

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To establish the Office of the Special Advocate to provide advocacy in cases before courts established by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. COONS, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. FRANKEN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To establish the Office of the Special Advocate to provide advocacy in cases before courts established by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “FISA Court Reform
5 Act of 2013”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

1 (1) DECISION.—The term “decision” means a
2 decision, order, or opinion issued by the FISA Court
3 or the FISA Court of Review.

4 (2) FISA.—The term “FISA” means the For-
5 eign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 (50
6 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.).

7 (3) FISA COURT.—The term “FISA Court”
8 means the court established under section 103(a) of
9 FISA (50 U.S.C. 1803(a)).

10 (4) FISA COURT OF REVIEW.—The term
11 “FISA Court of Review” means the court of review
12 established under section 103(b) of FISA (50 U.S.C.
13 1803(b)).

14 (5) OFFICE.—The term “Office” mean the Of-
15 fice of the Special Advocate established under sec-
16 tion (3)(a).

17 (6) SIGNIFICANT CONSTRUCTION OR INTERPRE-
18 TATION OF LAW.—The term “significant construc-
19 tion or interpretation of law” means a significant
20 construction or interpretation of a provision, as that
21 term is construed under section 601(c) of FISA (50
22 U.S.C. 1871(c)).

23 (7) SPECIAL ADVOCATE.—The term “Special
24 Advocate” means the Special Advocate appointed
25 under section 3(b).

1 **SEC. 3. OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ADVOCATE.**

2 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the ex-
3 ecutive branch as an independent establishment, as de-
4 fined in section 104 of title 5, United States Code, an Of-
5 fice of the Special Advocate.

6 (b) SPECIAL ADVOCATE.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—The head of the Office is the
8 Special Advocate.

9 (2) APPOINTMENT AND TERM.—

10 (A) APPOINTMENT.—The presiding judge
11 of the FISA Court of Review shall appoint the
12 Special Advocate from the list of candidates
13 submitted under subparagraph (B).

14 (B) LIST OF CANDIDATES.—The Privacy
15 and Civil Liberties Oversight Board shall sub-
16 mit to the presiding judge of the FISA Court
17 of Review a list of not less than 5 qualified can-
18 didates to serve as Special Advocate.

19 (C) SECURITY CLEARANCE.—An individual
20 may be appointed Special Advocate without re-
21 gard to whether the individual possesses a secu-
22 rity clearance on the date of the appointment.

23 (D) TERM AND DISMISSAL.—A Special Ad-
24 vocate shall be appointed for a term of 5 years
25 and may be fired only for good cause shown, in-

1 including the demonstrated inability to qualify for
2 an adequate security clearance.

3 (E) REAPPOINTMENT.—There shall be no
4 limit to the number of consecutive terms served
5 by a Special Advocate. The reappointment of a
6 Special Advocate shall be made in the same
7 manner as appointment of a Special Advocate.

8 (F) ACTING SPECIAL ADVOCATE.—If the
9 position of Special Advocate is vacant, the pre-
10 siding judge of the FISA Court of Review may
11 appoint an Acting Special Advocate from
12 among the qualified employees of the Office. If
13 there are no such qualified employees, the pre-
14 siding judge of the FISA Court of Review may
15 appoint an Acting Special Advocate from the
16 most recent list of candidates provided by the
17 Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board
18 pursuant to subparagraph (B). The Acting Spe-
19 cial Advocate shall have all of the powers of a
20 Special Advocate and shall serve until a Special
21 Advocate is appointed.

22 (3) EMPLOYEES.—The Special Advocate is au-
23 thorized, without regard to the civil service laws and
24 regulations, to appoint and terminate employees of
25 the Office.

1 (c) SECURITY CLEARANCES.—The appropriate de-
2 partments, agencies, and elements of the executive branch
3 shall cooperate with the Office, to the extent possible
4 under existing procedures and requirements, to expedi-
5 tiously provide the Special Advocate and appropriate em-
6 ployees of the Office with the security clearances necessary
7 to carry out the duties of the Special Advocate.

