

THE LIARS ARE “VERY CONCERNED” PROGRAM THEY LIED ABOUT WILL BE DEFUNDED

Buried at the bottom of a broader story on opposition to the Amash-Conyers amendment, CNN offers a very solicitous account of the White House statement opposing it, making no note of how absurd the entire premise is.

The White House issued a statement Tuesday evening, saying that it opposes the amendment and urges the House to reject it. “In light of the recent unauthorized disclosures, the president has said that he welcomes a debate about how best to simultaneously safeguard both our national security and the privacy of our citizens,” the statement said. “However, we oppose the current effort in the House to hastily dismantle one of our intelligence community’s counterterrorism tools. This blunt approach is not the product of an informed, open, or deliberative process.”

CNN does, however, provide James Clapper and Keith Alexander an opportunity to give their readout of the TS/SCI briefings they gave Congress.

In spite of reporting describing it as a lobbying session, these noted prevaricators claim their job wasn’t to persuade, it was just to answer questions.

“Our mission wasn’t to convince the House to do anything other than to provide information for them to make a decision,” Alexander told CNN.

Asked if they satisfied lawmakers and

persuaded them not to change the program, Alexander would only say it was useful to “get the facts on the table.”

Sort of gives you the impression they failed to persuade, huh?

But if their mission was really to “provide information” and “get the facts on the table,” then what have all the unclassified briefings been about? Is this claim they were only now “providing information” yet another indication that they were, perhaps, misinforming before? Again?

That, to me, is a big part of this story: that two men who have lied repeatedly about these programs felt the need to conduct Top Secret briefings to provide information that hadn't been provided in the past.

All of which makes me very unsympathetic to Clapper's stated worry.

A day before the House is expected to vote on restrictions to the National Security Agency's controversial phone surveillance program, the director of national intelligence told CNN Tuesday he would be “very concerned” if the measure were to pass.

This program is problematic for several reasons: it is overkill to achieve its stated purpose and it violates the intent of the Fourth Amendment.

But add to that the trust those overseeing the program chose to piss away by lying about this collection repeatedly in the past.

If Amash-Conyers does pass (and it's still a long-shot unless each and every one of you manages to convince your Rep to support it), it will be in significant part because Clapper and Alexander abused the trust placed in them.

Update: HuffPo covers this straight, too, though at least it includes Demand Progress' views.