regime for Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court decisions.

We believe addressing the above must be a part of any reform package, though there are other reforms that our groups and companies would welcome, and in some cases, believe are essential to any legislation. We also urge Congress to avoid adding new mandates that are controversial and could derail reform efforts.

It has been nearly two years since the first news stories revealed the scope of the United States’ surveillance and bulk collection activities. Now is the time to take on meaningful legislative reforms to the nation’s surveillance programs that maintain national security while preserving privacy, transparency, and accountability. We strongly encourage both the White House and Members of Congress to support the above reforms and oppose any efforts to enact any legislation that does not address them.

Thank you,

Access
Advocacy for Principled Action in Government
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
American Association of Law Libraries
American Booksellers for Free Expression
American Civil Liberties Union
American Library Association
Application Developers Alliance
Association of Research Libraries
Brennan Center for Justice
Center for Democracy & Technology
CloudFlare, Inc.
Committee to Protect Journalists
Competitive Enterprise Institute
Computer & Communications Industry Association
The Constitution Project
Constitutional Alliance
Defending Dissent Foundation
DownsizeDC.org, Inc.
Electronic Frontier Foundation
Engine Advocacy
Free Press Action Fund
FreedomWorks
Global Network Initiative
Government Accountability Project
Hackers & Founders
Human Rights Watch
Internet Association
Internet Infrastructure Coalition
Liberty Coalition
Mozilla
National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
New America’s Open Technology Institute
Niskanen Center
OpenTheGovernment.org
PEN American Center
Project On Government Oversight
Public Knowledge
R Street
Reform Government Surveillance
ServInt
Silent Circle, LLC
Sonic
TechFreedom
Venture Politics
Wikimedia Foundation
World Press Freedom Committee