

Statement of Senator Thomas R. Carper

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

June 15, 2010

Protecting Cyberspace as a National Asset: Comprehensive Legislation for the 21st Century

I want to start off my opening statement by thanking Chairman Lieberman and Ranking Member Collins for their leadership on this important national and economic security issue. This hearing to examine the various aspects of our comprehensive cyber security legislation is both timely and important.

As we all know, the Internet has certainly grown over the years – both in its complexity and in its impact on our everyday lives.

For the past three years, I have called for some of the very same reforms we will talk about today. In fact, I introduced cyber security legislation last spring in an effort to strengthen our Federal government – and our nation – against the kinds of attacks that we have seen seriously disrupt the nations of Estonia and Georgia.

One reform I am happy my colleagues accepted is the creation of a White House office that would be responsible for coordinating the security and resiliency of our nation's cyber space. To date, Federal agencies' efforts have been ad-hoc and duplicative. As the saying goes, the 'left hand didn't know what the right hand was doing.' My hope is that this office will provide the needed strategic direction to more effectively deal with challenges in cyberspace before they become a crisis.

Another reform I am happy made it into the bill is the idea that agencies need to leverage their purchasing power to demand private vendors sell more secure products and services. For too long agencies have needlessly spent money cleaning up after a cyber attack because the technology was full of security holes. Like a door with no lock, hackers have used security holes that never should have been there in the first place to gain access to our sensitive networks. Our bill changes that.

I also commend my colleagues for joining me in reforming the Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002. As we all know, producing a plan that sounds good on paper is not the same as ensuring the plan is effective when implemented. That's why our bill compels agencies to stop producing the reams of ineffective paperwork they currently do and instead focus their efforts on defending their systems in real-time.

Lastly, I thank my colleagues for accepting my language to create a nation-wide network of cyber challenges to help reduce the gap between the number of so-called "cyber warriors" that are produced in America and those being trained in China, North

Korea, and Russia. Like a “farm system” in baseball, these cyber challenges will create a pipeline of talent that can be tapped by government agencies and private sector companies. If we want America to continue to be dominant in the century to come, we must invest in the skills of our youngsters.

In closing, I look forward to working with Chairman Lieberman, Ranking Member Collins, and other Senate colleagues who may have interest in this issue. My hope is that we can bring together a diverse group of stakeholders on all sides of the issue to produce a bipartisan bill that will enhance our nation’s cyber security and be signed by the President before the end of this year.