# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 6, 2006

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Specter:

We were gratified that Congress agreed to extend the expiring provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act at the end of last year's Congressional session. Although the PATRIOT Act must be modified to better protect the constitutional rights of innocent Americans, the important tools the original law provides law enforcement in the fight against terrorism should not be allowed to expire.

This extension gives Congress and the Administration more time to add additional civil liberties safeguards to the PATRIOT Act reauthorization conference report – safeguards that in no way will hinder law enforcement's ability to investigate and prosecute terrorists. As you will recall, last year we identified our most serious concerns with the conference report in a Dear Colleague letter (a copy of which is attached for your convenience).

We appreciate the hard work you have done to bring the Congress close to agreement on a final PATRIOT Act reauthorization bill. However, we still firmly believe that modest but critical changes can and must be made to the conference report to address the needs of law enforcement and protect the civil liberties of law-abiding Americans.

We look forward to working closely with you this month to pass an improved PATRIOT Act reauthorization bill before the expiring provisions sunset on February 3rd.

Sincerely,

Larry E. Craig

Richard J. Durbin

John E. Sununu

Russell D. Feingold

Lisa Murkowski

Ken Salazar

Chuck Hagel

John F. Kerry

Barack Obama

cc: The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy, Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary

Attachment