

Federal agents went into a library and asked for a list of everyone who checked out a book on Osama bin Laden—which likely would include people who wanted to learn about his connection to the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington—and that overall, since those attacks libraries have received more than 200 formal and informal requests for materials, including 49 requests from federal officers.

It is not clear what authority (if any) was cited by the federal officers for obtaining this information—and, because recipients of orders issued under section 215 not only have no effective way of challenging them but in fact are prohibited from disclosing to anyone but their attorneys that they received such an order, there is no way of knowing how often this authority has been used.

So, I remain concerned about the possibility that the “PATRIOT Act” would be used to obtain very private information—whether library records, medical information, or gun purchase records—without an adequate showing of a connection to terrorism.

It is true that this bill would make some worthwhile changes to current law, including allowing the recipient of a Section 215 order to challenge it before a three-judge panel of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, FISC, in Washington, DC, and assert that the law was wrongly applied.

But I think we ought to have at least had the opportunity to debate more substantial reform to this part of the law.

To begin with, we should have been able to at least consider a limited exemption for bookstores and libraries, along the lines of the bipartisan amendment that the House voted to add to the Justice Department appropriations bill for fiscal 2006. However, the Republican leadership blocked that amendment from even being offered.

Further, I think consideration should be given to changing the standard for issuing a section 215 order, to require some individual suspicion that the records the government wants are related to a spy, terrorist or other foreign agent—which could include the records of other parties if they were clearly relevant to the activities of the subject under investigation. Again, no amendment along those lines was allowed consideration.

It is true that the House did have the opportunity to consider a number of worthwhile amendments. I was glad to have the chance to vote for them, and am glad that so many were adopted. However, we should have had the chance to consider many more.

For example, the House ought to have had the chance to at least debate changes such as some proposed in the Intelligence and Judiciary Committees. I have in mind the amendment to “sunset” the so-called “lone wolf” provision, approved by the Intelligence Committee and an amendment offered in the Judiciary Committee to restore a requirement for reporting on the disclosure of electronic communications that was included in the bill approved by the Judiciary Committee in 2001 but later stripped by the Rules Committee without explanation.

Unfortunately, the Republican leadership did not allow any of these amendments to even be debated on the House floor, although it did allow time for a new amendment—not considered in committee, as far as I can tell—that would, among other things, change the rules

for jury trials in many federal criminal trials, evidently including some not related to terrorism.

And so, Mr. Chairman, my reaction to the bill now before the House is similar to the one I had to the original “Patriot Act” legislation four years ago.

As I did then, I strongly support combating terrorism, here at home as well as abroad.

But I continue to think that it is essential that we remember and respect the Constitutional rights of law-abiding Americans as we wage war against those who would destroy both our Constitution and our country. In fact, I think that if we don't do that we will lose much of what we are seeking to defend.

And, now as then, I have concluded that for the reasons I have mentioned this bill as it stands—especially after rejection of the proposal to shorten the extension of expiring provisions—does not strike the right balance, and should not become law in its present form.

But, now as four years ago, I am hopeful that the bill will be further improved as the legislative process continues.

Four years ago, that did not happen. However, I think there is good reason to think that this time history will not repeat itself.

There evidently is considerable support in the other body—by Senators on both sides of the aisle—for provisions that would improve on this legislation. I hope and expect that the Senate will make such improvements and that in the end the result will be a measure that deserves the support of all Members of Congress.

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION
COMMEMORATING THE 40TH AN-
NIVERSARY OF THE VOTING
RIGHTS ACT OF 1965

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 22, 2005

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to join Congressman JOHN LEWIS in introducing a resolution commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. On August 6, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law. This Act is one of the Nation's most important civil rights victories and serves as a tribute to those that marched, struggled, and even died to secure the right to vote for all Americans.

Brave Americans of different races, ethnicities, and religions risked their lives to stand up for political equality. Most notably, on March 7, 1965, a day that would come to be known as “Bloody Sunday,” nonviolent civil rights activists, like Congressman JOHN LEWIS, were brutalized and demeaned in their pursuit of voting rights for all Americans. It took this horrific violence for the Nation to realize it had to own up to the democratic ideals it preached. Eight days later, President Lyndon B. Johnson called for a comprehensive and effective voting rights bill.

This call for a voting rights bill was to ensure that this country realized the 15th Amendment of the Constitution, that “the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” Forty

years later, the Act has proven effective in furthering this Constitutional ideal, as it has enhanced political participation and opportunity among racial and ethnic minorities. Today the Voting Rights Act also serves to protect the rights of language minority and disabled voters.

Please join us in celebrating this significant progress from 40 years of enforcement of the Voting Rights Act.

THE ELEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE PASSING OF THE
LUBAVITCHER REBBE

HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 22, 2005

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, Sunday July 10, 2005 (3 Tamuz, 5765), marked the eleventh anniversary of the passing of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of righteous memory. When Rabbi Schneerson first became the Rebbe, or spiritual leader, of Chabad-Lubavitch, the movement had barely survived the brutality of the Holocaust. Yet, over the course of his 44 years as “The Rebbe,” Rabbi Schneerson turned Chabad-Lubavitch into a worldwide movement.

Under the Rebbe's leadership, Chabad-Lubavitch began to offer educational and social services to the elderly, ill, and infirm. Over time, and under Rabbi Schneerson's leadership, Chabad-Lubavitch became a global force for good-will and kindness. It is not surprising therefore, that upon Rabbi Schneerson's passing, both this House, as well as the Senate, voted unanimously to award him the Congressional Gold Medal.

It is a testament to the Rebbe's leadership that Chabad-Lubavitch's social, educational, and humanitarian efforts did not cease upon his passing. In fact, Chabad-Lubavitch presently has over four thousand emissaries operating more than three thousand institutions around the globe. Chabad-Lubavitch offers vital outreach and social services to communities in more than sixty countries on six continents.

In the wake of the devastating Tsunami in South-East Asia, Chabad-Lubavitch responded to the crisis in a manner consistent with Rabbi Schneerson's teachings and leadership. Chabad-Lubavitch of Thailand has extended a helping hand to all Tsunami victims and survivors, regardless of race or religion.

Chabad-Lubavitch has provided both funding and technical assistance to local relief organizations in order to support the local relief effort. Chabad-Lubavitch also provides interest free loans to Tsunami survivors in order to assist in the economic recovery of individuals and communities. Chabad-Lubavitch also participates in an ongoing effort to provide fresh food and drinking water to the villages of Koh Muk, Laem Naew, Baan Talae Nok, Ko Rah, Bak Jok, Ko Surin, and Tung Dap.

Mr. Speaker, while we continue to honor Rabbi Schneerson's memory, we must also celebrate his ongoing legacy of kindness and compassion.