

Rand Paul: Privacy for Me, But Not for Thee

If a private citizen wants to open a bank account, board an airplane, buy tobacco or alcohol, or engage in many other perfectly ordinary activities, government requires that citizen to present photo identification which includes personal information, including his or her home address and date of birth.

But according to many government employees, their own personal information should be protected by law from the prying eyes of that ordinary citizen.

Congress is currently considering legislation that would empower federal judges to censor social media posts containing such information about themselves. US Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) opposes the bill — not because it clearly violates the First Amendment, but because he wants it expanded to provide for concealment of his own personal information and that of his fellow members of Congress too.

“I really think that this is important that we protect addresses for our judges, but it’s also important that we do this for our elected officials,” says Paul. “The Capitol Hill police are not stationed at our homes where our families live while we serve in Washington.”

You know where else the Capitol Hill Police aren’t stationed, Senator Paul? My house. If the TSA agent or financial regulator or store clerk your laws require me to show my ID to turns out to be some kind of psycho stalker, I’m on my own.

There’s one big difference between me and Senator Paul, and between me and US District Judge Esther Salas, whose son was killed and husband wounded by such a stalker in an attack on their family home, fueling the latest round of calls for “protection” of government employees’ personal information.

That difference is that I don’t claim to represent or serve (or expect a paycheck from) the people I’m required by law (that is, by Senator Paul and friends) to share my personal information with.

Article I of the US Constitution requires Senator Paul to be an “inhabitant” of Kentucky as of each election in which he seeks to retain his seat. If Kentucky’s voters aren’t allowed to know where he lives, how can they know whether he’s eligible to continue serving as their Senator?

Nobody forced Rand Paul to seek political office. Nobody’s forcing him to continue living on the taxpayer dime. So long as he does, those taxpayers are entitled to know as much about him as he demands to know about them.