



Rockland Coalition
for Peace & Justice

Watch Out the USA PATRIOT Act!

The **USAPATRIOT Act**, which is an acronym for **Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism**, was passed hastily by Congress on Oct. 25, 2001 right after the 9-11 tragedy. It allows the government to:

- Search your home or office without your knowledge
- Monitor your internet use, read your e-mail, and obtain your library records
- Wiretap your telephone without a court order
- Detain you without access to a lawyer and without charging you with a crime
- Monitor your political and religious activities

They say it's patriotic, the so-called Patriot Act,
but it mocks the Constitution, and that's a real true fact,
'Twas passed the week of 9-11, when Congress was in shock –
took away the Bill of Rights and sold it into hock.
Now the government can search your house, take away your stuff --
if you ask them for a warrant, they'll say "Don't need one – tough."
Privacy is dead and gone – Won't help to whine and pout,
'cause the Patriot Act will get you if you don't watch out.

The Japanese internment way back in World War Two
was not the sort of thing Americans should do,
but what about Guantanamo and prisoner here at home
who was secretly held, not allowed to talk or call or roam?
And speaking of roaming, what about the No-Fly list? --
you yourself could be on it, and your next plane could be missed.
And it won't help at all if you have a ton of clout,
'cause the Patriot Act can get you if you don't watch out.

A shirt that says "Peace, Brother," is enough to get you caught
Forget about the Bill of Rights and things that you were taught –
Big Brother can find out every book you take to read
confiscate your laptop, subpoena records as you breed.
In Cold War times they taught us that wire taps and spying
on the private lives of citizens, the US won't be trying.
It's legal now – they're doing it – you must not have a doubt,
'cause the Patriot Act will get you if you don't watch out.

The first amendment makes us free to publish, write and speak --
the fourth guarantees warrants, rules out random search and seek.
The nature and cause of the plaintiff's accusation
must be clear, says the sixth, for folks in that situation.
The fifth requires indictments by a citizens' grand jury
and due process of law – but today, that's not the story.
In the name of Safety we gave up what we were about,
and the Patriot Act will get us if we don't watch out.

I wonder what the soldiers off fighting in the war
would think about the Bill of Rights living here, no more.
We need to do our part to resuscitate poor Bill –
gotta write and talk and speak, and I know you will,
If you're like me, and you're scared – not of the terrorists,
but of living in a land where the Bill of Rights is missed.
We all have to write to Congress; we have to march and shout
'cause the Patriot Act will get us if we don't watch out.

By *Ellen Belitsky*, Rockland resident

Sign a petition to request the Rockland County Legislature to pass a resolution to protect the Bill of