

U.S. Congress leans to Bush's wiretaps

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- U.S. House and Senate Democrats have backtracked on their opposition to the Bush administration's warrantless wiretapping, the New York Times reported. As recently as August, Democrats said they would fight the continuation of the National Security Agency's right to monitor telephone and Internet communications of citizens without a special warrant, but that has changed the newspaper said. A Democratic House bill released Tuesday would maintain the administration's policy for several years, while the Senate version that's still being drafted is reportedly even closer to the White House's view, the Times said. William Banks, a professor who specializes in terrorism and national security law at Syracuse (N.Y.) University told the newspaper the shift is based on political perception. "Many members continue to fear that if they don't support whatever the president asks for, they'll be perceived as soft on terrorism," Banks said.

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