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Hoekstra Introduces FISA Modernization Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra, R-Mich., the top Republican on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, today introduced legislation to modernize the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

“Our laws are meant to protect the rights of Americans, they should not be extended to terrorists and foreign adversaries,” Hoekstra said. “America faces a heightened threat of attack and the director of national intelligence warned Congress four months ago that we are not getting information needed to keep us safe. We need a serious bill to fix FISA; the time for foot-dragging is over.”

H.R. 3220 makes clear that FISA does not apply to surveillance to collect foreign intelligence on foreign targets outside the United States. It provides a means to authorize and compel assistance to the government from third parties to aid in gathering intelligence information on targets outside the United States. It also provides FISA Court review for those procedures and for reporting to Congress. The bill also provides a retroactive liability defense for those who may have provided or who provide assistance the U.S. Intelligence Community to protect America from attack. The bill keeps intact all current protections for the civil liberties of Americans.

“This bill makes it clear once and for all that court orders are not needed for spying on terrorists and rogue regimes like North Korea, Iran, Cuba and Venezuela,” Hoekstra said. “We are focusing the intelligence community on going after threats to our nation, not the bureaucracy and process that hinder their agile and swift response to potential threats.”

Joining Hoekstra as original cosponsors of the bill are Republican Leader John Boehner, R-Ohio; Republican Whip Roy Blunt, R-Mo.; and Republican Conference Chair Adam Putnam, R-Fla.

“Congressional Republicans are united on the need to pass meaningful FISA reform to protect the rights of Americans and eliminate loopholes that allow America’s enemies to shield their plots,” Hoekstra said. “Congress should not recess before passing a real FISA modernization bill and closing the terrorist loophole.”