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With Liberty, No Justice, At All (parody of pledge)
The Fight That Has Nothing to Do with Terrorism
Control: Now:: Freedom: Past
PATRIOT ACT: Now:: Bill of Rights: Past
Before September 11, 2001, America had no invasions since the Pearl
Harbor incident that forced Americans to join World War II. There was an
impulsive reaction to Pearl Harbor by imprisoning all the Japanese-
Americans. There was a comparable reaction after September 11 by
imprisoning most of America's free rights. This backlash became a law and
is an acronym called Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing
Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act, or USA
PATRIOT Act. The USA PATRIOT Act is a three hundred forty-two-page document
presented before the Senate in a one and a half hour hearing given by
Attorney General Ashcroft. He took no questions and gave no opportunity for
testimony from opponents. The USA PATRIOT Act was voted to be a law in a
record breaking forty-five days because America wanted to know that the
government would do something to protect the citizens. Most representatives
will now agree that it was an unread proposal. The USA PATRIOT Act is a
violation of everything America stands for, and it needs to be exceedingly
modified.

The USA PATRIOT Act infringes the Bill of Rights. The USA PATRIOT Act
states that the government can monitor all roving forms of communication.

It means the bureaucracy can wiretap the phones of the terrorists, their
friends, and their businesses. Anyone's body or place of residence can be
searched without a warrant. All financial matters, including credit reports
and bank transactions, have to be reported by the financial institutions.

It even goes as far to say that librarians have to tell what books were
checked out without revealing it to the suspected criminal or suffer the
penalty of imprisonment. If the subject were to be apprehended, it could be
done without a reason or even a suspicion for arrest. While being held, the
government can refuse the right to a lawyer and refuse the right to let the
family know where one is. This is a direct contamination of our first,
fourth, and sixth amendments of The Bill of Rights.

The government has defined checks and balances, and the USA
PATRIOT Act disregards them. The government is split up into three agencies
that are assigned to watch one another to avoid abuse of power. The USA
Patriot Act allows the Executive branch of the government to take authority
by searching a person's home without a warrant, which does not allow the
Judicial branch to decide if it overthrows the Executive branch's
authorized power. The Justice department has a secret court with a panel of
judges to decide who is a terrorist and who is not. Kelley O'Meara, author
of " Losing the War For Civil Liberties; Civil Libertarians Contend
Politicians Have Pulled A Bait And Switch By Using The War On Terrorism To
Implement Intrusive--And Unconstitutional--Security Measures," interviews
several authoritative figures and discusses a police state. John Whitehead,
founder of a civil rights institute, feels that we have set the groundwork
for a police state with this bill that has been trying to be passed for
years (O'Meara 4-5).

The USA PATRIOT Act is so broad that it can be used for anyone.

" Domestic terrorism is defined very broadly as 'any action that endangers
human life that is a violation of any Federal or State law'" (Ramasastry
2). It could be anything from speeding to someone making a bad phone call
about a person, and that person is a " suspected terrorist." In " Show Me the
Money: PATRIOT ACT Helps The Feds In Cases With No Tie To Terror", Michael
Isikoff discusses a Las Vegas man accused of a crime. The man, a local
casino owner, is suspected of bribing local officials to prevent a lap
dance ordinance from occurring. The USA PATRIOT ACT allowed the FBI to
submit the name to the Treasury Department to get all financial records;
whereas before they would have to go from bank to bank with a warrant. This
allowed them to look up records and indict a handful of people involved in
it. Isikoff also explains that out of 6, 397 records pulled, only two-thirds
were in money-laundering cases with no terror connection (Isikoff 36). Many
government organizations can use the tools that were originally intended
for terrorist activities.

The USA PATRIOT Act is a dilemma leading America toward a police
state, and the law needs to be substantially modified. Whether one has a
liberal or conservative view, the results will be against all wishes of
this country if nothing changes. However, steps are being made in the
correct direction. CNN had a news report titled " Federal Judge Rules Part
of PATRIOT Act Unconstitutional" where the judge outlawed the right to ban
expert advice and assistance. In " A Federalism Role Reversal," Matthew
Segal discusses America fighting back. He states how Alaska, Hawaii,
Vermont, and over one hundred forty-five communities are passing
resolutions to refuse to help federal agents in ways that violate the
rights guaranteed to the Americans. The main problem with the USA PATRIOT
ACT is that it has little to do with fighting terrorism. The USA PATRIOT
Act is a good concept that needs to be modified and narrowed down to
protect the general public, not to endanger their freedom.