



COMMITTEE *ON* HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Subcommittee Hearing Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)

Growing the National Cybersecurity Talent Pipeline

June 22, 2023

Growing the national cybersecurity talent pipeline has been a longstanding priority for the Homeland Security Committee. While we have done important work in recent years in enacting legislation for CISA to provide critical assistance for industrial control systems cybersecurity training and for K-12 cybersecurity education, the cybersecurity workforce shortage has proven to be a stubborn challenge.

It is apparent that much more needs to be done to develop the next generation of cyber talent, re-skill our current workforce to fill cybersecurity vacancies that exist today, and build a more inclusive workforce that makes full use of the diversity that makes our nation so great.

To help cultivate the next generation of diverse cybersecurity leaders, I worked with then-Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff to establish the DHS Intelligence and Cybersecurity Fellowship Program, providing a diverse set of college students the opportunity to work for a summer at DHS on intelligence and cybersecurity matters. Earlier this month, I had the opportunity to meet the inaugural class of fellows and was impressed by their knowledge and commitment to public service.

Unfortunately, just this week, Republicans on the Appropriations Committee have advanced a Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations bill that would eliminate funding for this important program. This is the exact opposite of what we need to do if we are going to address our shortage of cyber talent. The young people I met this month are precisely the kind of bright and talented individuals we need working in cybersecurity, especially in the federal government where the challenge of recruiting qualified cyber professionals has been particularly acute.

As we move through the appropriations process, I will fight to restore funding for this important program, and I hope the bipartisan membership of this committee will support me in this effort.

Instead of following the lead of the Appropriations Committee in cutting back support for the development of the cyber workforce, we must continue to look for innovative ways to bring more people into the talent pipeline. The panel of witnesses we have before us today have extensive expertise on both the causes of our existing shortage and the solutions that we must implement if we are to grow our cyber workforce.

We know that there is no single program that will solve this problem overnight, but if we build cybersecurity education into our K-12 curriculum, expand opportunities for cybersecurity training – whether in the form of certifications, apprenticeships, or degrees – and increase outreach to women and people of color, we should be able to make real progress.

With partners in the executive branch like Acting National Cyber Director Kemba Walden, DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, and CISA Director Jen Easterly, who all share our interest in tackling this ongoing problem, I am confident that we will have a National Cyber Workforce and Education Strategy that reflects

this multi-pronged approach. I look forward to working with the members of this committee to ensure we have the legislation and resources necessary to implement it.

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