

ALERT: CALL YOUR STATE REPRESENTATIVE IN SUPPORT OF H 7339 - Restriction on Political Surveillance

The Rhode Island ACLU wants to alert you about a proposed law that we urge you to encourage your state Representative to support in this time of assault on First Amendment rights.

- House Bill 7339 – Restriction on Political Surveillance, sponsored by Rep. Edith Ajello, prohibits state and local law enforcement from collecting information about the “**political, religious, or social views, associations, or activities of any individual, group, association, organization, corporation, or business**” unless the information is directly related to a criminal investigation.
- The bill also prohibits law enforcement from using agency funds or federal funds to interfere with peaceful protests and other protected expression.

House Bill 7339 will take crucial steps to ban the types of surveillance and data collection that federal agencies have recently been found to be engaging in:

- It was recently disclosed that peaceful protesters in Providence were placed in a Department of Defense “terrorism” database after staging a demonstration outside the Army National Guard recruiting station. It remains unclear exactly what role local police played in passing along information about this protest, but there have been similar revelations of unlawful police spying across the country in the past year.
- The Providence Police Department spent more than \$100,000 of federal homeland security grant money to train officers on how to “handle” civil demonstrations.

The need for House Bill 7339’s modest prohibition is clear. Urge your State Representative to say NO to police spying.

As of April 27th, 2006, the bill had passed out of the House Judiciary committee and was scheduled for a full vote on the floor within a week. We urge you to call your state Representatives immediately to request their support. The full text of the bill is at <http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/Billtext/BillText06/HouseText06/H7339.pdf>
Please call the ACLU with questions or if you need contact information for your Representative. Thank you for supporting this important legislation.