

Bilirakis: Pass Permanent FISA Fix Now

Posted: By GUS BILIRAKIS

The Majority has failed in its effort to forge a permanent fix to the FISA law. This inefficacy may not harm U.S. national security in the immediate term, because existing spy orders may continue to be carried out in the absence of a FISA extension under the old law. However, such a deficit may certainly create difficulties for our intelligence and national security agencies moving forward.

By the Majority constantly delaying a permanent FISA fix, they demonstrate a clear inability to address important issues that directly affect our national security and efforts in the Global War on Terror.

Some both inside and outside of Congress have argued that there is no rush to pass a permanent fix; that nothing will change if the temporary FISA law expires at the end of this week. The Majority claims that if they can't muster the necessary compromise for passing a permanent fix, they will simply pass another extension.

This misguided strategy, however, does not take into account the immediate threat to our nation's security. If FISA warrants were to back up because of a lapse in the current FISA fix, or extra time was needed to secure warrants on new targets, this would negatively impact our efforts to conduct surveillance on individuals who may pose great harm to the people of the United States.

Additionally, I wonder how much more time the Majority will need to pass a permanent fix. Their inability to act in a decisive manner on such a clear requirement for national security is nothing short of a failure of leadership.

The answer is simple: stop wasting the time of this Congress and squandering the security of the American people by simply putting off until tomorrow that which can easily be done today. The technological innovations of the 21st Century and the cunning and adaptability of those who wish to harm the United States and our allies are not waiting for Congress to get its act together and pass legislation that would thwart their activities.

Pass a permanent fix for FISA now, and do it before this Congress adjourns for the President's Day work period.