

September 30, 2009

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Chairman  
Judiciary Committee  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy,

We are writing to thank you for your tireless commitment to protecting and advancing government transparency through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). As organizations and individuals concerned with government openness and accountability, we deeply appreciate your leadership on this critical issue.

Your nearly three decades of work to ensure the public has access to the information it needs to hold leaders accountable has left a lasting mark. Thanks to legislation you authored, co-authored, and championed, FOIA reflects the reality of modern electronic recordkeeping and accountability has been injected into the system for processing FOIA requests. By fighting off unnecessary exemptions, you have kept the law strong and effective. Additionally, you have increased compliance with and attention to public access by holding thorough oversight hearings.

We are especially appreciative of your dedication to making sure that policy makers consider both the public interest and the security interest before deciding to withhold information. While secrecy across the government has grown since the terrorist attacks of September 11, we know that we would have a much more secretive and less accountable government today if not for your personal efforts.

We look forward to working with you and your staff to improve FOIA in the coming years. We particularly look forward to supporting your efforts to enact legislation that makes it easier to identify new FOIA exemptions tucked into other pieces of legislation, and to working with you to make sure the newly established Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) has the support it needs to fulfill its mission.

Thank you, again, for your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

OpenTheGovernment.org

American Association of Law Libraries

American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression

American Civil Liberties Union

American Library Association

Arizona First Amendment Coalition

Association of American Publishers

Association of Research Libraries

Atlanta Law Libraries Association

Bill of Right Defense Committee

Center for Democracy and Technology

Center for National Security Studies

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington

Citizens for Sunshine

Collaboration on Government Secrecy

DC Open Government Coalition

Defending Dissent Foundation

Electronic Frontier Foundation

Electronic Privacy Information Center

Essential Information

Feminists for Free Expression

First Amendment Coalition

First Amendment Project

Government Accountability Project

iSolon.org

Law Librarians Association of Wisconsin

Law Librarians of New England

Law Librarians Society of Washington D.C.

League of Women Voters of the United States

Liberty Coalition

Minnesota Coalition on Government Information

National Coalition Against Censorship

National Freedom of Information Coalition

National Newspaper Association

National Security Archive

New Jersey Law Librarians Association

Northern California Association of Law Libraries

OMB Watch

People For the American Way

Political Research Associates

Project On Government Oversight

Public Citizen

Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility

Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press

San Diego Area Law Libraries

Social Responsibility Special Interest Section (SR-SIS), American Association of Law Libraries

Society of American Archivists

Society of Professional Journalists

Southern New England Law Librarians Association

South Florida Association of Law Libraries

Special Libraries Association

U.S. Bill of Rights Foundation

Utah Foundation for Open Government

Virginia Association of Law Libraries

Vermont Coalition for Open Government

Vermont Press Association

Washington Coalition for Open Government

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