

# US lawmakers call Apple, FBI to encryption hearing

February 25 2016

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US lawmakers Thursday called a hearing next week on encryption, saying they hope to craft "a solution" to the standoff between Apple and law enforcement over accessing locked devices.

The hearing called by the House Judiciary Committee for next Tuesday will be the first in Congress since Apple said it would challenge a court order to help unlock an iPhone used by one of the San Bernardino attackers.

"Our goal is to find a solution that allows [law enforcement](#) to effectively enforce the law without harming the competitiveness of US encryption providers or the privacy protections of US citizens," said a statement from Judiciary chairman Bob Goodlatte, a Republican from Virginia, and ranking Democrat John Conyers of Michigan.

The panel has already held a briefing from technology companies and a classified briefing from the government on the issue.

The debate has divided the public as the FBI seeks to get Apple's assistance in unlocking an iPhone used by one of the perpetrators of the December attack in San Bernardino, California that killed 14.

Apple has said the [court order](#) would effectively require the company to "hack" its own device and would open a "backdoor" that could be exploited by others.

FBI officials have disputed the claim, saying the order affects only one iPhone. But Apple has noted that several similar cases are pending in US courts.

Earlier Thursday, FBI Director James Comey reiterated his position at a hearing on Capitol Hill.

"The San Bernardino litigation is not about us trying to send a message or establish some kind of precedent," Comey told lawmakers at the House Intelligence Committee.

"It's about trying to be competent in investigating something that is an active investigation."

The phone at the center of the standoff belonged to Syed Farook, a US citizen, who carried out the attack on an office party in San Bernardino along with his Pakistani wife Tashfeen Malik.

In his latest comments on the matter, Apple chief Tim Cook said breaking into the iPhone in the name of fighting terrorism would be "bad for America."

"It is a precedent that should not be done in this country, or in any country," he told ABC News on Wednesday.

Comey said the question of whether tech firms should be able to create tamper-proof encryption was the "hardest question" he had ever seen in government.

"It's going to require negotiations and conversation," he said.

Comey noted that while encryption is attractive in principle, law enforcement must have some sort of continued access to information to

keep the public safe.

"Law enforcement really saves people lives," he said. "We do that a whole lot through court orders that are search warrants."

Comey told lawmakers the public should understand "the costs associated with moving to a world of universal strong encryption."

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Citation: US lawmakers call Apple, FBI to encryption hearing (2016, February 25) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-02-lawmakers-apple-fbi-encryption.html>

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