

**“Evolving the U.S. Cybersecurity Strategy and Posture: Reviewing the Cyberspace
Solarium Commission Report”
Opening Statement of Chairman Ron Johnson
May 13, 2020**

As prepared for delivery:

Today’s hearing will focus on examining the findings and recommendations from the Cyberspace Solarium Commission’s recent report. The Commission’s report is a call to action that identifies critical cyber shortcomings across the public and private sectors, and recommends holistic, coordinated, nonpartisan solutions to those problems.

The cybersecurity challenges we face are growing in number and sophistication. From data breaches in the retail sector to the financial sector, no industry is immune from hackers. In the last few years, we have seen an emergence of ransomware attacks. It is estimated that 966 government, education, and healthcare entities have been victims of ransomware such attacks in 2019, causing operational and financial costs of roughly \$7.5 billion. The COVID-19 pandemic necessitates an even greater need for vigilance to protect against these threats to the healthcare system. Other issues – like how we develop and maintain secure supply chains, particularly with the emergence of China, Inc. in the telecommunications equipment market – are equally challenging.

As our federal agencies have evolved to counter these threats, ultimately expanding federal programs and bureaucracy, it has become more and more clear that we can’t answer a simple question: “who’s in charge?”

I am pleased that the President appointed a senior White House official as the point person on 5G issues who can define that problem and provide a clear federal strategy. Yet I believe we need that kind of clarity across all cybersecurity policy.

Accordingly, I am particularly interested in the Commission’s recommendation to establish a National Cyber Director. This is an important recommendation that deserves careful consideration. A National Cyber Director could set a president up for success and ensure that his or her policies are being implemented across the government.

There are many outstanding questions, however, like how a National Cyber Director would be involved in defensive cyber operations; combating the theft of intellectual property; and reviewing budgets. We also need to find consensus on the appropriate scope of authorities and powers a National Cyber Director would need to be successful. We need to get these details right to ensure that this new position can cut through the bureaucracy, not add to it.

Another important Commission recommendation is the need for the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency to have administrative subpoena authority to identify and warn critical infrastructure owners and operators of vulnerabilities. I sponsored legislation that would provide this authority with Senator Hassan, the *Cybersecurity Vulnerability Identification and Disclosure Act*, and we passed it out of committee by voice vote. This is an important authority that will make the critical infrastructure of this nation more resilient from hackers and I appreciate the Commission’s support as we work to get this authority signed into law this year.

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I want to thank all of the witnesses for participating virtually today and I look forward to our discussion.