

(Washington, DC) – U.S. Rep. Rush Holt (NJ-12) today issued the following statement upon the House’s passage of a four year extension of the FISA Amendments Act, which will allow continued, industrial-scale surveillance of American’s communications by the National Security Agency:

“This bill is just as bad now as it was when it became law almost four years ago. The measure continues the suspension of the 4th Amendment, allowing the government to electronically collect and search the communications of Americans without a warrant. This ‘fishing expedition’ approach to surveillance has not improved our security, and only eviscerated our liberties.

“As Senators Wyden and Udall have discovered, this blanket surveillance authority has been abused by our government, just as such blanket surveillance was abused in the Johnson and Nixon eras. I sincerely hope that Senator Wyden will not lift his hold on this legislation unless it is rewritten. Our surveillance laws should strictly adhere to a 4th Amendment standard—warrants should only be issued by a judge based on genuine probable cause.

“This is not simply a civil liberties nicety; it is a matter of getting better public safety by holding collectors and law enforcement to high standards. Our Founders understood why such protections are essential to protect the rights of the people, and to promote better, not worse, protection of the people. We ignore their wisdom at our peril.”