

# US senators call for cybersecurity czar

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New Yorkers look over employment listings in a computer room in New York City. Two US senators introduced legislation aimed at creating a powerful national cybersecurity advisor who would report directly to the president.

Two US senators introduced legislation on Wednesday aimed at creating a powerful national cybersecurity advisor who would report directly to the president.

Senator Jay Rockefeller, a Democrat from West Virginia, and Senator Olympia Snowe, a Republican from Maine, said the goal of the bill was to reduce US "vulnerability to cyber crime, global cyber [espionage](#), and cyber attacks."

The legislation called for the creation of a post of national cybersecurity advisor to "serve as the lead official on all cyber matters, coordinating with the intelligence community, as well as the civilian agencies."

"Currently, the US has systems in place to protect our nation's secrets and our government networks against cyber espionage," Rockefeller and Snowe said in a statement.

"However, another great vulnerability our country faces is the threat to our private sector critical infrastructure -- banking, utilities, air/rail/auto traffic

control, telecommunications -- from disruptive cyber attacks that could literally shut down our way of life.

"The increasingly connected nature of our lives only amplifies our vulnerability to cyber attacks and we must act now," Rockefeller said.

"Our enemies are real, they are sophisticated, they are determined and they will not rest," he continued. "Congress must bring new high-level governmental attention to develop a fully integrated, thoroughly coordinated, public-private partnership to our cybersecurity efforts in the 21st century."

Snowe said "America's vulnerability to massive cyber crime, global cyber espionage, and cyber attacks has emerged as one of the most urgent [national security](#) problems facing our country today.

"This legislation will ensure we have many of the tools to target, isolate and effectively combat cyber attacks in America," she said.

US President Barack Obama announced a sweeping 60-day review in February of US efforts to protect the government's information technology systems from security and economic threats.

A congressional panel warned in November that China had developed a sophisticated cyber warfare program and stepped up its capacity to penetrate US computer networks to extract sensitive information.

And a December report by the Commission on Cybersecurity for the 44th Presidency listed the issue as "among the most serious economic and national security challenges we will face in the 21st century."

Last month, a top US cybersecurity official quit complaining that US cyber protection efforts are being dominated by the super-secret National Security Agency (NSA).

Rod Beckstrom, director of the National Cyber Security Center, complained that the NCSC had been effectively sidelined by the NSA and warned against putting the surveillance agency in charge of national cybersecurity.

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