



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

Design vs. Default: Analyzing Shifts in Cybersecurity

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When President Biden and Vice President Harris were sworn in four years ago, they committed to making cybersecurity a national security priority, and they have.

From the May 2021 Executive Order on Improving the Nation's Cybersecurity, to the March 2023 National Cybersecurity Strategy, to the July 2023 National Cyber Workforce and Education Strategy, the Biden-Harris Administration has put in place ambitious policies to secure our digital ecosystem.

A common thread in these efforts has been identifying systemic approaches to improving security. Notably, the National Cyber Strategy articulated a pivotal shift in responsibility for security -- away from consumers and onto software developers and technology manufacturers who are better positioned to systemic action reduce cyber risk.

Too frequently, the technology we rely on every day is vulnerable to attack because manufacturers prioritized being first to market over being the most secure in the market.

As CISA Director Jen Easterly observed: "We don't have a cybersecurity problem. We have a software quality problem."

With that in mind, I commend CISA for launching the Secure by Design Initiative and encouraging software manufacturers to take the steps necessary to ensure their products are secure when their customers use them.

I am pleased that over 200 companies have signed CISA's Secure by Design Pledge, including some of our witnesses today.

I will be interested in understanding how witnesses have improved their development practices since signing the Pledge, and how CISA can incentivize and facilitate greater adoption of Secure by Design practices in the future.

At the same time, I recognize that the Secure by Design Initiative is a voluntary program with no enforcement mechanism.

We would be remiss if we did not explore the limitations of relying on voluntary programs to improve the security of technology that underpins our communications infrastructure, our healthcare infrastructure, Federal networks, and other critical infrastructure sectors.

Before I close, I will note that that this is the last cybersecurity hearing we will hold during the Biden-Harris Administration.

Project 2025, which was written by people close to the President-elect, included a series of troubling, ill-informed proposals for CISA's future that would diminish its ability to effectively defend Federal networks and carry out its broad infrastructure security mission.

I hope my colleagues on this panel will educate the incoming Administration about CISA's important missions and push back against efforts to undermine the Agency in the weeks and months ahead.

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Media contact: 202-225-9978