

Mr. Speaker, the bill here at issue, the so-called RESTORE Act, undermines the existing structure that we put in place to reform FISA only 3 months ago.

In the midst of a war, any changes to the way that our intelligence community operates should be understood as a somber and delicate undertaking that requires great care. Our national security hangs in the balance. We cannot afford to get this wrong, Mr. Speaker.

My amendment aimed to deal with the seriously flawed provision of the RESTORE Act that will do great damage to the civil liberties of the protections of Americans.

My amendment would have stricken section 11 of the bill that directs the Director of National Intelligence and the Attorney General to jointly maintain a recordkeeping system of U.S. persons whose communications are intercepted.

Mr. Speaker, this would amount to a big government database that would have individuals' identity attached in every practical way. There is simply no way to have a database like this that does not attach individual identities to verify the process. The Democrats maintain that the identity is not attached. But this is an impractical rebuttal.

Mr. Speaker, the proposal's not only misguided, it attempts ostensibly to protect Americans' civil liberties and only undermines them further. And we have to understand that these identities would be attached, even if they have no connection to spying or terrorism.

And the bottom line is this, Mr. Speaker, this war on terrorism is ultimately fought in the area of intelligence. If we knew where every terrorist was tonight, in 60 days this war would be over. And if we tie those people's hands who are fighting to protect this country with this RESTORE Act by the majority, I believe that we will some day revisit this issue, Mr. Speaker, because when a terrible tragedy comes on this country, it will transform this debate in the most profound way, and we need to be very, very careful. We need to understand that what we're doing here is of vital importance to future generations.