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### Intelligence Bill: New carte blanche

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We can't recall being more baffled and, yes, disgusted in the majority of our senators. Given what we've seen them do in recent years, that's really saying something. The [source](#) of the fresh shame they've brought upon themselves is the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act amendment, which the Senate voted down on Monday, thereby granting immunity -- retroactively even -- to telecom companies that helped the government spy on Americans without court permission. The Senate then [approved the flawed bill](#), sending it on to the House (which is currently looking at a [different version](#) of the bill). Well, why not?

After all, if the government need not bother with court orders to spy on Americans as part of its 9/11 Terrorist Surveillance Program, why should telecom companies have to respect the privacy of their customers? If there was ever a filibuster-proof amendment, this should have been it. We can't imagine why so many -- 18 Democrats and all Republicans, minus Sen. Lindsay Graham, who skipped this one -- voted against the amendment supported by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid as well as Sens. Chris Dodd and Russell Feingold. In case you're keeping track, Sens. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell [voted](#) for the amendment (bravo!), as did Sen. Barack Obama, whereas Sen. Hillary Clinton chose to sit this one out.

To the 68 senators who sold us out by voting for the bill: You've really outdone yourselves this time. President Bush couldn't hope for better minions.

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