

Subcommittee Chairman Will Hurd
Opening Statement
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Subcommittee on Information Technology Hearing
“Encryption Technology and Potential U.S Policy Responses”
Wednesday, April 29, 2015

Good afternoon everyone and thanks for attending today’s hearing.

In September of last year, Apple and Google, the largest mobile device manufacturers in the United States, announced that they would implement increased security measures on their products in an attempt to strengthen privacy and data security.

These developments were met with concern from some law enforcement entities, such as the FBI, who were worried that this increased level on encryption would lead to an inability to access data on specific devices and that despite obtaining a warrant, investigatory efforts could be hindered by this.

As a former CIA officer, I understand and appreciate the need and desire for law enforcement to access digital information in a timely manner. However, I also understand the protections afforded to Americans provided by the Constitution.

I firmly believe that law enforcement officials must gain the trust of the very people they are trying to protect in order to be successful. I remain concerned that a government-mandated back or front door on U.S. -based mobile device manufacturers might undermine that trust.

Today’s hearing will involve testimony from a variety of experts and stakeholder representatives on ways to balance law enforcement needs with privacy and security concerns. The hearing will also explore the impact of this debate on domestic privacy, American consumers, and U.S. technology manufacturers.

As technology continues to evolve and encryption capabilities become a part of everyday life for all Americans, this debate will only grow larger. I believe we can find a way to protect the privacy of law-abiding citizens and ensure that law enforcement have the tools they need to catch the bad guys.

I welcome the witnesses and look forward to the discussion.

I’d like to now recognize my friend and the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, Miss Kelly of Illinois for five minutes for an opening statement.

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