

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

May 19, 2020

The Honorable Michael C. Stenger
Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Philip G. Kiko
Chief Administrative Officer
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Stenger and Mr. Kiko:

We write to ask that you take immediate action to secure telephone calls between the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives from foreign government surveillance.

Highly-sophisticated foreign intelligence services have long targeted U.S. government communications in Washington, D.C. The top counter-intelligence official in the U.S. government, William Evanina, advised the Senate Intelligence Committee at a May 2018 hearing of his recommendation that officials encrypt their unclassified telephone conversations. However, the Senate's internal telephone calls remained unencrypted until August 2018, leaving calls vulnerable to interception by any hacker or foreign government that gained access to the Senate's internal network. The Senate has since enabled the phone encryption feature built into the Senate's desk phones. Internal House telephone calls made using the more recent models of House desk phones are also encrypted.

Encryption of intra-chamber phone calls is important, but it does not fully address the surveillance threat. Calls between the Senate and House are still vulnerable to spying by anyone who gains access to the data connection between the two Chambers.

The Pentagon has recognized the threat of unencrypted communications and taken steps to secure its communications. In February 2019, the Defense Information Systems Agency advised that it "secure[s] its core network by using a wide range of technologies that are available on the market, to include bulk encryption [of data]." DISA also stated that it recommends that "Federal, State and Local agencies should work towards protecting their unclassified networks by applying encryption technologies similar to the Department of Defense."

Congress must secure itself from the serious threat posed by foreign spies. Please take immediate action to encrypt, in bulk, all internal calls and other electronic communications between the Senate, House and other components of the legislative branch. Please also provide us, by June

12, 2020, with a written plan detailing when you expect to have completed this critical cybersecurity upgrade.

Thank you for your attention to this serious matter.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Ben Sasse
United States Senator

/s/

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



James Lankford
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



John Cornyn
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



Jerry Moran
United States Senator

Brian Schatz
United States Senator

Kevin Cramer
United States Senator

Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

Mike Gallagher
Member of Congress

Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress

Michael Waltz
Member of Congress

C.A. Dutch Ruppensberger
Member of Congress

Michael T. McCaul
Member of Congress

Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

Will Hurd
Member of Congress