



Members of Congress knew about the spying Americans are just now hearing about

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What you may not realize about the NSA spying scandal is that your members of Congress knew about it.

In fact, they've known about the spying programs for years.

They even keep approving them.

For many Americans, the shock is still setting in.

"It doesn't seem appropriate given our protections under the constitution," one person believes.

"I was really surprised because we really try not to trample on people's civil rights," added another.

News of what now appears to be multiple government surveillance programs in the name of stopping terrorism and crime, but involving mostly law-abiding citizens.

"It's an invasion of privacy," added a third person we interviewed. "I wouldn't want them to have that type of information on me."

But this was not quite a top secret program and it certainly wasn't underground. These laws were drawn up, approved and renewed right here in the halls of Congress.

"The author of this story is not George Orwell. Our present day 1984 was written by Lamar Smith from Texas, by Mike Rogers from Michigan and by Dianne Feinstein from California," commented Jim Harper, Director of Information Policy Studies at CATO Institute.

Harper says Congress failed to oversee the very law they voted for. Still, many continue to defend the program.

"We've got to examine ways to be able to get the data to get intelligence that is operable and that can prevent plots from hatching and Americans from being killed," Intelligence Committee Chairwoman Dianne Feinstein believes.

Sen. Feinstein's bill reauthorizing the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act passed in December of 2012.

Senator Mike Lee voted against it and says it may be time to change the law.

That change could restrict the power of the NSA and other intelligence agencies.

“To make sure if they’re going after personal information belonging to the American people they do so with a court order backed up by probable cause,” commented Senator Lee, a Republican from Utah.

So will new knowledge of these programs incite change?

“Right now many congressional leaders are standing together to defend the national security bureaucracy,” commented Harper. “Will people's outrage reach them? Or will it not? That's up to Americans.”

Americans just now learning the full extent of these programs that may involve them directly.