

April 16, 2012

Dear Representative,

We the undersigned organizations urge you to vote 'no' on H.R. 3523, the Cyber Intelligence Sharing and Protection Act of 2011 (CISPA). We are gravely concerned that this bill will allow companies that hold very sensitive and personal information to liberally share it with the government, which could then use the information without meaningful oversight for purposes unrelated to cybersecurity. We understand this bill is scheduled to be considered on the House floor during "Cybersecurity Week," the week of April 23rd.

CISPA creates an exception to all privacy laws to permit companies to share our information with each other and with the government in the name of cybersecurity. Although a carefully-crafted information sharing program that strictly limits the information to be shared and includes robust privacy safeguards could be an effective approach to cybersecurity, CISPA lacks such protections for individual rights. CISPA's 'information sharing' regime allows the transfer of vast amounts of data, including sensitive information like internet use history or the content of emails, to any agency in the government including military and intelligence agencies like the National Security Agency or the Department of Defense Cyber Command. Once in government hands, this information can be used for any non-regulatory purpose so long as one significant purpose is for cybersecurity or to protect national security. These are not meaningful use restrictions: "national security" use is one of the problems, and the White House recognized this immense problem by precluding such use in its own cybersecurity proposal. While the bill requires the Director of National Intelligence Inspector General to issue annual reports on the government's use of information shared with it under the bill, such reports would only be provided to congressional intelligence committees, and IG reports are no substitute for meaningful use restrictions and they will do nothing to dissuade companies from misusing personal information shared under this broad new program.

We believe these broad new authorities will needlessly impinge on Americans' privacy and urge you to vote 'no' on CISPA. Several other bills in the 112th Congress proposed by members on both sides of the aisle and in both houses contain protections that could easily be incorporated into CISPA to protect privacy.

Advocacy for Principled Action in Government

American Association of Law Libraries

American Association of University Professors

American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression

American Civil Liberties Union

American Library Association

American Policy Center

Association of Research Libraries

Center for Democracy & Technology

Center for Media and Democracy

Center for National Security Studies

The Constitution Project

Consumer Federation of America

Consumer Watchdog

Council on American-Islamic Relations

Cyber Privacy Project

Defending Dissent Foundation

Demand Progress

DownsizeDC.org, Inc.

Electronic Frontier Foundation

Free Press Action Fund

Fight for the Future

Government Accountability Project

Hon. Bob Barr

Liberty Coalition

National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers

National Coalition Against Censorship

National Whistleblower Center

OMB Watch

Patient Privacy Rights

PEN American Center

Personal Democracy Media

Privacy Rights Clearinghouse

Republican Liberty Caucus

The Rutherford Institute

U.S. Bill of Rights Foundation