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New U.S. Senate Encryption Bill Will Save Lives

WASHINGTON, April 8, 2016 – The Major Cities Chiefs Association today announced its support for legislation released by the Senate Intelligence Committee that gives law enforcement authorities access to encrypted data at U.S. companies and service providers. Representing the largest cities in the Nation, Chiefs spoke out in strong support of long-awaited legislation to require industry compliance with court orders. In the wake of recent terror attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, California, the release of today's bill addresses the difficulties law enforcement nationwide face when accessing encrypted communications in criminal cases.

Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Richard Burr (R-NC) and Vice Chairman Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) drafted the legislation, which is strongly endorsed by law enforcement officials.

"The recent attacks in Paris and San Bernardino demonstrate the urgent need to grant law enforcement lawful access to cell phone data in criminal and terrorist cases," said Chief J. Thomas Manger, president of the Major Cities Chiefs Association. "We support the proposed legislation that grants access to encrypted information and will lead law enforcement to victims in danger and the criminals who would do them harm."

Law enforcement officials regularly turn to digital technology when conducting investigations. They rely upon carriers and manufacturers to provide data such as text messages and location data to track down criminals or find missing persons. With the use of encryption on mobile devices, investigators are blocked from obtaining the evidence needed to prosecute criminals in court, unless carriers and manufacturers agree to provide assistance.

"I want to thank Senators Dianne Feinstein and Richard Burr, who have drafted legislation that would assist law enforcement in accessing encrypted data with a lawful court order," said Police Commissioner William J. Bratton. "Law enforcement cannot do this alone and I have long sought legislation that would compel application developers and phone manufacturers to adhere with orders from a court. As terrorist acts rock Europe, law enforcement's ability to legally intercept communication is critical to uncovering the next plot. No key piece of evidence in disrupting an attack or identifying a child predator should be beyond the reach of the law and I again, commend both Senators for taking this important step. The safety of New Yorkers and our nation depend on it."



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Law enforcement nationwide report cases where encryption and privacy laws leave them unable to save lives and arrest criminals. In April 2015, 29-year-old pregnant mother [Brittney Mills](#) was shot to death on her front porch in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Doctors delivered her unborn baby who died a week later. During subsequent investigations into the murders, Apple has denied requests from law enforcement authorities to access the encrypted data from Mills' [iPhone](#) with or without a warrant.

“Public safety will be well-served by measures that make it easier for law enforcement to request assistance from service providers and manufacturers,” said Darrel Stephens, executive director of the Major Cities Chiefs Association. “Today’s bill is a step in the right direction for law enforcement to assist citizens in danger and arrest criminals who pose a threat to the public we serve.”

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Major Cities Chiefs is a professional association of Chiefs and Sheriffs representing the largest cities in the United States and Canada. Membership is comprised of Chiefs and Sheriffs of the sixty-eight largest law enforcement agencies in the United States and ten largest in Canada. They serve 81.9 million people (70.4 US - 23%, 11.5 - 32% Canada) with a workforce of 185,183 (163,244 US, 21,939 Canada) officers and non-sworn personnel.
