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Contact:

Ginger McCall, Director
EPIC Open Government Project
(202) 483-1140 x 102
mccall@epic.org

EPIC FILES LAWSUIT SEEKING DETAILS OF PLAN TO AMASS GOVERNMENT DATABASES

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Electronic Privacy Information Center, or “EPIC,” has filed a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit against the Office of the Director of National Intelligence for details of the agency’s plan to increase data collection on Americans.

The ODNI is the top intelligence agency in the United States, coordinating the activities of several agencies, including the Central Intelligence Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Department of Homeland Security.

Under guidelines that were adopted earlier this year, the Office of Director of National Intelligence plans to obtain and integrate databases across the federal government containing detailed personal information. The data will be kept for up to five years without the privacy safeguards typically in place for government databases.

"The ODNI now has the authority to collect a vast amount of information on Americans," said Marc Rotenberg, EPIC Executive Director. "The purpose of the EPIC lawsuit is to determine whether there are privacy protections in place."

The EPIC Freedom of Information Act lawsuit asks the agencies to disclose the procedures it has established to correct inaccurate information and to make sure personal information is not used improperly.

Under the federal Privacy Act, government agencies are routinely expected to provide these protections. But the new program has raised concerns that the government will disregard privacy rights.

"The guidelines do not comply with requirements of the Privacy Act," said Ginger McCall, Director of the EPIC Open Government Project and the lead attorney in the case. "The Privacy Act places clear limits on profiling American citizens. But the ODNI guidelines open the door to Big Brother surveillance. This is precisely what the Privacy Act was intended to prevent."

EPIC's lawsuit comes as Congress is considering legislation that would expand ability of the government to monitor the Internet and to profile Internet users.

About EPIC

Established in 1994, EPIC focuses public attention on emerging privacy and civil liberties issues. EPIC routinely files Freedom of Information Act lawsuits against the federal government, and has successfully obtained formerly secret documents from many federal agencies including the DHS, the FBI, and the Department of Justice.

Resources

EPIC: Freedom of Information Act Requests (March 28, 2012, June 15, 2012)

www.epic.org/foia/EPIC-NCTC-Priority-List-Request-03-28-12.pdf

www.epic.org/foia/EPIC-NCTC-Guide-Request-06-14-12.pdf

www.epic.org/foia/EPIC-NCTC-Guide-Request-06-15-12.pdf

www.epic.org/foia/EPIC-NCTC-Docs-Request-06-15-12.pdf

EPIC: Complaint in United States Federal District Court

www.epic.org/foia/EPIC-v-ODNI-Complaint.pdf

EPIC: Open Government

<http://epic.org/privacy/litigation/>

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