



23 June 2005

The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker,

I am writing to advise you of the strong support of the Fraternal Order of Police for legislation to reauthorize the USA PATRIOT Act and make permanent its critical intelligence and intelligence-related authorities.

The USA PATRIOT Act has enabled law enforcement officers to use the same investigatory tools used in criminal cases against suspected terrorists seeking to attack our nation and its people. The law was enacted by wide Congressional majorities, but its most important provisions will expire at the end of this calendar year. Congress needs to consider and pass legislation to permanently authorize the bill's expiring intelligence-related provisions so that the intelligence and law enforcement communities can continue to share information about the ongoing threats our nation faces from terrorists. Without this type of cooperation, the ability of law enforcement to prevent future attacks is considerably lessened.

For this reason, we are particularly concerned by the success of a House amendment to H.R. 2862, the "Science, State, Justice Commerce, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act," which greatly reduces the effectiveness of Section 215 of the USA PATRIOT Act by prohibiting investigators from obtaining library circulation records, library patron lists, book sales records, or book customer lists. This restriction is a serious mistake. While Section 215 has not been used, as of 30 March 2005, to obtain any such records, this is not to say that such information may never be of value during an investigation, as it was while building the case against Olympic Park bomber Eric Rudolph. In that case, a grand jury served a subpoena on a bookseller to obtain records showing that Rudolph had purchased a book giving instructions on how to build a particularly unusual detonator that had been used in several bombings, which was crucial evidence in helping to establish him as the bomber.

Libraries and bookstores have never been exempt from similar investigations and to do so in investigations into terrorist activities might compromise the ability of law enforcement to keep our nation safe from future attacks. We can never forget that our terrorist enemies are determined, resourceful, and patient—we should not be providing them with safe havens in

libraries and bookstores. Our nation's intelligence and law enforcement communities are hard at work every hour of every day protecting our nation from future attacks, but without the tools provided in the USA PATRIOT Act, including Section 215, this cooperation will be tremendously difficult—which places all of us at greater risk.

I thank you for your work and leadership in the House and look forward to working with your staff to support the legislation reauthorizing the USA PATRIOT Act. If I can be of any further assistance on this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco in my Washington office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chuck Canterbury". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Chuck Canterbury
National President

cc: The Honorable Alberto R. Gonzales, U.S. Attorney General