8 (d) DUTIES AND AUTHORITIES OF THE SPECIAL AD-
9 VOCATE.—

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Special Advocate—

11 (A) shall review each application to the
12 FISA Court by the Attorney General;

13 (B) shall review each decision of the FISA
14 Court or the FISA Court of Review issued after
15 the date of the enactment of this Act and all
16 documents and other material relevant to such
17 decision in a complete, unredacted form;

18 (C) shall participate in a proceeding before
19 the FISA Court if appointed to participate by
20 the FISA Court under section 4(a);

21 (D) may request to participate in a pro-
22 ceeding before the FISA Court;

23 (E) shall participate in such a proceeding
24 if such request is granted;

1 (F) may request reconsideration of a deci-
2 sion of the FISA Court under section 4(b);

3 (G) may appeal or seek review of a deci-
4 sion of the FISA Court or the FISA Court of
5 Review under section 5; and

6 (H) shall participate in such appeal or re-
7 view.

8 (2) ADVOCACY.—The Special Advocate shall
9 protect individual rights by vigorously advocating be-
10 fore the FISA Court or the FISA Court of Review,
11 as appropriate, in support of legal interpretations
12 that minimize the scope of surveillance and the ex-
13 tent of data collection and retention.

14 (3) UTILIZATION OF OUTSIDE COUNSEL.—The
15 Special Advocate—

16 (A) may delegate to a competent outside
17 counsel any duty or responsibility of the Special
18 Advocate with respect to participation in a mat-
19 ter before the FISA Court, the FISA Court of
20 Review, or the Supreme Court of the United
21 States; and

22 (B) may not delegate to outside counsel
23 any duty or authority set out in subparagraph
24 (A), (B), (D), (F), or (G) of paragraph (1).

1 (4) AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS AND MATE-
2 RIAL.—The FISA Court or the FISA Court of Re-
3 view, as appropriate, shall order any agency, depart-
4 ment, or entity to make available to the Special Ad-
5 vocate, or appropriate outside counsel if utilized by
6 the Special Advocate under paragraph (3), any docu-
7 ments or other material necessary to carry out the
8 duties described in paragraph (1).

9 **SEC. 4. ADVOCACY BEFORE THE FISA COURT.**

10 (a) APPOINTMENT TO PARTICIPATE.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—The FISA Court may ap-
12 point the Special Advocate to participate in a FISA
13 Court proceeding.

14 (2) STANDING.—If the Special Advocate is ap-
15 pointed to participate in a FISA Court proceeding
16 pursuant to paragraph (1), the Special Advocate
17 shall have standing as a party before the FISA
18 Court in that proceeding.

19 (b) RECONSIDERATION OF A FISA COURT DECI-
20 SION.—

21 (1) AUTHORITY TO MOVE FOR RECONSIDER-
22 ATION.—The Special Advocate may move the FISA
23 Court to reconsider any decision of the FISA Court
24 made after the date of the enactment of this Act by
25 petitioning the FISA Court not later than 30 days

1 after the date on which all documents and materials
2 relevant to the decision are made available to the
3 Special Advocate.

4 (2) DISCRETION OF THE FISA COURT.—The
5 FISA Court shall have discretion to grant or deny
6 a motion for reconsideration made pursuant to para-
7 graph (1).

8 (c) AMICUS CURIAE PARTICIPATION.—

9 (1) MOTION BY THE SPECIAL ADVOCATE.—The
10 Special Advocate may file a motion with the FISA
11 Court to permit and facilitate participation of ami-
12 cus curiae, including participation in oral argument
13 if appropriate, in any proceeding. The FISA Court
14 shall have the discretion to grant or deny such a mo-
15 tion.

16 (2) FACILITATION BY THE FISA COURT.—The
17 FISA Court may, sua sponte, permit and facilitate
18 participation by amicus curiae, including participa-
19 tion in oral argument if appropriate, in proceedings
20 before the FISA Court.

