

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 21, 2017

The Honorable Rex Tillerson
Secretary of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Tillerson,

This letter is in regards to recent media reports that the Department of State is planning to close the Office of Coordinator for Cyber Issues (S/CCI). We urge you to strongly reconsider this decision. It is imperative the United States continues to have a lead diplomat for cybersecurity issues, ensuring the United States remains able to work with foreign partners to fulfill its mission of promoting an open, interoperable, secure, and reliable cyberspace while continuing to deter malicious activity, bolster global cybersecurity and avoid conflict in cyberspace.

The S/CCI plays a vital role in cyberspace interactions with other nations. Recently we have seen nations brazenly defying international norms in cyberspace. Continuing a dialogue with our allies and countries around the world on issues like Internet governance, responsible state behavior, curbing cybercrime, and responding to international cyber incidents makes America and cyberspace a safer place. The S/CCI also plays a key role in leading United States delegations in international cyber meetings – a role of increasing importance following daily threats to multiple segments of our economy and critical infrastructure.

Additionally, with the increase in nation-state backed cyber-attacks and the heightened alert that rightfully follows, there are situations where misinterpretation of motives can quickly escalate a situation. It is becoming increasingly difficult to discern the difference between offensive and defensive behavior in cyberspace, as defensive action can easily be misconstrued as an act of aggression or vice versa. A misreading or miscalculation can lead to international strife and can further intensify conflict. The State Department and S/CCI have a key role in mitigating potential conflict in these scenarios.

The importance of a harmonized and coordinated American cyber policy spans the entire global economic system. Whether it is coordinating an international response to an outbreak of ransomware, fighting Distributed Denial of Service attacks, or protecting American companies from the theft of trade secrets and intellectual property, the critical role S/CCI plays in coordinating a U.S. response with our own government agencies, the private sector, and foreign governments cannot be overstated. A strong and coordinated response to these issues will ensure American leadership in the continually changing landscape of cyberspace.

critical to retain a direct line of communication between the S/CCI Coordinator and the Secretary to ensure that you are aware of all potential threats from abroad.

Cybersecurity is one area where bipartisan agreements on policy and strategy still exist. At a time when the world is more interconnected than ever and we face constant cyber threats from state actors, it is vital that we retain a high-level diplomatic role to report directly to the Secretary on global cybersecurity. We must continue to make the Internet and cyberspace a secure and stable place to communicate, do business, and engage in a free and open exchange of ideas. We know you share these goals, and therefore urge you to appoint a S/CCI Coordinator and reconsider proposals to close or reorganize the office.

Sincerely,



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Kathleen Rice
Member of Congress



Brendan Boyle
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



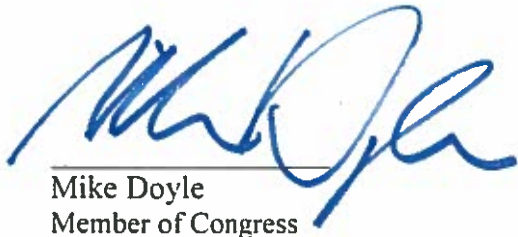
Adam B. Schiff
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Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



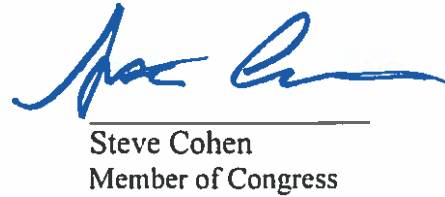
Mike Doyle
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Gwenn Moore
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Steve Cohen
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Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



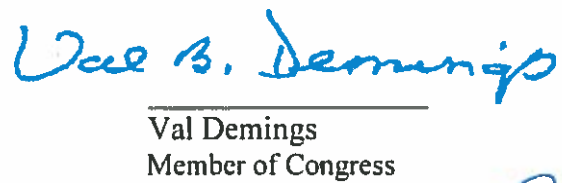
Dutch Ruppersberger
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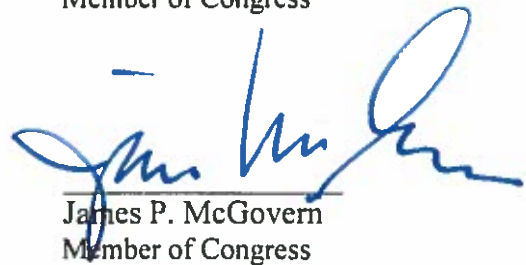
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Member of Congress

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Denny Heck
Member of Congress

Handwritten signature of Keith Ellison in blue ink.

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress