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Reference: Massachusetts bill H.1881, Resolution Affirming the Civil Rights and Liberties of the People of Massachusetts.

Representative Cheryl A. Rivera
Chairperson, The Committee on Public Safety and Homeland security
Room 146, The Statehouse
Boston MA 02133

Dear Ms. Rivera:

The Sudbury Democratic Town Committee has been following the progress of H.1881 for some time and favors its timely approval by the legislature. Indeed, our Committee was instrumental in the passage at town meeting 2004 of a Sudbury resolution that opposed elements of the USA-Patriot Act, Presidential findings, and administrative actions that we believe are dangerous to civil rights or unconstitutional under any reasonable reading of the US Constitution. Some of our members also assisted in formulating H.1881.

We believe that the persistent erosion of civil rights under the Bush administration is moving this nation toward an Orwellian condition. Recent laws and executive edicts broaden police powers and in part remove search, seizure, and detention from judicial review. Information technology is increasingly used by government to track people's private affairs. Secrecy has been greatly expanded to screen governmental malfeasance. Poorly considered secret lists stigmatize and penalize people without cause or recourse. An eternal state of war exists that demands obedience and compliance. Increasingly the US military is placed above the law and used for lawless ends. Federal courts seem inclined to uphold government's natural wish to restrict civil rights. The information media have become uncritical of government with few exceptions.

These threats to civil rights and democracy must be vigorously resisted. H.1881 is of great importance as a clear statement of disapproval of and resistance to those institutions that would diminish civil rights. Given the proud history of Massachusetts in upholding and furthering civil rights, this state ought to join the hundreds of towns and cities and the several states that have already approved similar resolutions.

Accordingly, the SDTC requests in the strongest terms that H.1881 be promptly and favorably voted out of Committee so that it may be considered by the legislature in the current session.

Respectfully,

Thomas C Hollocher, Secretary, SDTC