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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

July 13, 2011

MICHAEL L. ALEXANDER, STAFF DIRECTOR  
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The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senator  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senator  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leaders Reid and McConnell:

We write to express our strong opposition to the idea of creating a temporary Select Committee on Cyber Security and Electronic Intelligence Leaks as proposed by Senator McCain in his July 12 letter to you. We could not agree more with his assertion that “we must provide congressional leadership on this pressing issue of national security.” This is precisely why we must continue to push forward with the significant progress that has been made toward comprehensive cybersecurity legislation. It would be a real mistake and a waste of time to restart the process when so much work has already been done.

As Senator McCain recognizes in his letter, our electric grid, air traffic control system, water supply, financial networks, and defense systems are increasingly vulnerable to cyber attack. Not a week goes by that we do not hear about another attempted intrusion of ever increasing sophistication. The targets range from corporations to government facilities to individual government leaders. Even some of the leading cybersecurity companies themselves have been successfully penetrated. Sony, Citi, RSA, Lockheed Martin, our National Labs, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) – the list goes on.

Politicians are frequently heard to say that “the time to act is now.” Unfortunately, when it comes to cybersecurity, we are past that time; we are in a race to secure our cyber infrastructure from adversaries who are constantly growing in number and ability, and it is a race that we are now losing. For this reason, we urge you to bring comprehensive cybersecurity legislation to the Senate floor as soon as possible this year.

The Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee’s examination of our nation’s vulnerability to cyber attack has been a truly bipartisan effort, and the bill that our Committee unanimously marked up was the product of years of bipartisan work.

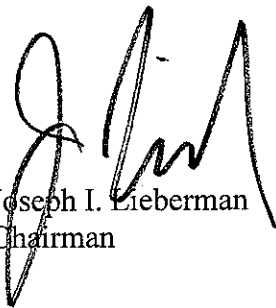
But that work did not stop when our bill was reported. For more than a year, we have also worked across Committee lines with our colleagues from the Commerce Committee and other Committees on comprehensive cybersecurity legislation. Partisanship and turf protection were strikingly absent from these talks. This truth is borne out by the final product: draft legislation that would establish clear lines of authority for securing the dot-gov and dot-com domains, and that is notably lacking in the legislative drafting oddities that usually signal a jurisdictionally driven compromise.

If Senator McCain or any other colleague wishes to amend the cybersecurity legislation that comes to the floor or even introduce a substitute to it, of course they should be free to do so. That would be a more efficient and less time-consuming way for our colleagues to affect the ongoing legislative process regarding cybersecurity without derailing it.

However, a Select Committee will necessarily require a restart of efforts that have been underway for years and would wash away the significant progress that the Senate has made.

The cyber threat is real and growing, and it is urgent; we cannot afford the unnecessary and significant delay that would come with establishing a new Committee, appointing members, hiring staff, and developing new legislation.

Sincerely,



Joseph I. Lieberman  
Chairman



Susan M. Collins  
Ranking Member