

[Internet New Bill Would Call for National Cybersecurity Advisor](#)

[Michael Barkoviak](#) - April 3, 2009 8:00 AM

New proposed U.S. Senate legislation aims to broaden the cybersecurity focus of the U.S. government, as there is growing concern the federal government is ill-equipped to battle against cyber threats from China and Eastern Europe.

Assigning an official White House cybersecurity "czar" to oversee cybersecurity is the most important aspect of the new bill proposed by Senator Jay Rockefeller (D, WV) and Senator Olympia Snowe (R, ME). They both hope to reduce the nation's "vulnerability to cyber crime, global cyber espionage, and cyber attacks."

Furthermore, the czar would have the ability to temporarily disable [computer networks](#) -- even privately operated networks -- if they're under attack, or have been hijacked.

"Currently, the US has systems in [place to protect our nation's secrets and government networks](#) against cyber espionage," the two Senators said in a statement. "However, another great vulnerability our country faces is the threat to protect 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."

Despite varying levels of defense against government [computer](#) systems, Rockefeller believes private sector PCs will be the ones that need to be more closely monitored. The bill he co-authored would allow for vulnerability [information sharing](#) among private institutions, though there are still many questions that need to be answered.

Rockefeller must try and figure out who would serve as cyber [security](#) analysts for the government, what their specific job goals would be, and who they respond to in case of emergency. It appears small and medium-sized [businesses](#) would respond to regional and state-operated cybersecurity centers.

The actual realistic threat the U.S. and its people face from cyber attacks is very hard to gauge, with different threat levels coming from government agencies and privacy groups. However, a congressional panel -- among other government officials -- have highlighted the growing threat of Chinese-led cyber terrorism attacks aimed at western targets.

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