

..... URGENT ACTION ALERT

ARE YOUR LIBRARY RECORDS MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOUR PSYCHOTHERAPY NOTES?

The records of library patrons are only the most visible area of concern around repressive aspects of the USA PATRIOT Act.

Please join Therapists for Peace & Justice, and many other groups across the political spectrum, in working to repeal Section 215, which, among other anti-democratic aspects of the USA PATRIOT Act, poses serious limitations on confidentiality, the cornerstone of the client-therapist relationship.

Section 215 of the USA PATRIOT Act:

- requires you, as a mental health professional to provide client records to the US government if federal agents merely claim, without showing proof, that they have legitimate national security concerns, and
- prohibits you, through a gag order, from telling anyone, including your client(s), that the government has taken your records.

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE:

We call for mental health professionals and all citizens to take action NOW to prevent the USA PATRIOT Act from becoming permanent law at the end of 2005.

In early June, 2005, the Senate Intelligence Committee met in secret and approved the full reauthorization of this destructive law. The House, because of activism sparked by librarians, voted a week later to amend Section 215 to protect each citizen's library records — but this amendment does not involve medical records, which includes psychotherapists and other health professionals!

Your help is requested. If everyone reading this information took at least one of the steps below, we could join librarians in being potent and effective sources for change.

SOME STEPS YOU CAN TAKE:

- Educate yourself about the efforts of the ACLU to repeal the USA PATRIOT Act: Go to <http://www.aclu.org/SafeandFree>
- Copy and send this flyer to others
- Inform your professional organizations about your concerns
- Urge your federal elected officials to take action against this statute. Postal letters and faxes carry much more weight than emails. To get contact information for your specific representative(s), use the search tool at: <http://congress.org/stickers/?dir=congressorg&officials=1>

This Action Alert is produced by Therapists for Peace and Justice, a group of San Francisco Bay Area therapists whose projects include informing mental health professionals about the gravity of Section 215 of the USA PATRIOT Act, and advising them of actions that are being taken to repeal the law. If you have questions, or would like more information about Therapists for Peace and Justice, contact Zora Kolkey, MFT, at zkol@mindspring.com or (415) 474-6707 or write TPJ at P.O. Box 20236, Oakland CA 94620-0236.

