

OPENING STATEMENT
The Honorable Ralph Hall (R-TX), Chairman
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives

Markup of H.R. 2096, the Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2011

July 21, 2011

I am pleased to convene the markup this morning for consideration of H.R. 2096, the *Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2011*.

As our reliance on information technology expands, so do our vulnerabilities. Protecting the nation's cyber infrastructure is a responsibility shared by different Federal agencies, including the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). I am delighted that Congressmen McCaul and Lipinski have reintroduced the Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2011 which primarily addresses important cybersecurity efforts conducted by NSF and NIST.

This bill will help to support these efforts through reauthorization of activities in four general areas: (1) strategic planning for cybersecurity R&D needs across the federal government; (2) basic research at the National Science Foundation (NSF), which will hopefully increase security over the long-term; (3) enhanced NSF scholarships to increase the size and skills of the cybersecurity workforce; and (4) strengthened R&D, standards development and coordination, and public outreach at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) related to cybersecurity.

These are modest but important changes that will help us do a better job of protecting our cyber networks, and I am pleased to join as a cosponsor, along with Mr. Smith, Mr. Brooks, Mr. Wu, and Mr. Lujan.

This is a good bill, and it represents a small but important step in Congress's overall efforts to address cybersecurity issues. By strengthening agency coordination and cooperation on cybersecurity research and development efforts, this bill will help address the comprehensive cybersecurity needs of the Nation. I want to thank Mr. McCaul and Lipinski for collaborating on this bipartisan effort, and I look forward to continued cooperative efforts as we move forward.

As long standing Members of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee know, the Committee enjoys a tradition of bipartisanship, and as evidenced by the legislation before us today, this spirit of cooperation lives on in the 112th Congress. I thank the gentleman from Texas and the gentleman from Illinois for setting an example. It is in that spirit of cooperation, that I seek to address concerns expressed in regard to legislation taken up by this Committee.

As you are all aware, the Republican Leadership put forward legislative protocols for the 112th Congress. The protocols are intended to guide the Majority Leadership in the scheduling and consideration of legislation on the House floor.

While the protocols do not govern the introduction of legislation, good-faith compliance with the protocols will be necessary if such legislation is scheduled for the floor. In other words the protocols do not bar introduction of legislation and provide that as Committees work through the legislative process, good-faith efforts to address and comply with the protocols can be accomplished at the Committee level.

In that vein, we have an open dialogue with Leadership on this legislation (and any legislation for that matter), as it is a priority for the Committee on both sides of the aisle. In my remarks at our organizational meeting in February, I mentioned two policies which I wanted the Committee to abide by when considering legislation. The first dealt with the goal that the Committee will no longer consider bills that authorize “such sums as may be necessary”.

For example, the legislation in front of us today, in the previous Congress, included at least 5 instances of the following authorization of appropriations language, “...There are authorized to be appropriated to the National Science Foundation such sums as are necessary to carry out this subsection for each of the fiscal years 2010 through 2014...” During the 110th and 111th Congress my Republican colleagues routinely offered amendments that eliminated the phrase “such sums as are necessary”. That is the phrase which I do not want this Committee to utilize.

This is balanced with the desire to continue to provide Agencies needed flexibility within a defined amount of funding for the myriad of activities we may direct them to conduct. We continue to work through options by which to satisfy this desire.

The second policy dealt with providing a “sunset” of not later than seven years after the first fiscal year spending is authorized. In making a good-faith effort to comply, it is my intention that we will not move legislation out of this Committee that includes authorizations for a period of longer than 7 years.

For example, including specified authorization of appropriations for a program for the fiscal years 2012 through 2019 would not be permissible. Including specified authorization of appropriations for a program for the fiscal years 2012 through 2018 would be permissible, however, it is my overall preference that we authorize for three to five year periods.

This provides programs and activities authorized to build a record from which the Committee may conduct proper oversight and legislate necessary fixes to problems sooner rather than later.

As mentioned earlier, this Committee will make a good-faith effort to comply with the protocols, working with Members on both sides of the aisle and Leadership to craft legislation that meets the threshold necessary for floor consideration.

Bring forward your ideas, including in the form of legislation and amendments and the Committee will try its best to get those good ideas packaged in a way that permits them to be considered in the Committee and by the whole House.

I now recognize, the Ranking Member, Ms. Johnson for her opening statement.