

ANTI-IMMUNITY PORN

Senators Dodd and Feingold aren't waiting for Monday to keep fighting the good fight on FISA. Feingold has issued the following statement:

The conduct of Senate Republicans yesterday was shameless. After weeks of insisting that it is absolutely critical to finish the FISA legislation by February 1, even going so far as to object to a one-month extension of the Protect America Act, they obstructed all efforts to actually work on the bill. Now they want to simply ram the deeply flawed Intelligence Committee bill through the Senate. They refused to allow amendments to be offered or voted on, including my straight-forward amendment to require that the government provide copies of FISA Court orders and pleadings for review in a classified setting, so that Members of Congress can understand how FISA has been interpreted and is being applied. If the Republicans succeed in cutting off debate on Monday, the Senate won't even get to vote on the amendment Senator Dodd and I want to offer to deny retroactive immunity to telecom companies that allegedly cooperated with the administration's illegal wiretapping program.

Democrats should not allow the Republicans to ram this bill through the Senate without amendments. Monday's cloture vote will be a test of whether the majority is willing to stand up to the administration and stand up for our rights. [my emphasis]

And Dodd just finished kicking some serious ass on the floor of the Senate. He has called those who claim the telecoms will go out of business "amateur economists" and pointed to AT&T's huge profits. He explained, "the point of immunity is

to challenge Bush's assertion that he is the law." And he accused the telecoms of using the Nuremberg defense. Finally, after listing all the abuses of power that can't be undone—including the destruction of the torture tapes and AGAG's lies before Congress, he described immunity as one thread that we can use to combat the Administration's abuses. "We can grab hold of the one thread left to use here and pull on it until the whole garment unravels."

Update: Whitehouse just finished speaking. Two of his best lines were, the Administration "couldn't be troubled to get a court order, to protect these companies they're so concerned about now" and if we pass telecom immunity, "we are taking away real rights of real Americans that are being litigated in courts right now. I don't know if Congress has ever done before."