



BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER

June 27, 2012

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader McConnell:

We write to advocate for the confirmation of the five nominees to the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board (PCLOB), which were approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee. If confirmed, the five nominees – Rachel Brand, Elizabeth Cook, James Dempsey, David Medine, and Patricia Wald – would comprise the first membership of the PCLOB as an independent body since its authorization in 2007. The Board is designed to play a crucial oversight role in preventing the intentional or accidental misuse of personal information across the government, and its establishment should be a high priority.

The PCLOB was created in statute based on a recommendation of the 9/11 Commission to impose additional oversight over homeland security measures that may implicate the privacy of Americans. For example, the FBI uses tools such as National Security Letters to request information on potential terrorists, and the federal government seeks increased coordination with the private sector on cyber issues—practices which increase access to personal information. By developing privacy guidelines and maintaining oversight, the Board would provide a strong assurance that the privacy and civil liberties of American citizens will be protected, and the additional legal clarity will also help national security officials to act with confidence.

We commend the Senate Judiciary Committee for reporting out the slate of five nominees to the Senate, and we ask you to expeditiously confirm the slate of nominees so the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board may begin its intended role of providing oversight across the government.

Sincerely,

Tom Kean
Co-Chair, Homeland Security Project
Co-Chair, 9/11 Commission

Lee Hamilton
Co-Chair, Homeland Security Project
Co-Chair, 9/11 Commission