

Stop the Online Spying Bill

Want to give the federal government and big companies new powers to spy on you?

You're in luck: There's a bill for that.

It's called CISPA — the "Cyber Intelligence Sharing and Protection Act" — and it's a frightening piece of legislation. It could allow for a new online spying regime, letting Big Brother read, watch and listen to everything we do on the Internet.

CISPA could lead to attacks on our right to speak freely online.

CISPA would allow companies and the government to bypass privacy protections and share all sorts of information about what Americans do online. The legislation makes it far easier for authorities to spy on your email traffic, comb through your mobile texts, filter your online content and even block access to popular websites.

It would have a chilling effect on free speech — creating an

environment in which we refrain from posting on Facebook, conducting Web searches, sending emails, writing blog posts or communicating online for fear that the National Security Agency — the same agency that's conducted online "warrantless wiretapping" for years — could come knocking. ([Go here to learn more about the bill and to take action to stop it.](#))

If this bill passes, authorities won't have to worry about pesky privacy laws getting in the way the next time they want to grab your Facebook history or search through your email. All they'll need is the vague sense that the information relates to a "cyber threat" — a poorly defined concept in the bill. And you'll never know they shared that information.

CISPA's broad language could lead all too easily to governmental and corporate attacks on our right to speak freely online. And while there is a real need to protect vital national interests from cyber attacks, we can't do it at the expense of our basic civil rights.