



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on July 25, 2015

Chambliss Ignores Constitution and Law; Calls for Snowden to be Lynched

Ed Snowden, still living in exile after having blown the whistle on the U.S. government's unconstitutional surveillance state, had better stay put, at least for the time being. Former U.S. Senator Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.) said in a speech at the University of Georgia that Snowden should be publicly executed. "We need to hang him on the courthouse square as soon as we get our hands on him," declared the recently retired senator.



Chambliss retired from the Senate in January 2015 to pursue a lucrative career in lobbying. He is now on the payroll at DLA Piper. He also serves on several boards and is a sought-after speaker. Leaving the Senate will not likely lessen his influence over American politics.

His statement about Ed Snowden was made during the question-and-answer session after he had spoken to an audience at the University of Georgia Terry College of Business on July 16 as part of the school's "Terry Third Thursday" series, which is sponsored by The Bank of North Georgia, the *Atlanta Business Chronicle*, and WABE-FM. His speech was titled, "Leadership Lessons from Capitol Hill." As of the writing of this article, the University of Georgia (UGA) has not responded to multiple requests for a statement on Chambliss' remarks. Chambliss is an alumnus of UGA.

The first question from the audience was about the [OPM hack that allowed China to steal sensitive information on over 21 million Americans](#). While answering the question, Chambliss went off point long enough to act as judge and jury and sentence Snowden to a public death.

"This is real and it's going to be felt by lots of Americans. The worst part of it — not unlike the Snowden incident, which I hope none of you have sympathy for him because we need to hang him on the courthouse square as soon as we get our hands on him — but just like with Snowden, we're going to lose American lives as a result of this breach," he said.

It might be tempting to dismiss Chambliss' comments as irrelevant, if the man himself could be so easily dismissed. Unfortunately, Chambliss is a former U.S. representative and senator with 20 years of federal lawmaking experience behind him. During that time, he held some very important positions. While in the House of Representatives, he served on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and was chairman the House Intelligence Subcommittee on Terrorism and Homeland Security. In the Senate, he served as a member of the Armed Services Committee, the Rules Committee, and the Intelligence Committee, where he was vice chairman from 2011 to 2014.

Chambliss is a man with connections and clout. He is also a man with experience in intelligence. His sentiments were not formed in a vacuum. Even former CIA Director James Woolsey said in 2013 that Snowden should be "hanged by his neck until he is dead." But the difference is that Woolsey said it should happen only "if convicted by a jury of his peers." Chambliss left out that bit about a trial and a conviction, saying Snowden's hanging should take place "as soon as we get our hands on him."



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Chambliss is considered to have a conservative voting record according to both the American Conservative Union and the Christian Coalition. But how genuine a “conservative” Chambliss is depends on the definition of “conservatism.” One thing is sure: Saxby Chambliss is not a constitutionalist.

His call for publicly lynching Ed Snowden without a trial or any due process of law is in stark contrast to the Fifth Amendment, which says, “No person shall ... be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.” In this case, that would require that he be charged, tried, found guilty, sentenced to death, and exhaust all appeals. In the absence of such a process, it is beyond the pale that a former U.S. representative and senator who has sworn an oath to the U.S. Constitution would make such a statement. Of course, though this statement was particularly egregious, it is not the only one he made in his speech that clashed with the Constitution. In fact, his speech was loaded with big government ideas and heavy handed foreign policy.

Chambliss mentioned that he serves on the advisory boards for the director of the CIA and the director of the National Counterterrorism Center. He also referred to the National Counterterrorism Center as “about the only good thing I can think of that we created with the Intelligence Modernization Act,” after saying its role is to “to distribute information out regarding anything anybody thinks is an act of terrorism.”

I’ve been fortunate to able to keep my finger in the intel world, I serve on two boards — two advisory boards. One is the CIA director’s advisory board and we meet quarterly ... and then I serve on the advisory board to the director of the National Counterterrorism Center, which is the central point, now, that all suspected acts of terrorism are funneled into. And it’s the role of the National Counterterrorism Center to distribute information out regarding anything anybody *thinks* is an act of terrorism.... It’s about the only good thing I can think of that we created with the Intelligence Modernization Act of several years ago.” [Emphasis in original transcript.]

So, the former federal legislator is now serving on two advisory boards and has been working for a lobbying firm since immediately after leaving office. Federal law requires a two-year period after leaving office before lobbying. Par for the course, the very legislators who enact these laws create loopholes that allow them to do what the law would prohibit without actually breaking the law. In an interview with the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Chambliss said he is not a lobbyist: “I’m not going to lobby. That’s part of my deal. I’m not a lobbyist. I’m on the legal side of the firm.” Instead he will simply advise the lobbyists and get them introductions to his former colleagues. It’s a distinction without a difference.

Though the American Conservative Union and the Christian Coalition gave him high scores based on their criteria, [Chambliss earned a paltry cumulative score of 59 percent](#) in *The New American’s* “Freedom Index” (a congressional scorecard based on the U.S. Constitution) for the period from 1999 (the farthest back the index goes online) to 2014, when he retired from the Senate. Our criteria is simple: How do the votes of elected officials measure up to the Constitution? In Chambliss’ case, the answer is also simple: not too well.

Compared to the actions and sentiments of Saxby Chambliss, Ed Snowden stands out in sharp contrast. The former NSA contractor who leaked a trove of NSA documents to journalists and started the movement to rein in the U.S. government’s warrantless mass surveillance of its own citizens has paid a



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price for his patriotism. He said in his interviews with both [Laura Poitras](#) and Glenn Greenwald that he knew he was risking his life and his freedom. He has spent over two years in exile in Russia and may never be able to come home. Certainly not while Chambliss' brand of "justice" is still a possibility.

One of these men sacrificed selflessly and bravely and has suffered for it. The other has skirted the laws he swore to uphold and is profiting from it. One has served America. The other has served himself. Now the lover of Big Government wants the patriot dead. Some things never change.

Photo of Senator Saxby Chambliss: AP Images



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