Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)
Hearing: Is Your Data on the Healthcare.gov Website Secure?

Chairman Smith: Many Americans are beginning to experience the ill effects of Obamacare. That's because the President's broken promises are piling up. He promised that if you like your health care plan you can keep it. But for millions of Americans, that's not true.

He said that the law would make health insurance more affordable. But across the country, Americans are seeing their premiums go up, not down. And when launching Healthcare.gov, the Obama administration said that the website was safe, secure and open for business. We now know that isn't true either.

The data obtained by Healthcare.gov is one of the largest collections of personal information ever assembled. It links information between seven different federal agencies and state agencies and government contractors.

The website requires users to provide personal information like birth dates, social security numbers and household incomes in order to obtain information about potential health coverage. But security experts have expressed concern about flaws in the site that put this personal data at risk and subject users to the threat of identity theft.

The Science Committee oversees the agencies responsible for setting privacy and security policies and standards for the rest of the federal government—the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and the National Institute for Standards and Technology.

The Obama administration has a responsibility to ensure that the personal and financial data collected by the government is secure. Unfortunately, in their haste to launch the Healthcare.gov website, it appears the administration cut corners that leaves the site open to hackers and other online criminals.
So the question for today's hearing is: Can Americans trust the federal government with their personal information on the Healthcare.gov website?

Today, we're going to hear from witnesses from outside the government who are experts in cybersecurity and hacking websites. Our witnesses will provide their professional assessment of the vulnerabilities that underlie Healthcare.gov.

Several vulnerabilities have already been identified, and we know of at least 16 attempts to hack into the system. And I heard this morning that there were another 50. But we can assume that many more security breaches have not been reported.

Here are some real-life examples. Mr. Thomas Dougall of South Carolina received a surprise phone call from a stranger one Friday evening explaining that he had just downloaded a letter off the Healthcare.gov website containing Dougall's personal information.

And when Lisa Martinson of Missouri called Healthcare.gov's customer service after forgetting her password, she was told three different people were given access to her account, address and social security number.

Also, it turns out that federal employees – called navigators – who help users apply for insurance on the Healthcare.gov website have not received background checks. Yet they are able to access the personal information of thousands of people.

Many Americans have been the victims of identity theft by computer hackers. Identity theft jeopardizes credit ratings and personal finances. The massive amount of personal information collected by the Healthcare.gov website creates a tempting target for scam artists.

These threats to Americans' well-being and financial security should make us question the future of Obamacare. Perhaps it is time to take Obamacare off of life-support.

Americans deserve a healthcare system that works and that they can trust. Obamacare is no cure.

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