

Obama to push for new cybersecurity legislation

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President Barack Obama on Tuesday will renew his call for Congress to pass cybersecurity legislation, including a proposal that encourages companies to share threat information with the government and protects them from potential lawsuits if they do.

The president's proposals are similar to congressional legislation that has been languishing on Capitol Hill, in part because of privacy concerns. But the White House is hoping that a recent spate of cyberattacks and data breaches—including November's hacking at Sony Pictures Entertainment, which the administration blamed on North Korea—will spur lawmakers to take up the issue in the coming months.

Obama will discuss the legislative proposals Tuesday afternoon in a speech at the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center in Arlington, Virginia. The proposals are also expected to be part of his Jan. 20 State of the Union address.

The legislation would encourage the private sector to share cyber threat information with the Department of Homeland Security's National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center, according to a White House fact sheet. Companies would qualify for targeted liability protection, but would have to comply with certain privacy restrictions.

Sen. John McCain, chairman of the Senate Armed Service panel and a member of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs committee, said Tuesday he was "glad the administration is coming

forward with a proposal." Legislation will need to strike a balance between "the right of privacy and the need for national security and the liability issue," the Arizona Republican told CNN.

But, he added, "I am guardedly optimistic we can come up with legislation that we can work with the administration on."

Tuesday's push comes after the Twitter and YouTube accounts for U.S. Central Command were taken over by hackers who claimed to be working on behalf of Islamic State militants on Monday. Other recent hackings at retailers including Target, Home Depot and Neiman Marcus have exposed the lack of uniform practices for alerting customers in the event of a breach.

On Monday, Obama proposed strengthening laws against identity theft by requiring notification when consumer information is hacked and protecting students' private data.

The White House will also host a Summit on Cybersecurity and Consumer Protection at Stanford University on February 13.

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