

1 CINDY COHN (SBN 145997)  
 cindy@eff.org  
 2 LEE TIEN (SBN 148216)  
 KURT OPSAHL (SBN 191303)  
 3 MATTHEW ZIMMERMAN (SBN 212423)  
 4 MARK RUMOLD (SBN 279060)  
 DAVID GREENE (SBN 160107)  
 5 JAMES S. TYRE (SBN 083117)  
 ELECTRONIC FRONTIER FOUNDATION  
 6 815 Eddy Street  
 San Francisco, CA 94109  
 7 Tel.: (415) 436-9333; Fax: (415) 436-9993  
 8 THOMAS E. MOORE III (SBN 115107)  
 tmoore@rroyselaw.com  
 9 ROYSE LAW FIRM, PC  
 10 1717 Embarcadero Road  
 Palo Alto, CA 94303  
 11 Tel.: 650-813-9700; Fax: 650-813-9777

Attorneys for Plaintiffs

RACHAEL E. MENY (SBN 178514)  
 rmeny@kvn.com  
 MICHAEL S. KWUN (SBN 198945)  
 BENJAMIN W. BERKOWITZ (SBN 244441)  
 KEKER & VAN NEST, LLP  
 633 Battery Street  
 San Francisco, California 94111  
 Tel.: (415) 391-5400; Fax: (415) 397-7188

RICHARD R. WIEBE (SBN 121156)  
 wiebe@pacbell.net  
 LAW OFFICE OF RICHARD R. WIEBE  
 One California Street, Suite 900  
 San Francisco, CA 94111  
 Tel.: (415) 433-3200; Fax: (415) 433-6382

ARAM ANTARAMIAN (SBN 239070)  
 aram@eff.org  
 LAW OFFICE OF ARAM ANTARAMIAN  
 1714 Blake Street  
 Berkeley, CA 94703  
 Telephone: (510) 289-1626

14 **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**  
 15 **NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**  
 16 **SAN FRANCISCO DIVISION**

17 FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF LOS  
 18 ANGELES, *et al.*,

19 Plaintiffs,

20 v.

21 NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY, *et al.*,

22 Defendants.

Case No: 3:13-cv-03287 JSW

**DECLARATION OF BERIN SZOKA  
 ON BEHALF OF TECHFREEDOM  
 IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS'  
 MOTION FOR PARTIAL SUMMARY  
 JUDGMENT**

Date: February 7, 2014  
 Time: 9:00 A.M.  
 Hon. Jeffrey S. White  
 Courtroom 11 - 19th Floor

1 I, BERIN SZOKA, hereby declare:

2 1. I am the President of TechFreedom. The facts contained in the following affidavit are  
3 known to me of my own personal knowledge and, if called upon to testify, I could and would  
4 competently do so.

5 2. Our organization is a non-profit<sup>1</sup> think tank based in Washington, D.C. Our mission is  
6 promoting technology that improves the human condition and expands individual capacity to choose  
7 by educating the public, policymakers, and thought leaders about the kinds of public policies that  
8 enable technology to flourish. TechFreedom seeks to advance public policy that makes  
9 experimentation, entrepreneurship, and investment possible, and thus unleashes the ultimate  
10 resource: human ingenuity.

11 3. All of TechFreedom's employees use Verizon for business and personal purposes.  
12 The compelled disclosure of our phone records to the government will decrease our organization's  
13 capacity to effectively communicate with policymakers, journalists, thought leaders, civil society  
14 allies, and our donors.

15 4. TechFreedom's ability to effectively advocate for our positions and influence  
16 lawmakers, policymakers, journalists and thought leaders, as well as to raise funds from donors,  
17 often hinges on our ability to communicate, and develop, our policy positions in confidence.

18 5. Since the disclosure of the Associational Tracking Program, we have lost the ability  
19 to assure policymakers, journalists, thought leaders, civil society allies, and our donors, that the fact  
20 of their communications to and with us will be kept confidential.

21 6. Indeed, in many circumstances, disclosure of the fact and timing of a particular  
22 communication is more important and revealing than the content of the communication.

23 7. This is particularly so in the case of TechFreedom's fundraising. Private  
24 communication is often essential for fundraising purposes: Some donors are less willing to engage

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26 <sup>1</sup> We have applied for federal tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3); while we have not yet  
27 received that status, we are operating according to the requirements of federal tax law.