21 (3) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 180 days
22 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
23 FISA Court shall promulgate rules to provide the
24 public with information sufficient to allow interested
25 parties to participate as amicus curiae.

1 **SEC. 5. APPELLATE REVIEW.**

2 (a) APPEAL OF FISA COURT DECISIONS.—

3 (1) AUTHORITY TO APPEAL.—The Special Ad-
4 vocate may appeal any decision of the FISA Court
5 issued after the date of the enactment of this Act
6 not later than 90 days after the date the decision is
7 issued, unless it would be apparent to all reasonable
8 jurists that such decision is dictated by statute or by
9 precedent handed down after such date of enact-
10 ment.

11 (2) STANDING AS APPELLANT.—If the Special
12 Advocate appeals a decision of the FISA Court pur-
13 suant to paragraph (1), the Special Advocate shall
14 have standing as a party before the FISA Court of
15 Review in such appeal.

16 (3) MANDATORY REVIEW.—The FISA Court of
17 Review shall review any FISA Court decision ap-
18 pealed by the Special Advocate and issue a decision
19 in such appeal.

20 (4) STANDARD OF REVIEW.—The standards for
21 a mandatory review of a FISA Court decision pursu-
22 ant to paragraph (3) shall be—

23 (A) de novo with respect to issues of law;

24 and

25 (B) clearly erroneous with respect to deter-
26 mination of facts.

1 (5) AMICUS CURIAE PARTICIPATION.—

2 (A) IN GENERAL.—The FISA Court of Re-
3 view shall accept amicus curiae briefs from in-
4 terested parties in all mandatory reviews pursu-
5 ant to paragraph (3) and shall provide for ami-
6 cus participation in oral argument if appro-
7 priate.

8 (B) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 180
9 days after the date of the enactment of this
10 Act, the FISA Court of Review shall promul-
11 gate rules to provide the public with informa-
12 tion sufficient to allow interested parties to par-
13 ticipate as amicus curiae.

14 (b) REVIEW OF FISA COURT OF REVIEW DECI-
15 SIONS.—

16 (1) AUTHORITY.—The Special Advocate may
17 seek a writ of certiorari from the Supreme Court of
18 the United States for review of any decision of the
19 FISA Court of Review.

20 (2) STANDING.—In any proceedings before the
21 Supreme Court of the United States relating to a
22 petition of certiorari filed under paragraph (1) and
23 any proceedings in a matter for which certiorari is
24 granted, the Special Advocate shall have standing as
25 a party.

1 **SEC. 6. DISCLOSURE.**

2 (a) REQUIREMENT TO DISCLOSE.—The Attorney
3 General shall publicly disclose—

4 (1) all decisions issued by the FISA Court or
5 the FISA Court of Review after July 10, 2003, that
6 include a significant construction or interpretation of
7 law;

8 (2) any decision of the FISA Court appealed by
9 the Special Advocate pursuant to this Act; and

10 (3) any FISA Court of Review decision that is
11 issued after an appeal by the Special Advocate.

12 (b) DISCLOSURE DESCRIBED.—For each disclosure
13 required by subsection (a) with respect to a decision, the
14 Attorney General shall make available to the public docu-
15 ments sufficient—

16 (1) to identify with particularity each legal
17 question addressed by the decision and how such
18 question was resolved;

19 (2) to describe in general terms the context in
20 which the matter arises;

21 (3) to describe the construction or interpreta-
22 tion of any statute, constitutional provision, or other
23 legal authority relied on by the decision; and

24 (4) to indicate whether the decision departed
25 from any prior decision of the FISA Court or FISA
26 Court of Review.

1 (c) DOCUMENTS DESCRIBED.—The Attorney General
2 shall satisfy the disclosure requirements in subsection (b)
3 by—

4 (1) releasing a FISA Court or FISA Court of
5 Review decision in its entirety or as redacted;

6 (2) releasing a summary of a FISA Court or
7 FISA Court of Review decision; or

8 (3) releasing an application made to the FISA
9 Court, briefs filed before the FISA Court or the
10 FISA Court of Review, or other materials, in full or
11 as redacted.

