

ACLU warns of pending intelligence bill

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- The American Civil Liberties Union said it dislikes a U.S. Senate bill that would give immunity to communications firms for sharing private customer data. At issue is whether a new intelligence law will grant telecommunications companies immunity from prosecution retroactively to the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks, as well as future immunity for cooperating with federal intelligence agencies, USA Today reported. There are two versions of the bill awaiting the Senate's return next Monday. One measure grants past immunity and the other doesn't. ACLU Washington spokeswoman Liz Rose told the newspaper retroactive immunity is worrisome. "The immunity isn't just for (warrantless) wiretapping," Rose said. "It's for databases and who knows what else? The blanket immunity may cover (surveillance) programs we don't even know about yet." U.S. President George Bush has vowed to veto any bill that doesn't give protection to the telecom companies for sharing telephone calling and e-mail records, the report said.

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