

Rep. Jan Schakowsky
Opening Statement – Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade Markup
Blackburn-Welch Data Bill
March 24th, 2015

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding tomorrow's markup on the Blackburn-Welch data security and breach notification bill.

Over the past decade, almost one billion records with personal information have been compromised. Just last week, we learned of another major breach at Premera Blue Cross affecting 11 million customers.

We all agree that we should enhance protections against data breach and provide consumers with relevant information in the event of a breach. Unfortunately, as I said last week, the Blackburn-Welch bill does not achieve that goal.

I appreciate some of the improvements this bill would make to existing law – including providing the FTC with penalty authority.

But each and every witness at last Wednesday's hearing said that there were changes that could be made to improve this bill. I believe that sends a clear message that not only can we amend and strengthen this bill – but that we should.

Some on this subcommittee have argued – in advocating for this bill – that we should not make the perfect the enemy of the good. I agree, but we also shouldn't take a step backwards.

I and other members of the subcommittee will offer amendments tomorrow that would improve the bill's consumer protections without sacrificing the advantages this bill seeks for businesses.

Those amendments will include efforts to better protect types of information that are unprotected in the current draft, and also to ensure consumers do not lose any existing protections that they enjoy.

I hope and expect that these amendments will receive the full support of this Subcommittee so that we can send a truly comprehensive bill to the full Committee for consideration next month. If these changes are not made, I do not believe this bill will receive the broad bipartisan support its sponsors have worked to attract.

Again, I thank the Chairman for holding this markup, and I yield back the remainder of my time.