

## Congress & Cyber Security

For several years Congress has been working on a way to help the nation's businesses and governments protect themselves from cyber attacks. All past efforts have been controversial and have been opposed by this group or that.

Just before the annual August recess the U.S. House passed one that may get support in the Senate and elsewhere. And — surprise! — it did so with a bipartisan effort.

The bill is the National Cybersecurity and Critical Infrastructure Protection Act. It was sponsored by House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Mike McCaul — a Texas Republican. The bill passed on a voice vote and a pleased McCaul noted how the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) — an opponent of previous bills — supports this one. The ACLU — McCaul said — calls it “pro-security” and “pro-privacy.”

The next stop is the Senate when Congress gets back from its August recess. McCaul is hopeful. “Striking a balance between security and privacy, I believe, is one of the most difficult challenges in developing cyber security legislation, and I'm so very proud that this committee and this bill achieves that goal,” he said.

The bill codifies the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center. That agency is charged with sharing cyber threat information. At the same time, the bill establishes an equal partnership between the DHS and industry.

This is where McCaul emphasizes the coordination of information will be done by a civilian agency and not the federal government and any of its national security arms.

“Particularly in light of the Snowden revelations, importantly the bill protects civil liberties by putting a civilian agency with the nation's most robust privacy and civil liberties office in charge of preventing personal information from being shared while also prohibiting any new regulatory authority,” McCaul said.



Rep. Mike McCaul