Attachment 14
Date 2-15-05
SJ 19

February 15, 2005
Senate Judiciary Committee
Written Statement of Sydney Taber
SJ 19 – a resolution on the USA Patriot Act

In the words of Thomas Jefferson, "The price of freedom is eternal vigilance." He and the other founders of our democratic republic knew well what it was like to live without the basic freedoms they established for us in the *Bill of Rights* of our *Constitution*. They knew the tyranny of fearful and despotic men, and they were determined that the democratic republic that they were founding would not be subject to such tyranny again. Those rights have been a model of freedom and the envy of people throughout the world. It is those rights, in defense of which so many have died, that make us the free-speaking, free-minded people that we have traditionally been. It is what makes America, America.

Once again, our nation is beset with men of fearful minds. Our president, vice-president, former and newly-appointed attorney generals have all sworn before us to uphold the law of our land, our *Constitution*. After the terrorist attack in New York City, President Bush swore that we would not allow terrorists to alter our commitment to freedom or to change our country. At the same time, his administration conceived the Patriot Act and rushed it through Congress without significant legislative analysis or discussion. Tucked into this act are sections depriving us of the right to live our lives as free citizens in a free and open society. President Bush is now pushing for permanent enactment of these sections as well as extensions to it.

Embodied in our *Constitution* are rights that our founders considered the most basic of human rights. Our nation can be rightly proud of our *Bill of Rights* and the foresight of these thoughtful and freedom-loving forebears; however, certain sections of the Patriot Act and executive branch directives alter Amendments I, IV, V, VI, and VII of the *Constitution*, so that we no longer enjoy that most basic of freedoms, the freedom to live without fear of our own government. Citizens throughout the country have been expressing their concern through resolutions in support of the *Constitution* and the *Bill of Rights*.

If our elected representatives do not uphold their responsibility to defend our *Constitution* and our freedoms, it then falls to us, the citizens to do so. It is my hope that all of you, will recognize the need to stand firm behind the freedoms that we value and that you will join in solidarity with other cities, counties, and states who have passed similar resolutions. Please vote for passage of SJ 19.