



## Report: FBI Spied On 3.3 Million Americans Without A Warrant

### Description

USA: Top House Republicans are demanding answers from the [FBI](#) after court-ordered information came to light showing that the federal agency had collected the information of over 3 million Americans without a warrant.

In a May 25 letter to FBI Director Christopher Wray, Reps. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) and Mike Turner (R-Ohio) asked Wray to explain why his agency had wiretapped and gathered personal information on over 3.3 million Americans without a warrant ([pdf](#)).

Limited authority to gather foreign intelligence information is granted by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act ([FISA](#)).

Specifically, section 702 of the bill says: “the Attorney General (AG) and the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) may jointly authorize the targeting of (i) non-U.S. persons (ii) who are reasonably believed to be outside of the United States (iii) to acquire foreign intelligence information.”

However, this power can grant an expanding circle of possible searches to the FBI and other intel agencies, who can use the same power against American citizens who had any interaction with targeted foreigners.

Historically, insight into how FISA has been used against American citizens has been limited and hidden behind classified reports.

However, a November 2020 decision by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISC)—which serves as a watchdog for U.S. intelligence agencies—required that the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) report “the number of U.S. person queries run by the FBI against Section 702-acquired information.”

In accordance with these new requirements, ODNI's recently-released Annual Statistical Transparency Report included data on how often the FBI gathered information on American citizens using section 702 in 2021.

In total, queries against U.S. citizens came out to a jaw-dropping 3,394,053 searches. By comparison, only 1,324,057 such queries were made in 2020, representing around a 250 percent increase during President Joe Biden's first year in office.

According to ODNI more than half of these queries—approximately 1.9 million—were part of the larger investigation of alleged Russian attempts to target or weaken U.S. critical infrastructure.

The ODNI report also admitted that on at least four occasions, the FBI failed to get FISC approval before accessing the contents of information collected under section 702.

This is not the first time the FBI has been caught red-handed overstepping its legal authority under section 702.

In November 2020, the FISC announced that “the government ... reported numerous incidents” in which the FBI reviewed information gathered under section 702 without obtaining proper permission from the court.

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