

Trump Administration

Trump Administration Moves to Allow Intelligence Agencies Easier Access to Law Enforcement Files

by **Tim Golden**

February 25, 2026, 5:00 am



Criminal Justice Journalists

Trump Aides Give Intel Agencies Access To More Records, Avoiding Privacy Issue

The Trump administration is loosening restrictions on the sharing of law enforcement information with the CIA and other intelligence agencies, overriding controls that have been in place for decades to protect the privacy of U.S. citizens. Government officials said the changes could give intelligence agencies access to a database containing hundreds of millions of documents — from FBI case files and banking records to criminal investigations of labor unions — that touch on the activities of law-abiding Americans, [ProPublica reports](#). Administration officials said they are providing the intelligence agencies with more information from investigations by the FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration and other agencies to combat drug gangs and other transnational criminal groups that the administration has classified as terrorists.

Officials have taken these steps with almost no public acknowledgement or notification to Congress. Inside the government, the process has been marked by a similar lack of transparency, with scant high-level discussion and little debate among government lawyers. “None of this has been thought through very carefully — which is shocking,” one intelligence official said. “There are a lot of privacy concerns out there, and nobody really wants to deal with them.” A spokesperson for the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, Olivia Coleman, declined to answer questions about the expanded information sharing or the legal basis for it. She cited public statements by senior administration officials, including one in which the national intelligence director, Tulsi Gabbard, emphasized the importance of “making sure that we have seamless two-way push communications with our law enforcement partners to facilitate that bi-directional sharing of information.” After the Watergate scandal, revelations that Presidents Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon had used the CIA to spy on U.S. anti-war and civil rights activists outraged Americans who feared the specter of a secret police. The congressional reforms that followed reinforced the long-standing ban on intelligence agencies gathering information about the domestic activities of U.S. citizens.