

United States Senate

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October 21, 2004

The Honorable Susan M. Collins, Chair
The Honorable Joseph Lieberman, Ranking Member
The Committee on Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Collins and Senator Lieberman:

As the House-Senate conference on intelligence reform legislation begins (S. 2845 / H.R. 10), we are writing to express our support for the inclusion of § 5028 of H.R. 10 in the Intelligence Reform Conference Report of 2004 and ask that the Senate conferees recede to the House on this issue. This section of the bill would create an Assistant Secretary of Cyber security within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

As you both are aware, almost all facets of the private sector—financial services, energy, transportation, telecommunications, and health care, to name just a few—are reliant on the proper functioning of information networks. Our defense, intelligence, law enforcement, and homeland security officials are likewise dependent. In short, the protection of the cyber realm is as vital to our homeland security as the protection of our physical infrastructure.

The importance of cyber security to our homeland security continues to increase. However, in the last two years, the individual responsible for cyber security within the federal government has evolved from that of a Special Advisor to the President, to merely an office director within DHS. The current position holds little authority to either prompt or coordinate action within the Department.

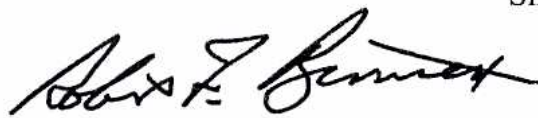
The creation of an Assistant Secretary for Cyber security will provide more focus for the cyber security mission within DHS. It will enable the Assistant Secretary to have the authority and resources necessary for implementing the National Strategy to Secure Cyberspace. It will also provide a single, visible point of contact for the states, for the private sector, and for those within DHS. I believe there will be a significant benefit to having a full-time official responsible for national cyber security who has the authority to implement the Department's National Strategy. This Assistant Secretary will also work

hand-in-hand with the Assistant Secretary for Infrastructure Analysis and Infrastructure Protection.

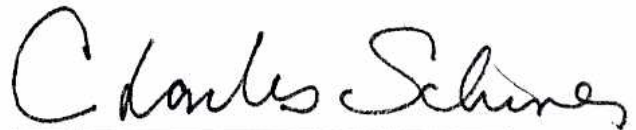
This departmental structure would ensure that attention is paid to both the physical realm and the cyber realm, while ensuring that they are both integrated where appropriate at the Under Secretary level. To this end, the Assistant Secretary for Cyber security would also have responsibility for the National Communications Systems, which would be transferred with its highly effective telecommunications mission intact. This would allow the Assistant Secretary to ensure that strategic cyber security and telecommunications policy—two substantive areas which are becoming increasingly interrelated and interdependent—are under one leader. This action will place greater emphasis on securing our nation's information systems, and advance public-private coordination and information sharing with DHS, as well as with state, local, and private entities.

We urge the Senate conferees to recede to the House on § 5028 of H.R. 10 in the Intelligence Reform Conference Report of 2004. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Robert F. Bennett
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator

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