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# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

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### Opening Statement Rep. Elijah E. Cummings, Ranking Member

### Full Committee Business Meeting H.R. 4257, Federal Information Security Amendments Act of 2012

April 18, 2012

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Earlier this month, the head of U.S. Cyber Command, General Keith Alexander, testified that securing our nation against cyber threats is one of our biggest national security challenges. H.R. 4257, the Federal Information Security Amendments of 2012, is bipartisan legislation intended to ensure that federal agencies use a risk-based approach to defend against cyber attacks and protect government information from being compromised. I want to thank Chairman Issa for working so closely with me and my staff to make this a truly bipartisan effort.

The bill would make key changes to help protect our federal information systems from cyber attacks. Specifically, the bill would shift the federal government to a system of continuous monitoring of information systems, streamline reporting requirements, and ensure that agencies take a smart, risk-based approach to securing networks.

This bill would continue to authorize the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to set federal policy for information security. This is important because we need to hold all agencies accountable for developing appropriate standards and living up to them.

However, nothing in this bill would prevent the Department of Homeland Security from continuing the great work that it is doing to protect our nation against potential cyber attacks. Not only has the Department dramatically expanded its cybersecurity workforce, it has also built the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center to serve as federal government's cybersecurity command center.

As this legislation moves forward, we must ensure that all of the various entities responsible for securing our federal information systems work together. Within OMB, we currently have a Chief Information Office and a Chief Technology Officer. Within the Executive Office of the President, there is the Cyber-Security Coordinator. And while each of these people plays an important role in securing our federal information systems, Congress should ensure that the roles of each of these positions is clear and that all three of these people work together to achieve a common goal.

I know this markup is not taking place in a vacuum. This week, a number of House Committees are meeting to markup their own cyber security legislation. And next week, the House leadership has announced that we will be considering a number of different proposals aimed at protecting this country against a cyber attack. Although I think these efforts are laudable, I am concerned that not all of these proposals strike the right balance between protecting this nation and individual freedoms.

As I stated at our hearing on July 7, 2011, we must be sure that personally identifiable information is appropriately protected and shared with the government only when necessary. We also must be sure that information shared with the government can be protected when appropriate without compromising our open government laws.

Mr. Chairman, I hope the bill we are considering today will be considered on the floor next week as freestanding legislation on its own. It would be a shame to wrap this bill into a package of legislation that may not share such widespread bipartisan support.

Of course, these concerns should not take anything away from our consideration today of the Federal Information Security Amendments Act of 2012. This legislation has been a bipartisan effort, and I think the final product is all the better for it.

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