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of court-authorized wiretaps sought by the Justice Department has decreased in the last two years. On this basis, Mr. Chapman suggests that growing public concern with government wiretapping may be misplaced.

Mr. Chapman's article, however, ignores or underplays certain salient facts which reinforce public concern with government wiretapping.

First, the number of court-authorized wiretaps sought by the state and local governments has increased dramatically in the last four years. Between 1968 and 1972, wiretaps authorized by state and local courts have increased from 174 to 649—an incredible 373 per cent.

Second, as Mr. Chapman observes, the decrease in wiretaps sought by the Justice Department relates only to those for which court authorization has been sought. Wiretaps *not* in this category include those justified by the government on national security considerations. Because national security wiretaps are not reviewed by courts or publicly reported, there is no way of knowing whether the incidence of these wiretaps has increased or decreased in recent years.

Finally, it should be added that wiretapping is not the only kind of government surveillance activity which is of concern to the public. The government also spies on citizens through the use of electronic bugs, paid informers, close observation, and other means. One glaring example of this last type was the surveillance activities which the U.S. Army unlawfully conducted until recently on more than 100,000 law-abiding citizens. In view of these facts, the public can take little solace from the fact that the number of court-authorized wiretaps sought by the Justice Department has decreased in the last two years.

The basic problem is that the public has no means of determining the full scope of government surveillance activities. Accordingly, it is impossible to assess the dangers which all government surveillance activities pose to individual privacy. This problem would be remedied, in part at least, if Congress enacts S.J. Res. 124, a bill introduced by Senator Gaylord Nelson. The bill would establish a joint committee of Congress on individual rights. With bipartisan membership, the joint committee would have the power to review all government surveillance activities and to recommend legislation necessary to protect individual privacy from such activities.

LEWIS J. PAPER,

Legislative Counsel to Senator Gaylord Nelson,  
Washington.

### *Wiretaps Today*

In his article of October 4, 1973, entitled "Government Wiretaps Reduced by Half Since '71," William Chapman correctly points out that the number