

## **RESOLVED: WHEN IN CONFLICT, THE RIGHT TO INDIVIDUAL PRIVACY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN NATIONAL SECURITY**

### **[Intro]**

Imagine you're in your college dorm room. Suddenly federal agents arrive, take a look around, and accuse you of criminal activity without any probable cause - all you did was engage in free speech which is protected by the Constitution. This actually happened to AJ Brown of Durham, NC. By invading your privacy like this, the government is really saying it doesn't trust you, and, after the incident, you won't trust the government either. Our nation rests on a solid foundation of trust, and if that trust starts to erode, no amount of national security will prevent this self-implosion. That's why I stand **RESOLVED: WHEN IN CONFLICT, THE RIGHT TO INDIVIDUAL PRIVACY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN NATIONAL SECURITY.**

### **[Definitions]**

Before we move on, let's define some key terms:

Oxford Dictionaries defines **conflict** as, "An incompatibility between two or more opinions, principles, or interests."

Merriam-Webster defines the "**right of privacy**" as, "The qualified legal right of a person to have reasonable privacy in not having his private affairs made known or his likeness exhibited to the public having regard to his habits, mode of living, and occupation"

Macmillan Dictionary says **national security** is, "the protection or the safety of a country's secrets and its citizens."

### **[Value]**

My value in this debate is **trust**. Trust is foundational to **any** relationship – husband/wife, buyer/seller, government/citizens. When we go to the bank, for example, there must be trust even before a transaction. Without trust, we aren't going to make a transaction. Trust is defined by Merriam Webster's Learners Dictionary as "**strong** belief in the goodness or ability of (someone or something)."

Trust is widely accepted as the strong and firm foundation of a country. Because of this, we measure the success and the state of our country through trust indexes, such as one from PewResearchCenter, which measures the level of trust between government and citizens.

The best way to achieve trust is through...

### **[Criterion]**

...my criterion, **the right to individual privacy**. In America, for example, this right is protected by the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> amendments in our Constitution. By respecting these Constitutional rights, government upholds trust. In fact, as noted in the book Legal Symbolism, the constitution is a legal expression **of trust** between government and citizens. Going back to my opening example,

if the government had respected AJ Brown's right to privacy in her dorm room, trust would've been preserved.

### **Contention 1: Trust is the foundation for any thriving society**

In his book, "The Rights of Man," America's Founding Father Thomas Paine said, "All delegated power is trust." In a democracy, for example, officials get elected because they have the people's trust. Citizens place their vote in a candidate, saying "I trust you." Think about it. In the upcoming presidential election, would you vote for someone you don't trust? Trust is the foundation of your vote, and the foundation of our country.

Trust is important because it's the basis of our relationship with the government. According to a quote from Laslett, political philosopher John Locke believed: "The relation between government and governed is...a trust." Without trust, this relationship becomes unstable, wreaking havoc on society. For example, when King George III broke his trust with the colonists, **war** erupted and Britain **lost its colony** forever.

### **Contention 2: Valuing national security above the right to individual privacy destroys trust**

When the government thinks national security is so important that it infringes on the right to privacy, trust is broken.

For example, look at McCarthyism. Joseph McCarthy claimed communist spies were hiding in America, posing as citizens. In the name of national security, privacy was invaded and an unethical witch hunt ensued. Most of the accused were innocent. And even when cleared, damage was still done – thousands lost their reputations and jobs because of this mistrust which started with the government, but then spread to the whole society. Neighbors mistrusted each other, for fear of being falsely reported.

Believing national security was more important, the government trampled the right to privacy, and trust was destroyed.

Put it this way: national security is analogous to an alarm system around a house. But just as having a security system won't prevent the foundation from crumbling, no amount of national security will prevent the erosion of trust in our society if the right to privacy is violated.

### **Contention 3: Respecting the right of privacy strengthens trust**

By respecting the right to privacy, a government earns the trust of its citizens. Take the example of the USA Freedom Act. This law was passed last June and is an acronym for "Uniting and Strengthening America by Fulfilling Rights and Ending Eavesdropping, Dragnet collection, and Online Monitoring." The law was specifically designed to protect our right to privacy. One notable organization, BSA, affirms, "Reforms in the USA Freedom Act will help restore trust in... the US government." Because the government would be upholding our right to privacy over national security, trust is restored and the very core of our country can hold strong.

Thank you and I now stand ready for cross examination.