

COMMITTEE ON
**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND
TECHNOLOGY**
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH



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Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)
Is the OPM Data Breach the Tip of the Iceberg?

Chairman Smith: Thank you Madam Chair. Today's hearing highlights the latest and so far the most extensive cybersecurity failure by a federal agency – the theft of millions of federal employee records from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

National defense in the digital age no longer just means protecting ourselves against enemies who attack with traditional weapons. It now means protecting America from those who launch cyber-attacks against our computers and networks, invading our privacy and probably endangering lives.

But it is about much more than solely the invasion of privacy or the burden to our economy. This is a national security concern as these breaches expose information about members of our military and employees of national security agencies.

A number of federal agencies guard America's cybersecurity interests. Several are under the jurisdiction of the Science Committee. These include the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate, and the Department of Energy.

All of these agencies support critical research and development to promote cybersecurity and set federal standards. However it is clear that too many federal agencies like OPM fail to meet the basic standards of information security – and no one is being held accountable.

Last year audits revealed that 19 of 24 major federal agencies failed to meet the basic cybersecurity standards mandated by law. And yet the Administration has allowed deficient systems to stay online.

What are the consequences when a federal agency fails to meet its basic duties to protect sensitive information? So far it seems the only people penalized are the millions of innocent Americans who have had their personal information exposed.

It will be some time before we know the full extent of the damage to personal and national security caused by the OPM breach of security. But we do know that it is critical that we prevent further attacks on America's cyber systems.

The federal government failed in its responsibility to keep sensitive and personal information secure, and Americans deserve better.

The Science Committee will continue its efforts to support the research and development essential to strengthen our Nation's cyber defenses. We will also continue to demand better answers from OPM on the extent of this breach.

The Director of the Office of Personnel Management recently testified: "I don't believe anyone (at OPM) is personally responsible." That is not believable. In fact, it's an insult the American people who pay her salary.

The government should be accountable to the people, and this Committee will continue to demand answers about who is responsible for failing to keep Americans' sensitive information secure.

I hope we can use lessons learned from the OPM breach to help find solutions to prevent the next attack. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today and yield back.

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