

Dear Members of Congress,

The Maryland Library Association's Executive Board wishes to express its concern regarding recent reports published in *The Guardian* and *The Washington Post*. These reports, acknowledged as accurate by the White House, stated that the National Security Agency (NSA) has covertly collected phone and Internet records of citizens of the United States who are not under criminal investigation.

The *Post* and *Guardian* detailed how the NSA and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) are gaining unfettered access to the aggregated data from the leading U.S. phone and Internet companies as well as sharing this information with foreign governments. As reported, the U.S. government is accessing private audio, video, photograph, e-mail, and document information in addition to Internet connection logs. The vast majority of this data is not related to any criminal investigation or terrorist activity.

As educators, we are dedicated to preserving the privacy, intellectual curiosity, and intellectual freedom of all readers and researchers, especially those in our local communities. This responsibility has become increasingly difficult over the last several decades as the Internet has become an indispensable tool increasingly used by libraries and individuals for informational needs. These needs include data/transaction storage, customer service provisioning, third-party contract services, research, and research communication. Without question, the Internet has provided libraries with greater community reach and educational yield, but it has also made privacy management exponentially more difficult.

We appreciate that the Constitution balances the rights of privacy against the needs of law enforcement and security. Thus, we acknowledge and respect the importance of judicial oversight in preserving this balance. Blanket data collection by the government undermines judicial review, circumvents probable cause requirements, and tips the balance of privacy vis-a-vis national security.

With the above in mind, we, the Executive Board, on behalf of the Maryland Library Association members, ask Congress to investigate and provide a full public accounting of the NSA's and the FBI's data collection programs. We further request that Congress assure a well-informed judicial process to preserve both our freedom and security regarding records collection.

Thank you for your consideration and attention to this important Constitutional issue.

Sincerely,

The Maryland Library Association