

Get FISA Right

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Get FISA Right Offline: Write a Letter to the Editor

From its inception, [Get FISA Right](#) has been dedicated to building an online movement from within the context of the Obama for President campaign. But the passage of time and the turn of events have led to some subtle and not-so-subtle changes in Get FISA Right's focus.

During 2008, Get FISA Right reacted with chagrin to Senator Barack Obama's support for the FISA Amendments Act and pressured him to consider FISA reform as his inauguration approached; during 2009, we've watched as President Barack Obama has moved to definitively support and reinforce elements of George W. Bush's surveillance agenda. The agenda of Get FISA Right has become more distant from the agenda of President Obama as the President's agenda moves ever farther from the defense of American constitutional protections.

During 2008, Get FISA Right worked from within the Democratic Party base of supporters to rally support for a NO vote against the FISA Amendments Act; during 2009, we've watched as Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee joined Republicans to form a supermajority against civil liberty and for the reauthorization of Patriot Act. The reach of Get FISA Right has become less partisan, drawing from the expertise of libertarians such as Julian Sanchez of the CATO Institute and reaching toward Libertarian Party audiences in an effort to build more bridges.

During 2008, Get FISA Right was able to tap into the excitement of the presidential race and existing media coverage stemming from Senator Christopher Dodd's filibuster threats to build a large online activist presence. This year, there are no presidential elections and only one congressional elections. To my knowledge, newspapers' coverage of the introduction of surveillance reform bills [H.R. 3845](#) and [H.R. 3846](#) has been limited to [one Associated Press article](#) and one [Roll Call article](#).

There's no similar buzz this year over surveillance legislation, even though constitutional and practical problems with government surveillance remain unresolved by the Obama administration. And so as Get FISA Right continues its important work of building awareness online, there is a need to expand awareness of surveillance policy developments offline.

One way to build awareness of Patriot Act reauthorization, and of the need for Patriot Act and FISA reform, is to use the newspapers' voice *in spite of* most newspapers silence. In addition to your online twitter, facebook and blogging work, please consider writing a letter to the editor today. Your words may reach tens or even hundreds of thousands of readers, and if published will almost certainly gain the attention of your local paper's editorial staff. [Get FISA Right has added a wiki page with appropriate links](#) to background information and the [letter-writing engine at my.barackobama.com](#). Add your submitted letters to the wiki page as an inspiration for others who would like to write their own original letters but may not know where to begin.

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