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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

### VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

July 20, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Majority Leader  
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Senate Minority Leader  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senators McConnell and Schumer:

We write you today to express our support for the inclusion of funding in any fourth stimulus package for cyber-security hardening grants for small American companies engaged in COVID-19 research.

In the CARES Act, Congress allocated \$9.1 million to the Cybersecurity Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). This money was to support operations and to help guarantee that CISA has the resources it needs. However, since Congress passed CARES earlier this year, we have become aware of attempts by hackers affiliated with China, Russia and Iran to steal American intellectual property related to COVID-19. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and CISA issued a joint notice alerting American companies to attempted intrusions by hackers affiliated with the Chinese government. These hackers attempted to illegally gain access to the networks of American companies and research institutions with the intent to steal intellectual property. This includes research into diagnostics, potential treatments, and vaccines. These attempts to steal intellectual property related to COVID-19 is a threat to our national security.

Research into diagnostics, treatments, and cures is some of the most important research being conducted today and will continue to be essential for the foreseeable future. Given that hackers affiliated with foreign adversarial governments have already tried to hack American companies to steal this valuable research, it is likely they will try again.

Innovative American companies of all sizes, in partnership with federal agencies, are working tirelessly to produce the essential treatments, vaccines, and ancillary supplies that we need to stop the spread of this virus. Smaller American companies are doing some of the most innovative research and development related to COVID-19. However, most of the resources they do have must be used for research. These smaller companies do not have the resources or technical expertise to prepare for attempted hacks. That is why this funding is essential.

China has been clear: if America can invent it, they will try to steal it. And they are not the only foreign adversary willing use cyber-attacks to try to steal American intellectual property. Cyber-attacks that are successful or disrupt essential research are a threat to our economic recovery and national security. One successful disruption or stolen IP from hackers affiliated with China or any other county will negatively impact our road to recovery.

As discussions continue for a possible fourth stimulus bill, we ask that you consider including funding for cyber-security grants for American companies conducting COVID-19 related research. The grant funding should prioritize smaller companies. It should also ensure that these companies coordinate their cyber-security improvements with the FBI and CISA. This funding will help ensure that our intellectual property is kept safe from foreign adversaries and protect national security.

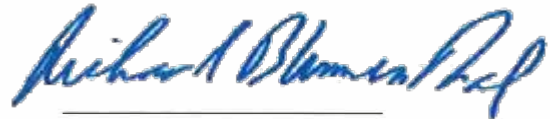
We want to commend the FBI and CISA for the work they are doing already. We are confident that the FBI, CISA and other federal agencies will continue to work collaboratively to protect American interests.

We appreciate your prompt attention and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Thom Tillis  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator