

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 13, 2008

STATEMENT BY THE PRESS SECRETARY

Today a bipartisan majority of the House of Representatives voted down a bill that would have temporarily extended the Protect America Act ("PAA") an additional 21 days beyond its current expiration date of this Saturday, February 16, 2008. We commend the House for rejecting this misguided legislation that fails to provide a long-term foundation for our Intelligence Community to monitor terrorist communications quickly and effectively. In addition, this bill failed to provide liability protection for companies that did the right thing and assisted our efforts to defend America after the attacks of September 11. At a time when our enemies could be plotting against us, patchwork extensions of critical national security tools do not give our Intelligence Community the certainty they need to protect our Nation. Nor do they give needed certainty to our private partners, whose assistance is so vital to our intelligence efforts.

Yesterday, the Senate, by a wide bipartisan majority, passed a strong bill that would provide the certainty that we need. The President has called on the House to pass the Senate bill immediately. Failure by the House to pass the bipartisan Senate bill will jeopardize the security of our people. Without passage of the Senate bill, our ability to prevent new terrorist attacks will be weakened. And it will become harder for us to uncover terrorist plots. We must not allow this to happen. The PAA expires at the end of this week. The time for debate is over. The time for the House to act is now.

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