

WASHINGTON- Today Congressman Terry (R-NE) praised the House of Representatives for passing a much-needed FISA bill. The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 Amendments Act of 2008, H.R. 6304 passed 293-129.

"When it comes to our national security, we need certainty, not more legal questions about how our government agencies use terrorist surveillance laws to keep our country safe. We have waited long enough to get this bill to the floor and passed. I am glad both parties came together to do the right thing on the Protect America Act, preventing further terrorist attacks depends on it," said Congressman Terry.

FISA was first enacted in 1978 and created a special court to oversee intelligence collection. The law was amended after September 11 to tear down the wall between criminal and intelligence investigations, which hindered the gathering of information on terrorist activities. Last year a special court overseeing the law ruled that if the government wanted to monitor a suspected terrorist phone call between Iraqi villages, it would have to get a warrant every time it wanted to obtain information from a transmission wire on U.S. soil. As a result, the U.S. intelligence agencies lost roughly two-thirds of their ability to obtain communications intelligence about al Qaeda before Congress passed a six-month extension of the law last August call the Protect America Act.

