

FSF, other groups join EFF to sue NSA over unconstitutional surveillance

By *srlinuxx*

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The Free Software Foundation (FSF) today joined eighteen other activist and advocacy organizations in challenging the National Security Agency's (NSA) mass surveillance of telecommunications in the United States with a lawsuit filed by the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF).

The suit, *First Unitarian Church of Los Angeles v. NSA*, argues that such government surveillance of political organizations discourages citizens from contacting those organizations and therefore chills the free association and speech guaranteed by the First Amendment. The EFF will represent the politically diverse group of plaintiffs, which in addition to the FSF, includes Greenpeace, the California Guns Association, the National Organization for the Normalization of Marijuana Laws, and People for the American Way.

EFF's legal director, Cindy Cohn, wrote in a press release, "The First Amendment protects the freedom to associate and express political views as a group, but the NSA's mass, untargeted collection of Americans' phone records violates that right by giving the government a dramatically detailed picture into our associational ties. Who we call, how often we call them, and how long we speak shows the government what groups we belong to or associate with, which political issues concern us, and our religious affiliation. Exposing this information -- especially in a massive, untargeted way over a long period of time -- violates the Constitution and the basic First Amendment tests that have been in place for over 50 years."

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