

Congress Unanimously Supports Paul Amendment to Protect Civil Liberties

July 22, 2005 Washington, DC: The U.S. House of Representatives yesterday voted unanimously in favor of legislation offered by Congressman Ron Paul that will help preserve the right of American citizens to participate in political activity without fear of government surveillance. Paul's amendment to a bill reauthorizing the Patriot Act makes it clear that the Act should not serve to chill political protest.

"I'm very concerned that the Patriot Act could be used to justify surveillance or intimidation of individuals solely because of their lawful political activities," Paul stated. "The Act defines terrorism so broadly that legitimate protest or other political action could be chilled. For example, a scuffle at an otherwise peaceful pro-life demonstration might allow the federal government to label the sponsoring organization and its members as terrorists. Similarly, you could be placed under federal surveillance if you belong to a gun rights group that a future administration doesn't like."

"These concerns are very real, as evidenced by the abuse of Internal Revenue Service power by both Democratic and Republican administrations," Paul continued. "Congress must ensure that no future administration uses the Patriot Act to silence or punish political opponents. I'm grateful that my congressional colleagues unanimously agree, and appreciate their support in sending a strong message that the Patriot Act does not give the federal government a green light to suppress political dissent."