

Statement of

The Honorable Patrick Leahy

United States Senator

June 21, 2011

**Statement Of Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.),
Chairman, Senate Committee On The Judiciary,
Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism
Hearing on "Cybersecurity: Evaluating the Administration's Proposals"
June 21, 2011**

I commend Senator Whitehouse for holding this timely hearing about the administration's cybersecurity proposals. I also congratulate him for his dedicated work as the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism.

Developing a comprehensive strategy for cybersecurity is one of the most pressing challenges facing our Nation today. In the digital age, we are witnessing truly fantastic advances in technology. But, with the explosion of new technologies, such as social networking sites, smartphones, and mobile applications, we also face threats to privacy and to cybersecurity like at no other time in our history.

In just the last few weeks, we have witnessed major data breaches at Sony, Epsilon, RSA, the International Monetary Fund, and Lockheed Martin -- just to name a few. Recently, Google announced that the Gmail accounts of hundreds of its users, including senior U.S. Government officials, have been hacked in an apparent state-sponsored cyber-attack. Our Government computer networks have also not been spared -- as evidenced by the recent hacking incidents involving the Senate and Central Intelligence Agency websites.

We cannot afford to ignore these threats, or their impact on our privacy and security. That is why I have made protecting Americans' privacy and security in cyberspace a top priority for the Judiciary Committee.

As Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, I am working closely with the Obama administration and others in Congress to develop a comprehensive national strategy for cybersecurity. Earlier this month, I reintroduced my Personal Data Privacy and Security Act - a comprehensive data privacy bill which would establish a national standard for data breach notification and require that companies safeguard our sensitive personal information. Many of the sound privacy principles in my bill were included by the administration in its cybersecurity proposal.

The privacy protections in that bill are long overdue. In fact, I have introduced the legislation four times and each time I have done so, the threats to data privacy have been greater than the time before. I hope the fourth time is the charm.

In the coming weeks, I will include this bill on the Committee's business agenda, so that we can consider and hopefully promptly report the legislation again. In the past, the work to pass this bill has always been a strong bipartisan effort. I hope that it will be so again this time.

I am pleased that representatives from the Departments of Justice, Commerce and Homeland Security are here to share their views on how best to protect cybersecurity. I look forward to learning more about these proposals.

We simply cannot wait to act on comprehensive cybersecurity legislation. But, we must proceed in a way that is respectful of our privacy rights and civil liberties.

We must also work together -- across party lines and ideology -- to build a secure future in cyberspace. This is not a Democratic issue, nor a Republican issue -- it is a national issue that impacts all of us. That is why I hope that all Members of the Committee will bring a bipartisan spirit to our work to strengthen our Nation's cybersecurity.

Again, I commend Senator Whitehouse for holding this important hearing. I look forward to a good discussion.

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