Congress is backing away from its controversial NSA bill

Congress is shelving a proposed expansion of NSA surveillance authorities after an outcry from reformers and privacy groups this morning. The House Rules Committee has officially postponed its vote on the FISA Amendments Reauthorization Act of 2017, leaving the immediate future of the bill unclear. More broadly, Republican lawmakers are already backing away from the proposal, with one telling *The Washington Post,* "there isn't any chance that a long-term FISA reauthorization has the support of the overall conference."

The bill had faced withering criticism from reformers, with one group calling it "by far the worst option" for reauthorizing the government's Section 702 surveillance authority. Other members of Congress seemed to be heeding the call: Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Rand Paul (R-KY) had both pledged to filibuster the bill had it reached the Senate, a particularly startling threat as Congress rushes to pass funding resolutions and disaster relief before the end of the year.

Section 702 of the FISA Amendments Act, which authorizes much of the NSA's data collection and queries, is set to expire at the end of the year, although many of the relevant legal authorities may continue through April. It's still unclear how Congress plans to address the deadline, although a short-term reauthorization has been proposed as a stopgap measure.

https://www.theverge.com/2017/12/20/16802770/702-reform-congress-nsa-surveillance-backing-away