



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on July 17, 2013

Former U.S. Senator Sends Message of Support to NSA Whistleblower Snowden

Former U.S. Senator Gordon Humphrey of New Hampshire [sent an e-mail](#) to Edward Snowden expressing his support of the former National Security Agency contract worker's action in exposing the NSA's massive data collection program through the release of classified documents.

"Provided you have not leaked information that would put in harms way any intelligence agent, I believe you have done the right thing in exposing what I regard as massive violation of the United States Constitution," Humphrey, who served two terms as senator from New Hampshire, wrote in an e-mail to Snowden, who is in Moscow seeking asylum as a political refugee. Snowden faces charges of espionage and theft of government property in the United States as a result of his leaking classified information.

"Having served in the United States Senate for twelve years as a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, the Armed Services Committee and the Judiciary Committee, I think I have a good grounding to reach my conclusion," wrote Humphrey, who served in the Senate from 1979-1990. "I wish you well in your efforts to secure asylum and encourage you to persevere."

"Thank you for your words of support," Snowden replied in an e-mail. "I only wish more of our lawmakers shared your principles — the actions I've taken would not have been necessary."

The correspondence was published Tuesday by *The Guardian*, the British publication that, along with the *Washington Post*, broke the story of the NSA collection and storage of billions of e-mails and telephone messages daily. After turning classified documents about the program over to the publications, Snowden fled from his Hawaiian home to a secret location in Hong Kong, where he publicly acknowledged in an interview with *The Guardian* that he was the whistleblower. He flew from Hong Kong to Moscow on June 23 and has been there ever since. Venezuela, Bolivia, and Nicaragua have offered him asylum, but his flight is complicated by the fact that the United States has revoked his passport. He applied Tuesday for temporary asylum in Russia. Russian President Vladimir Putin Monday described Snowden as an unwelcome present from the United States and accused Washington of intimidating other countries into refusing to receive the fugitive.

Glenn Greenwald, the reporter/columnist who broke the NSA-Snowden story for *The Guardian*, contacted Humphrey to verify that the e-mail to Snowden was actually from the former senator.

"Yes. It was I who sent the email message to Edward Snowden, thanking him for exposing astonishing violations of the US Constitution and encouraging him to persevere in the search for asylum,"





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Humphrey wrote. “To my knowledge, Mr. Snowden has disclosed only the existence of a program and not details that would place any person in harm’s way. I regard him as a courageous whistle-blower.”

The debate over whether Snowden is a “whistle-blower” or a “traitor” has been ongoing since the former system administrator with NSA contractor Booz Allen Hamilton disclosed the agency’s worldwide surveillance program in early June. Much of Washington officialdom has claimed the former intelligence worker betrayed his country with the unauthorized disclosure. [House Speaker John Boehner \(R-Ohio\)](#), [Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Dianne Feinstein \(D-Calif.\)](#), and [former Vice President Dick Cheney](#) are among those who have accused Snowden of treason. Secretary of State John Kerry has claimed Snowden’s information puts lives at risk.

“People may die as a consequence to what this man did,” Kerry said in a June 24 [interview](#) with CNN News. “It is possible that the United States would be attacked because terrorists may now know how to protect themselves in some way or another that they didn’t know before. This is a very dangerous act.”

Snowden’s intention has been “to inform the public as to that which is done in their name and that which is done against them,” he said in his e-mail to Humphrey. “I remain committed to that. Though reporters and officials may never believe it, I have not provided any information that would harm our people — agent or not — and I have no intention to do so.”

Humphrey, a [conservative Republican](#) who chose not to seek a third Senate term in 1990, said in his message to Greenwald that he regards the NSA’s massive data collection as unconstitutional and the government’s efforts against Snowden “monumentally disproportionate.”

“I object to the monumentally disproportionate campaign being waged by the U.S. Government against Edward Snowden, while no effort is being made to identify, remove from office and bring to justice those officials who have abused power, seriously and repeatedly violating the Constitution of the United States and the rights of millions of unsuspecting citizens,” the former senator wrote.

“Americans concerned about the growing arrogance of our government and its increasingly menacing nature should be working to help Mr. Snowden find asylum,” Humphrey said. “Former Members of Congress, especially, should step forward and speak out.”



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