

TRYING TO PEEL THE HAGGIS

The White House must be trying to peel Scottish Haggis away from the Democrats on the SJC who oppose granting the telecoms immunity for illegally spying on citizens. Why else show Leahy and Specter the family jewels—the justification for the domestic wiretap program—without sharing them with the rest of SJC?

The White House has offered leaders of the Senate Judiciary Committee access to legal documents related to the National Security Agency's warrantless surveillance program, senators said Thursday.

But Senate Judiciary Chairman Patrick J. Leahy, D-Vt., said while the White House had offered the documents to both him and the panel's ranking Republican, Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, he was pushing for the entire committee to receive access to the documents. But he also said he would take advantage of the offer and review the documents.

[snip]

The entire Senate Intelligence Committee and its staff did receive access to the documents prior to its approval of draft surveillance legislation last week, and had conditioned its own markup of getting to view them. That committee's draft legislation includes retroactive legal immunity.

If they could bring Scottish Haggis back into the camp of Republican rubber stamps (and at least get Leahy to agree to let the bill move through the committee), they should be able to get their telecom immunity. After all, DiFi and Whitehouse already voted for immunity in SSCI

(though Whitehouse wants to add more oversight on minimization). So with Specter, they'd have an 11-8 vote for immunity.

How about it, Haggis, want to be a hero? Or will you once again trade your purported principles for party fealty?

The funny thing, though, is what this childish tactic says about the others on SJC—those who can't see the family jewels. Feingold has already seen the family jewels over at SSCI, along with DiFi and Whitehouse. So which of the following Senators do you think the White House is trying—with such desperation—to prevent from viewing the family views?

- Ted Kennedy
- Joe Biden
- Herb Kohl
- Chuck Schumer
- Dick Durbin
- Ben Cardin

Sure, Kennedy and Biden are blowhards (Schumer, for his part, isn't even solidly against immunity yet). But they're *Senator* blowhards. What are you guys so worried about?