

The Honorable _____
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dear Senator **(name):**

On behalf of **(if you are writing for an organization)**, I am asking you to oppose consideration of S. 3774, the so-called Official Secrets Act, by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Keeping our nation's secrets is important. The federal government has laws and regulations on the books that already are available to punish civil servants and contractors who leak sensitive information. But creating criminal sanctions against disclosure of any classified information — even that which may be essential to keeping our nation secure and our citizens fully informed of the important decisions that voters must make — is the wrong way for an open and democratic society to maintain its records.

Congress has neglected to require reform of the classification system, despite warnings by the Government Accountability Office that records are over-classified and wrongly classified, and that information that should reach the public is bottled up inside a bureaucracy that is handcuffed by the wrong use of the classification stamp. Meaningful reform must be accomplished so that the sources and methods of intelligence and other truly sensitive records can be protected without blocking disclosure of information that may be politically sensitive but not otherwise threatening to our security. Until that reform has taken place, S. 3774 should not be considered by the committee.

As a **(writer, professional communicator, citizen – please describe yourself and your work here)**, I am concerned that as our nation confronts the threats of terrorism, it will create greater harm to our democracy than the enemies of our democracy could ever contemplate. I am counting on your support of our First Amendment freedoms.