

Congress Passes Omnibus Appropriations Package; Cybersecurity Bill to Become Law

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Earlier this morning both the **House** and **Senate** voted to pass the **Omnibus Appropriations Package**, clearing the way for the **Cybersecurity Act of 2015** to be signed into law. The House voted 316 to 113 to pass it and the Senate voted 65 to 33 in favor. The bill next goes to President Obama for signature and the White House has indicated that he intends to sign it. The bill establishes the Department of Homeland Security as the lead “portal” for reporting cyber threats. It also provides liability protections for companies that share – or do not share – cyber threat indicators or defensive measures with the government.

Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA), the ranking member of the House Intelligence Committee, said the cybersecurity bill is the “most significant effort by Congress to address the cyber threat to date.” Supporters of the measure believe it will help protect American consumers from data breaches and hackers, who have exposed the data of millions of American consumers in recent years.

The cybersecurity bill was included in the \$1.15 trillion spending bill over the objection of privacy advocates who said it limited the opportunity to debate and amend the bill, which they considered to be a surveillance bill. Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), who had protested the bill’s inclusion in the bill said, “I think it’s a surveillance bill posing as a data security bill, and I think that’s very wrong.”

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