

Senate panel clears plan for tighter cybersecurity

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A US Senate committee approved a bill to try to tighten cybersecurity to better protect US government agencies and businesses from Internet threats. "The status quo is not sustainable. We need a new model for the 21st century. We must secure America's critical networks, innovation and competitiveness in the global market," committee chair and cosponsor John Rockefeller said in a statement.

A US Senate committee on Wednesday approved a bill to try to tighten cybersecurity to better protect US government agencies and businesses from Internet threats.

The text was unanimously approved and now moves to a full [Senate](#) vote.

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The Cybersecurity Act is a new draft of a bill introduced last year and was revised to take into account the views of more cybersecurity experts in the private sector, government and civil liberties community.

The bill would not allow the president to shut down the Internet unilaterally -- a revision to address critics of the prior bill who claimed it would provide that authority.

The proposal would require collaboration with the private sector in responding to a "cybersecurity emergency."

A "cybersecurity emergency" is defined as "a cyber event that is equivalent to an act of war, a terrorist attack, or a major natural disaster."

Another new provision in the bill would allow the president to provide [security](#) clearances to private sector officials to allow for the sharing of classified information.

A companion bill to the Cybersecurity Act calls for the creation of a post of National Cybersecurity Adviser at the White House which would require Senate confirmation.

President [Barack Obama](#) has cited cybersecurity as a national priority and named Howard Schmidt, a former Microsoft executive, as his cybersecurity coordinator in December.

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