



COMMITTEE ON  
**HOMELAND  
SECURITY**  
DEMOCRATS

Rep. Bennie G. Thompson, *Ranking member*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)  
*Public-Private Solutions to Educating a Cyber Workforce*  
Subcommittee on Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Protection**

**October 24, 2017**

According to the International Data Corporation, global revenues for cybersecurity technology and services will grow from \$73.7 billion in 2016 to \$101.6 billion in 2020.

Yet, a report by Frost and Sullivan and (ISC)-Squared released earlier this year predicted that, despite current projections for steady growth in cybersecurity jobs, there will be 1.5 million unfilled cybersecurity positions worldwide by 2020.

As policymakers, we have to ask ourselves why we are struggling to attract people to a field that promises so much growth.

From where I sit, I can see at least three challenges we have to address.

As a Member of Congress representing the Second Congressional District of Mississippi, I can tell you that we have to do a better job cultivating domestic cybersecurity talent.

As Ranking Member of the Committee on Homeland Security, I am worried that President Trump's immigration policies - particularly related the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals - will result in a loss of cybersecurity talent that our academic institutions and businesses have already spent time and money educating and training.

And as a Member of the Congressional Black Caucus, I know that we have missed opportunities to develop cybersecurity talent in diverse communities.

I am pleased that the witnesses before us today will be able to give us their thoughts on how the Federal government can work with the private sector to address all three of these issues.

When the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Protection Subcommittee held its hearing on cybersecurity workforce challenges last month, I told the panel what my constituents in Mississippi tell me about what our approach to this problem should be: invest aggressively in growing domestic cybersecurity talent.

As a new generation enters the workforce and as displaced workers try to find their way in a changing economy, we must equip American workers with the skills they need to take advantage of cybersecurity job opportunities.

Unfortunately, the Trump Administration's commitment to helping our workforce gain the skills they need to compete for cybersecurity jobs is hardly consistent.

Although President Trump congratulated himself last month for directing the Department of Education to spend at least \$200 million annually on STEM education grants, his FY 2018 budget request slashed the National Science Foundation's Scholarship for Service Program.

And I would be remiss if I did not point out that no one knows where the Department of Education is going to get the \$200 million it is supposed to spend on STEM grants.

The only thing we do know is that the President did not send any new money with his directive.

President Trump is further undermining efforts to address our cybersecurity workforce challenges with his decision to allow the DACA Program to expire in March.

If we do not provide "Dreamers" a path to citizenship, we run the risk of hemorrhaging talent across a wide variety of disciplines.

I am pleased that businesses like Google, Facebook, IBM, and many others have formed the Coalition for the American Dream to advocate for a path to citizenship for "Dreamers" and to keep their talents in the United States.

I am similarly encouraged by the advocacy of academic leaders who have urged Congress to act so that the nation can reap the benefits of the Dreamers' skills and talents.

Finally, we must do more to promote cybersecurity opportunities in diverse communities. Today, black and Hispanic people - combined - make up only 12 percent of the cybersecurity workforce. To me, that means we are missing out on untapped potential.

Despite ongoing challenges with a lack of consistent leadership from the White House, I am pleased that the private sector and our academic institutions continue to work together to build a robust cybersecurity workforce.

I am eager to learn more about these efforts and how Congress can help support them.

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