

Opening Statement - Rep. Daniel Lipinski (D-IL)
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Research & Science Education
Joint Hearing with Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation on:
Protecting Information in the Digital Age: Federal Cybersecurity R&D Efforts
May 25, 2011

Good morning. I want to thank both Chairman Quayle and Chairman Brooks for holding this hearing. I agree with my colleagues' remarks on the nature and severity of the challenges we face in cybersecurity in both the public and private sectors. Cybercrime is a problem for our national security, for businesses large and small, and for every single American. Like Mr. Wu, I can think of no more important topic for this committee to address.

While there are several other agencies not here today who also play a significant role in cybersecurity, the three agencies that are represented here are all central to these efforts. I know some of my colleagues will address the cyber efforts of NIST and DHS, so I'd like to highlight those of the National Science Foundation. NSF is the agency overseen by the Research and Science Education Subcommittee and is second only to the Department of Defense in its support for

cybersecurity research. In addition, NSF uniquely funds research across the entire range of science and engineering disciplines that are relevant to cybersecurity, and joins only DARPA in supporting truly game-changing research. It is also significant that the Director of the interagency NITRD program is here today since all of the civilian agencies coordinate their cybersecurity R&D activities through NITRD.

I want to highlight one particular area that is often left out of discussions on cybersecurity research needs, and that is the human element of cybersecurity. People are perhaps the most important part of our IT infrastructure, and according to experts, they are also the ‘weakest link’ in many systems. Better cyber security education for both the general public and for current and future IT professionals is vital.

However, there’s still a lot we don’t understand about how humans interact with technology; therefore, more research into the social and behavioral sciences has the potential to significantly improve the security of our IT systems. I am

happy to see that the social, behavioral, and economic sciences directorate at NSF now has a more explicit role in the agency's trustworthy computing initiative. In the end, our cybersecurity efforts can only be as strong as our 'weakest link'. I look forward to hearing more from Dr. Jahanian about that.

We last held a series of hearings on cybersecurity in 2009, when I was chair of the Research and Science Education Subcommittee. We learned at that time about the respective roles of different agencies and we received extensive outside expert testimony. We also learned that a lot had changed since Congress, led by this committee, enacted the 2002 Cybersecurity R&D Act. That is why last Congress I introduced the Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2010, building on the 2002 Act. That bill, like today's hearing, was a joint effort between my subcommittee and T&I, then chaired by my friend Mr. Wu. Mr. McCaul, who has been a strong leader on cybersecurity issues, joined me as the lead Republican cosponsor, and the bill passed the

House by a margin of 422-5. Since our bill, like so many others, never made it through the Senate in the last Congress, I am now joining Mr. McCaul in introducing an updated version. We are still making some small modifications, but I'm hoping we can introduce the bill soon, perhaps as early as this week. I know the witnesses were asked about this legislation, and I look forward to hearing your thoughts and feedback today.

We are anticipating that our R&D bill will be part of a bigger, bipartisan cybersecurity bill in both the House and Senate. The efforts to move a larger bill have stalled for some time over disagreements about how to assign leadership and coordination responsibilities across the government. I am glad that the President is taking an active role in this discussion, and I hope that the proposal the White House sent up to Congress two weeks ago will help to move efforts along in both chambers. I look forward to working with both my colleagues and the Administration to ensure the development of a strong cyber security strategy.

I want to thank all of our witnesses for being here this morning, and I look forward to hearing your testimonies.