

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE
PROGRAM MANAGER, INFORMATION SHARING ENVIRONMENT
Washington, DC 20511

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The Editor
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The Washington Post's Dec. 6, 2006 article entitled "Civil Libertarians Protest Privacy Policy," highlighted criticisms of the new Information Sharing Environment (ISE) privacy guidelines from two panelists who spoke at the open forum of the White House Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board. As co-chairs of the ISE Privacy Guidelines Committee, we believe the article failed to explain that this forum was designed for the Board to receive comments, and not for officials to engage in debate.

These government-wide privacy guidelines establish key protections as agencies share terrorism information. They not only require agencies to comply with the Privacy Act and other privacy laws and policies, but also create a framework for ensuring that privacy safeguards are consistently reviewed, documented, and enforced. The guidelines apply to the sharing of information already lawfully in an agency's possession, and therefore do not purport to replace existing collection rules. The guidelines do, in fact, require agencies to establish appropriate redress and transparency mechanisms, and will be subject to continued oversight by the newly formed privacy committee as well as by the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board.

Finally, agencies will receive ongoing, detailed guidance, informed by our continuing dialogue with civil liberties and other groups. We believe the guidelines enable necessary information sharing while protecting privacy and other legal rights of Americans.

Sincerely,



Jane Horvath
Chief Privacy and Civil Liberties Officer
Department of Justice



Alexander Joel
Civil Liberties and Protection Officer
Office of the Director of National
Intelligence