12 (d) EXTENSIVE DISCLOSURE.—The Attorney Gen-
13 eral shall release as much information regarding the facts
14 and analysis contained in a decision described in sub-
15 section (a) or documents described in subsection (c) as is
16 consistent with legitimate national security concerns.

17 (e) TIMING OF DISCLOSURE.—

18 (1) DECISIONS ISSUED PRIOR TO ENACT-
19 MENT.—A decision issued prior to the date of the
20 enactment of this Act that is required to be disclosed
21 under subsection (a)(1) shall be disclosed not later
22 than 180 days after the date of the enactment of
23 this Act.

24 (2) FISA COURT DECISIONS.—The Attorney
25 General shall release FISA Court decisions appealed

1 by the Special Advocate not later than 30 days after
2 the date the appeal is filed.

3 (3) FISA COURT OF REVIEW DECISIONS.—The
4 Attorney General shall release FISA Court of Re-
5 view decisions appealed by the Special Advocate not
6 later than 90 days after the date the appeal is filed.

7 (f) PETITION BY THE SPECIAL ADVOCATE.—

8 (1) AUTHORITY TO PETITION.—The Special Ad-
9 vocate may petition the FISA Court or FISA Court
10 of Review to order—

11 (A) the public disclosure of a decision of
12 such a Court, and documents or other material
13 relevant to such a decision, previously des-
14 ignated as classified information; or

15 (B) the release of an unclassified summary
16 of such decisions and documents.

17 (2) CONTENTS OF PETITION.—Each petition
18 filed under paragraph (1) shall contain a detailed
19 declassification proposal or a summary of the deci-
20 sion and documents that the Special Advocate pro-
21 poses to have released publicly.

22 (3) ROLE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.—

23 (A) COPY OF PETITION.—The Special Ad-
24 vocate shall provide to the Attorney General a
25 copy of each petition filed under paragraph (1).

1 (B) OPPOSITION.—The Attorney General
2 may oppose a petition filed under paragraph (1)
3 by submitting any objections in writing to the
4 FISA Court or the FISA Court of Review, as
5 appropriate, not later than 90 days after the
6 date such petition was submitted.

7 (4) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—Not less than 91
8 days after receiving a petition under paragraph (1),
9 and taking into account any objections from the At-
10 torney General made under paragraph (3)(B), the
11 FISA Court or FISA Court of Review, as appro-
12 priate, shall declassify and make readily available to
13 the public any decision, document, or other material
14 requested in such petition, if such decision, docu-
15 ment, or other material pertain to a decision that
16 contains a significant construction or interpretation
17 of law, to the greatest extent possible, consistent
18 with legitimate national security considerations.

19 (5) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The Special Advocate
20 may not file a petition under paragraph (1) until
21 181 days after the date of the enactment of this Act,
22 except with respect to a decision appealed by the
23 Special Advocate.

1 **SEC. 7. ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS.**

2 (a) REQUIREMENT FOR ANNUAL REPORT.—The Spe-
3 cial Advocate shall submit to Congress an annual report
4 on the implementation of this Act.

5 (b) CONTENTS.—Each annual report submitted
6 under subsection (a) shall—

7 (1) detail the activities of the Office;

8 (2) provide an assessment of the effectiveness
9 of this Act; and

10 (3) propose any new legislation to improve the
11 functioning of the Office or the operation of the
12 FISA Court or the FISA Court of Review.

13 **SEC. 8. PRESERVATION OF RIGHTS.**

14 Nothing in this Act shall be construed—

15 (1) to provide the Attorney General with au-
16 thority to prevent the FISA Court or FISA Court of
17 Review from declassifying decisions or releasing in-
18 formation pursuant to this Act; and

19 (2) to eliminate the public’s ability to secure in-
20 formation under section 552 of title 5, United States
21 Code (commonly known as the “Freedom of Infor-
22 mation Act”) or any other provision of law.