August 7, 2012

Chair Dianne Feinstein
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
211 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Vice Chair Saxby Chambliss
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
211 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Chair Mike Rogers
House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
Capitol Visitor Center HVC-304
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Dutch Ruppersberger
House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
Capitol Visitor Center HVC-304
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Feinstein, Vice-Chair Chambliss, Chair Rogers, and Ranking Member Ruppersberger,

We are writing to urge you to preserve the existing statutory requirement for the Intelligence Community to prepare an annual report to Congress regarding security clearances.

That requirement, which was enacted in the FY2010 Intelligence Authorization Act (50 U.S.C. 415A-10), would be repealed by the Senate Committee markup of the FY2013 Intelligence Authorization Act (S.3454, Section 308(a)(3)). The House Committee markup leaves the reporting requirement unaffected.

We believe the annual report on security clearances provides exceptional value to the public and should continue to be published.

In the two years that the report has been produced, it has dramatically altered our conception of the size and scale of the personnel security clearance system. Prior to the reporting requirement, the Government Accountability Office could only estimate the number of security cleared personnel, and its latest estimate was low by more than a million clearances.

As evidence of the exceptional public interest in this report, we note that the findings of the latest annual report have appeared in the New York Times (July 24), the Washington Post (July 28), and McClatchy Papers (July 27), among others. As you know, this level of attention is well above average for a report to Congress on any topic.

Through this annual reporting requirement, your Committees have provided an unprecedented degree of transparency concerning the security clearance system. We thank you for that, and we respectfully request that you maintain this important reporting requirement.

Sincerely,

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
American Association of Law Libraries
American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression
Association of Research Libraries
Bill of Rights Defense Committee
Brennan Center for Justice
Essential Information
Federation of American Scientists
Freedom of Information Center at the Missouri School of Journalism
Government Accountability Project – GAP
James Madison Project
National Coalition Against Censorship
National Freedom of Information Coalition
National Security Counselors
OMB Watch
OpenTheGovernment.org
Progressive Librarians Guild
Project On Government Oversight – POGO
Sunlight Foundation
Understanding Government
Union of Concerned Scientists, Scientific Integrity Program
Washington Coalition for Open Government