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Hanna's near-plagiarism

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 By **The Post-Standard Editorial Board**

On Feb. 9, Julian Sanchez of the Cato Institute, a Washington, D.C., think tank, analyzed the recent vote by Congress failing to reauthorize the Patriot Act.

Addressing the most controversial features of the bill, Sanchez wrote about "lone wolf" authority that "allows non-citizens ... who are suspected of involvement in terrorist activities to be monitored under the broad powers afforded by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act."

On Feb. 20, The Post-Standard published a commentary by Rep. Richard Hanna, R-Barneveld, explaining his vote against Patriot Act reauthorization. He wrote about "lone wolf" authority that "allows non-citizens ... who are suspected of involvement in terrorist activities to be monitored under the broad powers afforded by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act."

On Feb. 9, Sanchez discussed "roving wiretap authority" that "allows intelligence wiretap orders to follow a target across multiple phone lines or online accounts."

On Feb. 20, Hanna wrote about "roving wiretap authority" that "allows intelligence wiretap orders to follow a target across multiple phone lines or online accounts."

On Feb. 9, Sanchez observed that the Patriot Act's Section 215 "expanded the authority of the FISA Court to compel the production of business records or any other 'tangible thing.'"

On Feb. 20, Hanna also mentioned the act's provision that "expanded the authority of the FISA Court to compel the production of business records or any other 'tangible thing.'"

What gives? How could two people have authored the same phrases, word for word?

Obviously, they didn't. It turned out Hanna used Sanchez's piece as the basis for his commentary. Questioned about Hanna's piece, Sanchez said he gave the Central New York congressman permission to use his words, which he said were written to help inform members of Congress.

It would be one thing if Sanchez was a speech writer on Hanna's staff, or if Hanna put the verbatim portions he borrowed in quotation marks and credited Sanchez. But what Hanna did comes perilously close to

plagiarism, which the dictionary defines as "taking the ideas, writings, etc., from another and passing them off as one's own."

Hanna is a first-term congressman, but an experienced entrepreneur who should know better. Even if he felt he couldn't have said it better himself, he should have tried. His constituents expect him to think for himself, not let others do it for him.

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