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1 with the organization and its employees if they know the fact of their communications will not be  
2 confidential.

3 8. Moreover, the timing of our communication with other parties, such as donors, might  
4 imply a chain of causation between donations, positions we take, and changes to the intellectual  
5 landscape that result from our advocacy – even where such causation does not actually exist. Such  
6 inaccurate perceptions could substantially damage our reputation for independence or even  
7 potentially jeopardize our non-profit status. Even if we were vindicated, the mere fact of an  
8 investigation or suggestion of impropriety could damage our reputation, limit our effectiveness and  
9 harm our ability to raise support for our work.

10 9. This fear is neither speculative nor abstract. Indeed, my former think tank, The  
11 Progress & Freedom Foundation (PFF), was the subject of a three year investigation by the Internal  
12 Revenue Service into whether PFF had, by funding a college course (Renewing American  
13 Civilization”) taught by then-House-Speaker Newt Gingrich, violated its tax-exempt status by  
14 engaging in electoral politics. The investigation ultimately concluded that the course and course  
15 book "were educational in content," rather than electoral. While this finding vindicated PFF, the  
16 investigation did considerable damage to PFF’s reputation, its relationship with Gingrich, and its  
17 ability to raise money from individuals who sympathized with Gingrich’s futurist views. Combined  
18 with speculation that the investigation was itself politically motivated, this experience further chilled  
19 PFF’s ability to exercise its free speech rights within the confines of its tax-exempt status by causing  
20 its future employees to be excessively cautious about engaging in speech that either might  
21 conceivably raise legitimate questions of tax law or that might raise the ire of those in a position to  
22 launch another such investigation.

23 10. The disclosure of TechFreedom’s communication records similarly harms our ability  
24 to fully advocate and advance our positions with policymakers.

25 11. For example, if TechFreedom has taken a public position on a particular issue, and  
26 policymakers are poised to vote on that issue, the content of our communication to policymakers and  
27 their staffs can safely be inferred: our communications will likely be consistent with our

1 public position.

2 12. In this example, however, the *fact and timing* of our communication with a lawmaker  
3 can be substantially more revealing. For example, if TechFreedom communicates with a  
4 policymaker shortly before that policymaker shifts his or her public position to align more closely  
5 with TechFreedom's position, it can safely be assumed that TechFreedom's communication had  
6 some influence over that decision.

7 13. Because of the acrimonious and partisan nature of Washington politics, the  
8 Associational Tracking Program will necessarily cause policymakers to be more inhibited with their  
9 communications with TechFreedom. For some policymakers, a change in their policy positions  
10 attributable to TechFreedom's advocacy may imply, accurately or not, an association or relationship  
11 that the policymaker might otherwise be unwilling to publicly acknowledge.

12 14. This inhibition, in turn, hinders TechFreedom's ability to advocate effectively for its  
13 ideas.

14 15. Similarly, our communications with journalists and foreign nationals is limited by the  
15 risk of disclosure. Knowing that the government will retain a record of all our communications, and  
16 the inevitable possibility of disclosure, will reduce the likelihood of such individuals working with  
17 TechFreedom on important Internet freedom issues, which are inherently trans-national and often  
18 require collaboration with foreign civil society groups and policymakers.

19 16. Given the nature of our work, all the parties we deal with are exceptionally sensitive  
20 to the risk of breaches of data collected by the government – be they inadvertent, the result of  
21 malicious attacks on U.S. government servers, or intentional leaks or disclosures by politically  
22 motivated individuals. Nor are the parties we deal with likely to accept official insistence that data  
23 collected for one purpose by one agency will not be shared with other government agencies or with  
24 policymakers. In short, the fact the government collects our call records in the first instance is  
25 sufficient to inhibit parties from engaging with us without inhibition.

26 17. The compelled disclosure to the government of all TechFreedom's telephone  
27 communications, and the associated risk that those communications may later be disclosed, is a

1 risk some policymakers, journalists, thought leaders, civil society allies, and donors are unwilling to  
2 take.

3 18. As a result, the Associational Tracking Program has chilled TechFreedom's ability to  
4 effectively advocate for our positions and advance our organizational mission.

5 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that  
6 the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on October \_\_\_\_, 2013 at \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.  
7 [City] [State]

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7 [City] [State]

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10 BERIN SZOKA

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