THE DIRE warnings in Massachusetts ACLU executive director Carol Rose’s July 17 op-ed “They could be eavesdropping” are totally false. The bipartisan bill passed overwhelmingly by the House and Senate does not allow access to content, but in fact only allows prosecutors to learn the name and identifying information about an e-mail or Internet subscriber. The bill clearly guarantees that administrative subpoenas for subscriber records will not give prosecutors access to the content of any e-mail or browsing history, instant messages, or other communications.

The state legislation that I have cosponsored with all 11 district attorneys has nothing to do with eavesdropping. Since 1966, authorities have had the ability to obtain administrative subpoenas for telephone records. This bill merely updates the law in order to provide law enforcement with the critical tools necessary to keep pace with technology and investigate various computer crimes such as child pornography and on-line threats, without disrupting the privacy of citizens who use the Internet. I commend the Legislature for giving law enforcement the tools necessary to fight crime in a high-tech age.

MARTHA COAKLEY
Massachusetts attorney general
Boston