

2018 POLICY BRIEF

SUPPORT THE STATE CYBER RESILIENCY ACT OF 2017 (H.R. 1344/S. 516)

QUICK FACTS

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The State Cyber Resiliency Act of 2017 (H.R. 1344/S. 516) would establish a State Cyber Resiliency Grant Program to assist states and local governments with:

- Enhancing the preparation, response and resiliency of computer networks, industrial controls systems and communications systems
- Continuous cybersecurity assessments and threat mitigation practices
- Implementing cybersecurity best practices as developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology
- Mitigating talent gaps in the cybersecurity workforce through recruitment, retention and training
- Mitigating cybersecurity threats and vulnerabilities related to critical infrastructure

ACTION NEEDED:

Urge your members of Congress to support the bipartisan State Cyber Resiliency Act of 2017 (H.R. 1344/S. 516). First introduced by Reps. Derek Kilmer (D-Wash.) and Barbara Comstock (R-Va.) in the House, and Sens. Mark Warner (D-Va.) and Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) in the Senate, the legislation would create a new federal grant program designed to assist state and local governments in protecting our digital assets against the threat of cyber-attacks or data breaches.

BACKGROUND:

Local governments across the country are responsible for ensuring that our citizens' personal information, historical records and critical infrastructure are adequately protected, recoverable and secured in the event of a data breach or cyber-attack.

While many county governments across the country are working to deploy modern technology to provide new online services in their communities, our responsibility is more urgent than ever, as we face increasing cyber threats from multiple sources on a daily basis. These threats are only becoming more sophisticated, and require proactive investments to prevent and mitigate potential damage to our nation's digital infrastructure and information systems.

Given the seriousness of the threat, and that each of our nation's 3,069 counties contends with varied resources and challenges, it is important that Congress support local governments as we develop and improve techniques for preventing, mitigating and responding to cyber-attacks.

The State Cyber Resiliency Act of 2017 would create a new State Cyber Resiliency Grant Program administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Under the program, cyber resiliency grants would be awarded to individual states, which could then distribute the funds to local governments. Grants awarded through the program would support state and local government efforts to prevent, prepare for and respond to cyber threats and vulnerabilities, including:

- Enhancing the preparation, response and resiliency of computer networks, industrial controls systems and communications systems
- Conducting cybersecurity assessments and threat mitigation practices
- Adopting cybersecurity best practices as developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology
- Mitigating talent gaps in the cybersecurity workforce through recruitment, retention



and training of state government personnel to protect against cybersecurity threats and vulnerabilities

- Mitigating cybersecurity threats and vulnerabilities related to critical infrastructure

Applications for grants under the new program would first be subject to review by a 15-member Review Committee for Cyber Resiliency Grants consisting of representatives of both state and local governments, including at least one representative nominated by the National Association of Counties (NACo). The committee would be tasked with making recommendations to the applicant and to the Secretary of Homeland Security regarding the approval or disapproval of each application. The committee would also be responsible for recommending improvements to a state's cyber-resiliency plan or its application for funding as appropriate.

The legislation would also provide additional resources to state and local governments seeking to bolster the resiliency of their cyber systems by awarding funds for the planning and implementation of state and local cyber-resiliency plans.

KEY TALKING POINTS

- Local governments across the country are responsible for ensuring that our citizens' personal information, priceless historical records, and critical infrastructure are adequately protected, recoverable, and secured.
- Counties support legislation, such as H.R. 1344/ S. 516, that would provide funding assistance for information technology resources and cybersecurity training for local government employees, as well as collaborative efforts among federal, state and local governments to improve cybersecurity nationwide.
- The State Cyber Resiliency Act of 2017 (H.R. 1344/S. 516) would provide necessary resources to state and local governments seeking to bolster the resiliency of their cyber systems by awarding funds to devise and implement state and local cyber resiliency plans.

- County representation on the Review Committee for Cyber Resiliency Grants would help ensure that state cyber resiliency plans take into account the key role of counties in ensuring the stability, integrity and security of our digital assets.

For further information, contact: Jacob Terrell at 202.942.4236 or jterrell@naco.org



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