

NSA info withheld from members of Congress

By: Josh Peterson – August 4, 2013

The House Intel Committee is stonewalling Congress's efforts to access information about the National Security Agency's bulk data collection program affecting millions of Americans, the Guardian reports.

Both Virginia Republican Representative Morgan Griffith and Democratic Florida Representative Alan Grayson have tried to obtain information about the NSA's phone and Internet surveillance programs first disclosed by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden.

Presently, their attempts seem to be in vain, despite the House Permanent Select Intelligence Committee's insistence that members of Congress are able to request briefings about the intelligence programs. Members have Top Secret security clearances.

But the committee has not cooperated with Grayson and Griffith's requests for more information so that they might, in their views, properly assess the programs, and uphold and defend the Constitution.

Grayson first wrote to the committee on June 19. Griffith wrote to the committee three times: June 25; and July 12, 22 and 23.

Grayson's request received a response from Michigan Republican Representative Mike Rogers, chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, stating that the members of the committee denied his request with a voice vote.

Grayson's request for a follow-up meeting with John Inglis, Deputy Director of the NSA, was ultimately denied, according to emails posted by the Guardian.

Griffith's requests went unanswered.

Grayson had scheduled an ad hoc hearing last week for July 31 during which journalist Glenn Greenwald, American Civil Liberties Union Legislative Counsel Michelle Richardson, and Cato Institute Research Fellow Julian Sanchez were supposed to testify about the NSA programs.

The hearing was canceled, however, due to a last minute meeting by President Obama with the House Democrats.