

Opening Statement
The Honorable Ralph Hall, Ranking Member
Committee on Science and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
Markup of H.R. 4061, the Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2009

November 18, 2009

Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling this markup this morning of H.R. 4061, the *Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2009*.

We are all aware that the importance of cybersecurity has grown dramatically in recent years, as most of the critical systems upon which we depend—from telecommunications to electricity to banking and commerce—rely on secure and reliable computing.

This Committee has a long record of leadership on these issues (dating back to the 1980s), and the agencies and programs we oversee are critical to the success of Federal efforts to address cybersecurity vulnerabilities. This bill will help to support these efforts through authorization of activities in three general areas: (1) basic research at the National Science Foundation (NSF), which we know is a key driver to increasing security over the long-term; (2) expanded NSF scholarships to increase the size and skills of the cybersecurity workforce; and (3) increased R&D, standards development and coordination, and public outreach at NIST related to cybersecurity.

These are modest but important changes that will help us do a better job of protecting our communications networks, and I am pleased to join my fellow Texan, Mr. McCaul, as a cosponsor, along with our Subcommittee Ranking Members, Dr. Ehlers and Representative Smith of Nebraska.

I also want to note my appreciation for what this bill *doesn't* do. It avoids calling for any activities that could amount to being regulatory in nature. I think this is important. The committee heard from multiple outside witnesses that heavy Federal involvement in private sector cybersecurity processes would actually be counterproductive to security. I hope we can ensure this bill continues to restrain from such action as it moves through the legislative process.

This is a good bill, and it represents a small but important step in the government's overall efforts to address cybersecurity issues. I want to thank the Chairman for working closely with Republicans on this legislation, and I look forward to continued cooperative efforts as we move forward.