

Patriot games essay



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Ever since the towers fell on September 11, 2001, and the flags began to fly, and the soldiers went over, there has been a defining separation over the best and most effective way to fight the “ war on terrorism”. New legislation on Capitol Hill created to deal with these threats was at first met with full and unhindered support, as immediate action was needed to effectively respond to the attacks.

In the past few years however, these laws have been more intimately scrutinized and examined, and have been met with increasing opposition and debate. The central issue behind these concerns is the potential for violations of civil liberties that these laws may allow, as unintentional as it may be. But the larger, more concerning issue goes beyond the actions of Capitol Hill, asking the question, “ Do the ends justify the means? ” In fighting this “ war on terror” we have been forced to change the way we view and approach our new world, let’s face it, this isn’t the country that our grandparents grew up in or even the country that our parents grew up in for that matter. While, hopefully, most Americans agree that freedom and liberty is worth fighting for, the ideas that everyone has are as vast as the country is big. One such piece of legislation, the PATRIOT Act, has become the poster child for people frustrated with the way the government has handled our security after September 11. While there certainly are questionable sections to the act that deserve our attention and analysis, the results of actions taken because of the PATRIOT Act have explicitly made this country safer and more secure.

I feel fairly confident that the idea of “ roving surveillance” is something that would really deter someone planning to mark another black day in American history. Everyone who lost a loved one on that tragic day in September of 2001 should be behind this law whole-heartedly, and even those who didn’t should be. I didn’t personally know someone whose life came to such an abrupt and terrifying end on that Tuesday morning, but that didn’t make watching those towers fall any less painful, because they were our countrymen, dying because they were American. A terrorist who is aware of this law and is worried that his house, property, or assets are randomly under surveillance and cancels his plans is another victory over terrorism. Giving the government power to provide for a safer and better nation is something that should be desperately desired for, not protested against. Those who are wasting their time protesting against making the country safer are so blind to the fact that terrorists could be living right next door to them.

Chances are that none of these complainers would be affected at all, unless they themselves are doing something that would affect the security of the nation. I stand with the notion that every effort must be taken to preserve our nation’s safety. The rights and liberties of all Americans must be defended with all possible vigor. In light of this, Congress passed the USA PATRIOT Act Improvement and Reauthorization Act in 2005. This new PATRIOT Act is even more powerful than the original PATRIOT Act, and both forms of legislation are crucial to winning the “ War on Terror”.

This legislation reauthorizes all expiring sections of the USA PATRIOT Act, adds dozens of additional safeguards to protect the privacy and civil liberties

of all Americans', and strengthens port security. Doyle) This reauthorizing legislation provides essential support for our efforts to protect both Americans and the values that Americans take for granted. Since October of 2001, the PATRIOT Act has been fundamental to winning the " War on Terror" and defending this nation. When signed into law by Congress, it would allow intelligence and law enforcement officials to continue sharing information, and use the same tools against terrorists that are already used against current criminals. While safeguarding against potential misuse to Americans' civil liberties, the PATRIOT Act also strengthens the United States Department of Justice so that it can better uncover and disrupt terrorist threats, and gives law enforcement officials new tools to combat everyday threats.

(Doyle) Both the original USA PATRIOT Act, and the improved USA PATRIOT Act significantly increase the surveillance, and investigative powers of law enforcement agencies. America still faces dangerous enemies, but it's not from the same enemies that we faced 50 years ago, it's not the nation-states that warred in years past, but from terrorist cells. The number one priority of the United States government should be preserving the American way of life, and this is shown in the USA PATRIOT Act Improvement and Reauthorization Act. When the President first signed the PATRIOT Act, the " War on Terror" became simpler to fight and it became more likely that the government would be able to prevent future attacks on Americans, at home and around the globe. Because of the new laws, new terrorist attacks have been foiled with the discovery that in fact, terrorists have been living among us. It has helped law enforcement officials break up terror cells in Ohio, New York,

Oregon, and Virginia, and also aided in the prosecution of terrorist operatives and supporters in California, Texas, New Jersey, Illinois, Washington, and North Carolina.

(White House) Now, with the USA PATRIOT Act Improvement and Reauthorization Act, American's can continue to feel safe in their daily routines, unlike the unfortunate victims on that fateful Tuesday morning. The PATRIOT Act has accomplished what it was designed to do and to this day is continuing to do so. The PATRIOT Act, is a key weapon in the fight against terrorism. But in order for the government to provide the American citizens with a failsafe and secure nation, there must be some very minor things taken away from the citizens.

The PATRIOT Acts limits the civil liberties granted to the American citizens only to the point where the security of the country is insured. As former Attorney General Janet Reno told the 9/11 commission, " Generally, everything that's been done in the PATRIOT Act has been helpful...while at the same time maintaining the balance with respect to civil liberties.

(Congress) The opponents to the PATRIOT Act claim that it depletes the checks on law enforcement that are allowed for our protection under the Constitution. They say the PATRIOT Act is ultimately taking away our inalienable rights.

But according to the Justice's Department Inspector General, who is required, by law, to examine the use of the PATRIOT Act and report any abuses, reported that there has not been any instances in which the PATRIOT Act has been taken advantage of to infringe on civil rights or liberties. Department of

Justice) In a publication from the German Law Journal, Viet Dinh, former Attorney General said “ The Patriot Act, by combining ideals and technique is the domestic shield for American democracy. ”(Dihn) Another defense of the PATRIOT Act’s non-infringement on civil rights and liberties comes from Senator Dianne Feinstein, who stated at a Judiciary Committee hearing on the PATRIOT Act that, “ I have never had a single abuse of the PATRIOT Act reported to me. My staff asked the ACLU, The American Civil Liberties Union, for actual instances of abuses.

They said they had none. (Tell) “ An honest man has nothing to hide”. These are some wise words that I have heard many people say in many different situations, whether it is someone suspected of lying, to someone who may indeed have something much larger to hide. Because I take these words to heart, I have nothing to fear when the law decides to take action as is allowed under the PATRIOT Act and decides to check out my phone records or look through my internet files.

The USA PATRIOT Act is and will continue to be an invaluable tool to protect America and prevent other, even more destructive terrorist acts from occurring, if used properly. It has helped our law enforcement community detect terrorist cells, disrupt terrorist plots, and ultimately, save American lives. The PATRIOT Act is a benefit for Americans, because we can now be much more content knowing that potential terrorists are being discovered and brought to justice before they can commit any damage to our society. If it requires a minor invasion of privacy, so be it.

I'll be happy in the thoughts knowing that I'm safely living in the greatest country in the world. Works Cited Congress. Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions. US Congress. May 21, 2004. Congressional Record.

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