

Senator Barbara Boxer
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Boxer:

I am writing to argue against the passage of CISPA, the Cyber Intelligence Sharing and Protection Act. As you may know, the passage of CISPA would allow the government to monitor, collect, and share information about Internet traffic. Although it is intended to protect people and networks from cyber threats and attacks, the truth is that CISPA is a major threat to online privacy, not only for the US, but for the rest of the world as well.

First of all, CISPA's wording does not impose sufficient limitations on the power of the government to monitor and collect information regarding individuals' Internet browsing. Under CISPA, the government would have too much power over these individuals' private information. This private information could then be shared with third parties, and as a result a user's private information could be released and made available to the general public. In addition, CISPA would allow third-party companies to share the private information they gather with the government.

Many people have cited the similarities between CISPA and two other bills that sparked controversy in January of 2012: the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) and its Senate equivalent, the Protect IP Act (PIPA). Although the latter two bills dealt mainly with piracy and theft of copyrighted material and other intellectual property, all three bills pose a threat to online privacy. The only major difference between SOPA/PIPA and CISPA is the goal of each bill; SOPA and PIPA aimed to combat piracy through the same means that CISPA aims to protect against hacking attempts and maintain cybersecurity. As you may remember, SOPA and PIPA were met with very strong opposition, with sites across the Web, including many high-profile websites such as Google and Wikipedia, going so far as to "go dark" for a day in protest of these bills. Through the combined efforts of these sites as well as the public's opposition, SOPA and PIPA were taken down and are not being considered by either house of Congress at the moment. In addition, after the recent passage of CISPA by the House, a similar but less widespread protest occurred on April 22. That being said, CISPA is just as much a threat to online privacy as SOPA and PIPA were. As mentioned earlier, CISPA, like SOPA and PIPA, grants too much power to the government with regards to the gathering of private information from users. With this much power, the government may abuse its power and instead use it to spy on innocent people, rather than pursue and prosecute hackers and other threats to cybersecurity. In addition, the government could abuse this power in other ways, such as targeting people based on ethnicity or other factors that do not pertain to anything that would warrant action against them. Such free transfer of information could also lead to security breaches, which contradicts the original purpose of the bill, to protect online security.

Recently, a reintroduced CISPA has once again passed the House by a staggering majority: 288 to 127. Therefore, the responsibility now falls upon the Senate and President

Obama to bring down the bill once again. I urge you to consider the potential consequences of CISPA and its potentially devastating effects on online privacy.

While it is true that CISPA faces heavy opposition, its goal is legitimate; I feel that cybersecurity and prevention of cyberattacks is an important priority. However, although I am not against the goal of CISPA, I am against the methods by which it aims to achieve this goal. Personally, I would suggest legislation that allows the government to combat cyberattacks and other malicious cyber crimes while limiting its power over our private information. I would suggest that this be done either by introducing a new bill to Congress or revising CISPA such that it abides by these rules. Specifically, I would suggest legislation that somewhat increases the power of the government to investigate potential cyber threats, but not without a warrant or valid reason to do so. Cybersecurity is important, but it is not worth sacrificing our right to privacy on the Internet or anywhere.

Sincerely,