

**Statement of Senator Ron Wyden Regarding the Intelligence
Authorization Bill for Fiscal Year 2016
July 27, 2015**

M. President, the Senate is being asked today to approve the intelligence authorization bill for fiscal year 2016 by unanimous consent. When this bill was reported by the Senate Intelligence Committee, I and other colleagues noted that it contained one provision that required further debate.

This provision, section 603, would require Internet and communications companies to make reports to the government if they become aware of “terrorist activity.” Over the past three weeks a number of Internet companies have raised very valid concerns about this provision. In particular, they note that this provision is quite vague, and does not specify how these companies should know what is and is not terrorist activity.

The Internet Association, which is comprised of dozens of leading technology companies, has warned that uncertainty about the meaning of this vague language will create “an impossible compliance problem” and lead to “massive reporting of items that are not likely to be of material concern to public safety.” That’s obviously something that I think every senator wants to avoid. Internet companies should not be subject to broad requirements to police the speech of their users.

There is no question that tracking terrorist activity and preventing online terrorist recruitment should be top priorities for law enforcement and intelligence agencies. And leading technology companies certainly have a role to play here. The Director of the FBI testified this month that technology companies are “pretty good about telling us” when they see something of serious concern. But I haven’t yet heard any law enforcement or intelligence agencies suggest that this provision will actually help catch terrorists, and I take the concerns that have been raised about its breadth and vagueness seriously.

For these reasons, I object to this unanimous consent request. I look forward to working with my colleagues to revise or remove this provision so that the rest of the bill can proceed forward.