INFORMATION SECURITY AND PRIVACY ADVISORY BOARD

Established by the Computer Security Act of 1987
[Amended by the Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002]

February 7, 2012

The Honorable Patrick Gallagher
Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology
100 Bureau Drive
Gaithersburg, MD 20899

Dear Dr. Gallagher,

I am writing to you as the Chair of the Information Security and Privacy Advisory Board (ISPAB). The ISPAB was originally created by the Computer Security Act of 1987 (P.L. 100-35) as the Computer System Security and Privacy Advisory Board, and amended by Public Law 107-347, The E-Government Act of 2002, Title III, The Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) of 2002. One of the statutory objectives of the Board is to identify emerging managerial, technical, administrative, and physical safeguard issues relative to information security and privacy.

At the Board meeting of October 25-27, 2011, the Board heard a presentation on the activities of "Cybersecurity Awareness Month" as part of a larger briefing on the National Initiative on Cybersecurity Education (NICE). The Board commends work done by the Administration for the NICE.

In discussing the activities regarding Cybersecurity Awareness month, the Board found that this year's activities were significant in the Federal space, but that the events during the month did not effectively reach a broad national audience. One time panels and workshops can highlight needs but carry little impact for the vast majority of Americans, including many who interact with government and whose actions thus can increase or reduce risks in the public sector.

The Board would like to offer a few recommendations for raising national awareness in future Cybersecurity Awareness Months:

- Increase targeted inclusion from the NICE program office with Centers of Excellence in Cyber Security, including through Universities and at the National Security Agency.

- Mainstream the cyber security awareness messaging -- the material that the Board reviewed is educational and helpful, but seems to be more visible in government among those who are already involved with cybersecurity education. The Board recommends expanding to mainstream media outlets, public service announcements, and other companies/means to get this messaging to the general public.

- Develop metrics for success – assessing what worked and what could be improved based on objective and understood measures will help to make better resource decisions regarding future education and awareness efforts.

- Clarify intended audiences – Messages and ways to reach out can and should differ depending on whether the targeted group involves students, parents, or the general public, and at what cost. The Board recommends a marketing/outreach plan and business plan for each group.

ISPAB has three meetings scheduled in 2012, the last of which is in October (Cybersecurity Awareness Month), and we are happy to participate as a public FACA committee in expanding the message over the next year. We look forward to working with NIST and the Administration on this effort.

The Board appreciates the opportunity to provide our views.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Chenok
Chair
ISPAB

cc: Steven VanRoekel, Administrator of E-Government and Information Technology and CIO, OMB
Howard Schmidt, Cybersecurity Coordinator, National Security Council,
Mark Weatherford, Deputy Undersecretary for Cybersecurity, DHS