

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 27, 2009

The President
The White House
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. President:

As two of the four authors of the 2004 Intelligence Reform Act, we write to inquire about the delayed status of nominations to the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board. Creation of this Board was a key provision of the Act and an important part of our efforts to codify recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. We urge you to move quickly to select members for this Board, which currently cannot perform its mandated role.

The federal government's response to 9/11 led to a sweeping and unprecedented restructuring of the laws affecting our national security and civil liberties. As Congress considers expiring provisions of the PATRIOT Act, the views of the Oversight Board would have been very useful. The Board could be a critical resource as you and we tackle other difficult issues.

Congress is also considering legislation that would grant the president additional authorities to mitigate cybersecurity threats, and a fully functioning Oversight Board will help navigate existing privacy laws while creating methods to prevent disruptions of our government and commercial computer systems.

We respectfully request that you fulfill the pledge you made earlier this year to reconstitute the Board and accelerate the selection process of its members – and we stand ready to help in any way possible.

Regards,


JANE HARMAN


SUSAN COLLINS