

What a great privilege it is to serve in this body that came together to declare war on Japan and Germany to save the free world from annihilation. This body that acted to re-unite the union after a bloody Civil War.

And this is a body that came together after 9/11 to vow never again.

In 1940 as Great Britain was fighting Nazi Germany, Prime Minister Winston Churchill spoke to the House of Commons and said:

"The gratitude of every home on our island goes out to the British airmen who, undaunted by odds, unwearied in their constant challenge and mortal danger, are turning the tide of the world by their prowess and by their devotion. Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

We too have a few in the United States to whom much is owed. They are the brave intelligence officers serving thousands of miles away from home in the toughest places on earth to infiltrate a terrorist network to stop that next plot to kill Americans.

They are the intelligence analysts toiling thanklessly day and night to try to find that needle in a stack of needles that leads us to the next terrorist attack.

Why would we want to take away the tools they use to keep us safe that we know prevented dozens of terrorist attacks?

Why would we take away the tools that are consistent with the Constitution, authorized by Congress and overseen by the courts?

This program does not read Americans emails or listen to their phone calls. This program does not include any names or addresses, merely numbers that are ONLY used to targets foreign terrorists overseas.

This program started because on 9/11 we missed a terrorist in was talking to a terrorist in San Diego. If we had the information to connect that dot, we might have been able to save 3,000 of our fellow citizens. That's why this program exists.

And if this amendment passes, this program will go away. Period. And I hope we can all agree this is not the right way to debate such an important issue.

Though Members certainly have legitimate concerns that deserve honest answers, I know with every fiber of my being that this body will do what's right today.

This body that had James Madison, Abraham Lincoln and John Kennedy serve before us will not govern based on what gets the most Facebook likes or the most re-tweets.

Instead this is a body that will allow America's prized few to protect our nation, our way of life and our future.