

**U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs**  
**“What States, Locals and the Business Community Should Know and Do: A**  
**Roadmap for Effective Cybersecurity”**

**OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER GARY C. PETERS**  
**February 11, 2020**  
**AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY**

“Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to all of our witnesses here today.

“I’m especially pleased that we have Chris DeRusha with us today. He is the Chief Security Officer for the State of Michigan, and an important partner in combatting cyber-attacks in our home state. Chris, I want to congratulate you on welcoming a baby boy last month and thank your family for allowing you to come to Washington while you are on paternity leave to share your expertise with us.

“The cyber threats facing our nation are becoming increasingly sophisticated and we are all at risk – families, government agencies, schools, small businesses, and critical infrastructure.

“In today’s digital world, state and local governments are responsible for safeguarding everything from election systems to sensitive personal data, including social security numbers, credit card information and even medical records. State and local governments don’t always have the tools to defend against cyber-attacks. Financial constraints, workforce challenges, and outdated equipment are all serious challenges for states and cities.

“Attackers always look for the “weakest link” and that’s why we must ensure that everyone from small businesses to our state and local governments have the tools to prevent, detect and respond to cyber-attacks. That’s why I have introduced commonsense, bipartisan legislation with my colleagues on this committee to help bolster our cyber security defenses at all levels of government.

“I introduced the bipartisan DOTGOV Act with Chairman Johnson and Senator Lankford to help state and local governments transition to the more trusted and secure dot-gov domain.

“I also introduced the State and Local Government Cybersecurity Act with Senator Portman. This will help DHS share timely information, deliver training and resources, and provide technical assistance on cybersecurity threats, vulnerabilities, and breaches with states and localities.

“In 2016 – in my home state of Michigan, hackers used a ransomware attack on the Lansing Board of Water and Light, forcing taxpayers to pay a \$25,000 ransom to unlock the targeted computer systems. My bill would give cities and states the tools to prevent and respond to these kinds of attacks more effectively.

“Recently, Richmond Community Schools in Michigan were closed for a week due to a similar attack demanding a \$10,000 payment. Luckily, their data was not compromised. But this attack exposes a dangerous vulnerability as schools maintain a considerable amount of sensitive records related to their students and employees – including family records, medical histories, and employment information.

“I introduced the K-12 Cybersecurity Act with Senator Scott to protect students and their data by providing better cybersecurity resources and information to K through 12 schools in Michigan and across the country.

“It is clear that these kinds of attacks are only growing and they pose a serious risk. I will continue working to ensure that all of our state and local governments have the resources, information and expertise they need to safeguard Americans.

“I will keep working with my colleagues on this important issue, and look forward to hearing from today’s experts on what else the federal government can do to prevent cyber-attacks.”