

(WASHINGTON) ---- Congressman Allen West (FL-22) released this statement tonight following the House passage of the PATRIOT Act, which he opposed:

"I spent 22 years in the United States Army on the tip of the spear protecting the citizens of this great nation in uniform. As a Member of the House of Representatives, I have taken an oath to protect the constitutional rights of the citizens of the 22nd Congressional District of Florida and all Americans.

I support the work that law enforcement around the nation does in order to protect our citizens and apprehend individuals who want to kill innocent people and try to destroy our way of life.

I have spent the past two months investigating these provisions to the PATRIOT Act, their effect on American citizens and their impact on apprehending terrorists to better keep our country safe. After much reading, many briefings, and conversations with local law enforcement and federal agents, including FBI Director Robert Mueller, I am not fully convinced that by extending these provisions for four years, we would be any safer, but instead I fear they may only give us the illusion of being safer.

I also have concerns that these provisions were pushed through during the final hours on the very last day before the provisions were set to expire, and there was no open process for myself and other members of Congress to fully review the document.

In a letter to FBI Director Robert Mueller last week, I asked for clarity on several issues and asked the following questions, which I did not receive answers:

Can you provide a breakdown of how many times these provisions have been used on citizens and non-citizens? How many people were ever convicted or investigated? Out of those held, how many were released without being charged? Are there any individuals that are still being held that were never charged? What intelligence, if anything, came from these instances in which Section 206 was implemented?

There is a constant struggle between liberty and safety, and it is a principle that I am prepared to balance as a Congressman of the United States.

Benjamin Franklin, one of the founders of our nation, wrote, 'They who give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety.' These are words I do not take lightly."

Click here for the letter [Congressman West sent to FBI Director Robert Mueller](#), as well as the [Statement for the Congressional Record](#)

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