



**One Hundred Twelfth Congress  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20515**

September 23, 2011

The Honorable John A. Boehner  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Room H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

President Obama has described the growing number of attacks on our cyber networks as “one of the most serious economic and national security threats our nation faces.”<sup>1</sup> During a hearing held by the Committee on Homeland Security on September 8, 2011,<sup>2</sup> three distinguished witnesses echoed the President’s sentiment regarding the threat posed to our cyber networks. Specifically, former Department of Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge, Former 9/11 Commissioner, Representative Lee Hamilton, and Comptroller General Gene Dodaro testified that enhancing the Department of Homeland Security’s authority cybersecurity capabilities and capacity is essential to strengthening our Nation’s cybersecurity posture.

Since the establishment of the Committee on Homeland Security as a standing committee in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, the security of our Nation’s federal IT and critical infrastructure has been a central focus of Members of the Committee on both sides of the aisle. Under Democratic control in the 110<sup>th</sup> and 111<sup>th</sup> Congresses, the Committee held one dozen oversight hearings on targeted aspects of this homeland security challenge. As you may be aware, we introduced legislation both this and last Congress to close cybersecurity gaps identified through the Committee’s oversight efforts.<sup>3</sup> Thus far, during the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, Representative Lungren, as Chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security’s Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies, has continued the Committee’s oversight into the security of our Nation’s

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.dhs.gov/files/cybersecurity.shtm>

<sup>2</sup> “The Attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>: Where Are We Today.”

<sup>3</sup> H.R. 174 (112<sup>th</sup>) the “Homeland Security Cyber and Physical Infrastructure Protection Act of 2011” and H.R. 6423 (111<sup>th</sup>) the “Homeland Security Cyber and Physical Infrastructure Protection Act of 2010.”

cyber networks, most especially critical infrastructure networks, by convening three cybersecurity hearings.

According to recent media reports, the Republican House Cybersecurity Task Force, the formation of which you announced in June, is currently compiling recommendations on cyber issues and legislation to be presented to Republican Leadership for their consideration in October.<sup>4</sup> As leaders on an authorizing committee with experience working in a bipartisan manner on cybersecurity, we urge you move any legislative package through the House via regular order. We also request your commitment that the Committee on Homeland Security, a panel with an extensive record of oversight on cybersecurity issues, will be afforded the opportunity to work in a bipartisan fashion to produce forthcoming cybersecurity legislation.

You recently stated Mr. Speaker, "American jobs and national security depend upon our Nation's ability to innovate and dominate information technology fields." We share your view about the criticality of the IT sector. That is why we stand ready to work in a bipartisan manner to produce cybersecurity legislation to help protect not only the IT sector but all the other sectors in our economy that rely on it.

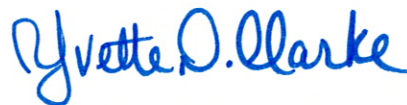
Thank you, in advance, for your prompt attention to this request. Should you or your staff have any further questions on this matter, please contact Ms. Rosaline Cohen, Chief Counsel for Legislation of the Committee on Homeland Security, at x6-2616.

Sincerely,



Bennie G. Thompson  
Ranking Member

Sincerely,



Yvette D. Clarke  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Cybersecurity,  
Infrastructure Protection, and  
Security Technologies

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<sup>4</sup> Politico, *Cybersecurity Is Focus of New Bills*, September 8, 2011.