

The Federal Campaign Cybersecurity Assistance Act of 2019 (S. _____)

The Russian playbook from 2016 is clear: hack political parties, campaigns, and the personal accounts of individuals involved in our political process, and then dump their emails online. While the Russians were far less aggressive in 2018, they are likely to be back in 2020. Congress must act to secure from sophisticated cyber attacks America's political campaigns and the political parties themselves. We must protect our Democracy.

The Federal Campaign Cybersecurity Assistance Act of 2019 **allows the national party committees to provide cybersecurity assistance to state parties, individuals running for federal office and their campaigns.** The assistance permitted by the bill includes secure laptops, secure smartphones, and secure, managed email. The bill permits national party committees to use "building fund" money to provide such assistance as well as to improve their own cybersecurity.

Why do political parties and campaigns need cybersecurity help?

Candidates for federal office and America's major political parties now face significant cyber-threats from foreign intelligence services. Political campaigns lack the resources or technical expertise to protect themselves from these powerful, highly-motivated hackers. The parties are also unable to spend freely to secure their own computer systems.

It's clear that our enemies are hacking our political institutions and the campaigns of individual candidates for office in order to undermine the bedrock of American democracy. Foreign intelligence services have hacked the presidential campaigns of Republican and Democratic candidates, the Republican National Committee (RNC) ([2016](#)) and Democratic National Committee (DNC), the National Republican Senatorial Committee ([2016](#)), the National Republican Congressional Committee ([2018](#), [2017](#)) and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee ([2016](#)), and the campaigns of Senators Graham and McCain ([2016](#)).

Campaigns may only receive limited cybersecurity help from parties right now

Federal law currently treats cybersecurity assistance as an "in-kind donation." As such, every dollar in cybersecurity assistance that a campaign receives from a national party committee reduces the amount of direct financial support a campaign may otherwise receive [that cycle](#).

To remedy this problem, this bill permits the national party committees (e.g. the DNC, DCCC, DSCC, RNC, NRCC, NRSC) to provide campaigns cyber security assistance without it counting as an in-kind donation. The bill also permits the parties to pay for this cybersecurity assistance with money they raise in their "building fund." The building fund is among three created by the FY2015 omnibus appropriations law, with which national political party committees may raise an additional \$100,000 per individual, per year to pay for the cost of presidential nominating conventions, national party headquarters buildings, and election recounts and other legal battles.