

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0533

5055 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD, SUITE 310
LOS ANGELES, CA 90036
(310) 652-3095

1600 ROSECRANS AVENUE, 4TH FLOOR
MANHATTAN BEACH, CA 90266
(310) 321-7664

April 18, 2016

Honorable Jason Chaffetz
Chairman
House Committee on Oversight and
Government Reform
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Elijah Cummings
Ranking Member
House Committee on Oversight and
Government Reform
2471 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515


Chairman Chaffetz and Ranking Member Cummings:

Thank you for your dedication and tireless efforts in leading the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. I write to you now to request that our Committee investigate the significant vulnerability that has been identified in the global mobile network that allows hackers to monitor callers' conversations, messages and location data with relative ease and impunity. The implications for such a vulnerability are widespread and threaten personal privacy, economic competitiveness and U.S. national security.

As you may know, a critical component of our global mobile communications system is the architecture of protocols that directs the content of our mobile communications to their intended destinations. The majority of telephone companies throughout the world use a set of telephony signaling protocols known as Signaling System Number 7 (SS7). According to numerous reports, researchers in Germany have discovered security flaws in SS7 that allow hackers to easily intercept and record communications en route to their destination unbeknownst to the users.

The applications for this vulnerability are seemingly limitless, from criminals monitoring individual targets to foreign entities conducting economic espionage on American companies to nation states monitoring U.S. government officials. The vulnerability has serious ramifications not only for individual privacy, but also for American innovation, competitiveness and national security. Many innovations in digital security—such as multi-factor authentication using text messages—may be rendered useless.

I strongly believe that action by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee is needed to examine the full scope and implications of the SS7 security flaw. I look forward to working with you to investigate this very concerning discovery.

Sincerely,

Ted W. Lieu
United States Representative

CC: Hon. Will Hurd
Hon. Robin Kelly

Enclosures: 3