



## There's A Secret Reason Why The Government Has To Keep It Secret How Many Americans It's Spying On Without A Warrant

from the because...-terrorism dept

The folks over at the **CATO** institute have put together a short five minute video on **the rush by the federal government to renew the FISA Amendments Act**, with no changes, which effectively has sanctioned warrantless wiretapping on millions of Americans. Even though the plain language of the bill suggests it only should be used on foreigners, it's become clear that thanks to weasel language in the bill, and a "secret" interpretation by a secret court, the definition of "targeting" foreigners has been interpreted to mean any communication that might possibly somehow shed light on some sort of illegal activity that might possibly maybe involve foreigners sometimes in some manner. As such, it seems likely that the NSA, in particular, has used this bill and its secret interpretation to sweep up huge databases of information about Americans, even as most people (including many in Congress) believe the bill only is used to spy on foreigners.

Privacy  
by Mike Masnick  
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The video is especially worth watching for the brief segment involving Senator Dianne Feinstein, who was the main supporter of extending these rules, responding to Senator Wyden's amendment that sought to have the NSA provide an estimate -- just an estimate -- of how many Americans had their information swept up by the NSA in its dragnet. Feinstein insists that *there's a secret reason* for why this information needs to be kept secret -- and promises to wave the piece of paper around (if someone hands it to her) that contains the secret reason that she can't tell us.

So, if you're keeping track at home, we've got a bill with plain language that most people incorrectly believes means that it only involves collecting data on foreigners. But thanks to a **secret** interpretation, it's almost certainly being used to collect tons of data on Americans, which is being kept **secret**. Furthermore, the NSA claims that it must keep **secret** whether or not it even has an estimate of how many Americans have had their data sucked up by this **secret** program because of, well, a **secret reason**.

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