Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this bill. I was

opposed to the Patriot Act in 2001, and do not believe now that it is a

good idea to extend it.

The Fourth Amendment is rather clear. It says that we should be

secure in our papers, our persons, our homes, and our effects; and,

that if warrants are to be issued, we have to do it with probable

cause, and describe in particular the places, the people, and the

things that we are going to look at.

I think what has happened, though, over the years has been that we

have diluted the Fourth Amendment. It was greatly diluted in 2001, but

it started a lot earlier than that. When the FISA law was originally

written in 1978, that really introduced the notion that the Fourth

Amendment was relative and not absolute. Later on, it was further

weakened in 1998, and then of course in 2001.

I think our reaction to the horrors of 9/11--we can understand the

concern and the fear that was developed, but I think the reaction took

us in the wrong direction, because the assumption was made of course

that we weren't spending enough money on surveillance. Even though then

our intelligence agencies received $40 billion, that didn't give us the

right information. So now we are spending $80 billion. But it also

looks like the conclusion was that the American people had too much

privacy, and if we undermine the American people's privacy, somehow or

another we are going to be safer.

I think another thing that has come up lately has been that the

purpose of government is to make us perfectly safe. Now, it is good to

be safe, but governments can't make us safe. I question whether or not

we have been made safer by the Patriot Act. But let's say a law makes

us somewhat safer. Is that a justification for the government to do

anything they want?

For instance, if you want to be perfectly safe from child abuse and

wife beating, the government could put a camera in every one of our

houses and our bedrooms, and maybe there would be somebody made safer

this way. But what would you be giving up?

So perfect safety is not the purpose of government. What we want from

government is to enforce the law and to protect our liberties.

This, to me, has been, especially since 9/11, a classical example of

sacrificing liberty for safety and security. Now, I didn't invent those

terms. They have been around a long time. And it is easily justified,

and I can understand it, because I was here in 2001 when this came up,

and people become frightened, and the American people want something

done. But I think this is misdirected, and it doesn't serve our

benefits.

I think at this time we should really question why we are extending

this. We are extending the three worst parts. Why were these sunsetted?

Because people had concern about them. They weren't sure they were good

pieces and maybe they were overkill, and, therefore, they were saying

we had better reassess it.

So what have we done? We have already extended it twice, and here we

are going to do it again, with the intent, I think, in a year to

reassess this. But this bill doesn't make things worse, it doesn't make

anything better, but it does extend what I consider and others consider

bad legislation. I ask for a ``no'' vote on this legislation.