



Biden Signs Bill Into Law Extending Warrantless Spying Powers

Description

US : On Saturday, President Biden signed a bill into law extending Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), which gives the federal government the power to spy on Americans without a warrant.

The Senate passed the Section 702 extension at 11:45 pm on Friday night, 15 minutes before the spy tool was due to expire. The legislation President Biden signed into law extends Section 702 until April 2026.

The bill passed through the Senate in a vote of 60-34, with 17 Democrats, 16 Republicans, and one Independent voting against the spying powers. A week earlier, the legislation passed the House in a vote of 273-147.

Section 702 gives the federal government the ability to spy on Americans by allowing warrantless surveillance of foreign citizens and any US citizens they communicate with. The surveillance allows the collection of emails, texts, and other types of digital communications.

Lawmakers in both chambers opposed to the sweeping power attempted to include an amendment that would require a warrant for the collection of Americans, but the efforts failed.

One change that was included in the legislation requires members of Congress to be notified if they become subject to Section 702 surveillance. The requirement does not extend to ordinary Americans.

“I think the American people would be a little concerned if they knew that there was a notification exception for a member of Congress that didn’t apply to regular citizens,” Rep. Thomas Massie (R-KY) said when the bill was being debated in the House. “I think we all deserve protection under the Constitution.”

by Dave DeCamp

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