

**WRITTEN STATEMENT OF HARRY COKER, JR.
NOMINEE FOR NATIONAL CYBER DIRECTOR
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**

**BEFORE THE U.S. SENATE
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

2 NOVEMBER 2023

Chairman Peters, Ranking Member Paul, distinguished Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you as the nominee to lead the Office of the National Cyber Director. I would like to thank President Biden for nominating me and this Committee for its continued support of this important position and office.

I also want to recognize and thank my family. Without their support I would not have had the opportunities that I have been blessed with. My mother, who served a career as a Navy wife, and then became an educator, and my father, who was a Navy Chief and then an educator, raised their nine children with love and discipline. My late wife remains an inspiration because of her strength and passion for life. Our daughters and granddaughter are carrying on her legacy in a manner that would make her immensely proud.

I have proudly served our Nation for over four decades in the military and as a civil servant. Although it was not called “cyber” when I first became interested as a high school student in Parsons, Kansas, by the time I graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy, I recognized the importance of what is now known as cyberspace. I worked at the intersection of technology and national security for the next twenty years while serving our Nation in uniform as a Naval Officer. I continued this work in a different capacity, spending another two decades as a career civil servant and senior leader at both the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency.

Since retiring from government service in 2019, I have continued focusing on the challenges our Nation faces in cyberspace by supporting organizations as they prepare for and respond to evolving cyber threats. During this time, I have seen a need for stronger partnerships and collaboration between the public and private sectors. If confirmed, I will ensure cooperation continues to be the North Star at the Office of the National Cyber Director and the guiding principle for the Administration’s cyber work with all partners, including Congress.

The challenges we face in cyber are both broad in scope and dynamic. There is a proliferation of persistent and capable threat actors from nation-states and criminal organizations that regularly target our schools, hospitals, cities, and businesses. Here at home, according to public reports, hundreds of thousands of open jobs that touch on “cyber” need to be filled. There are also risks to our supply chain and the technologies that underpin our digital ecosystem – spanning from the need to update legacy systems to the challenge of securely designing the products of the future.

Although the risks in cyber are pervasive, the President’s National Cybersecurity Strategy and its Implementation Plan are the roadmaps we need to tackle them. The solutions cannot be about any one

entity – or even just the Federal government. Taking action in the face of these challenges requires working together to improve our cybersecurity posture.

I am prepared to take on these challenges. If confirmed, I will work with interagency colleagues, the private sector, Congress, and many others to help foster a digital ecosystem that is inherently more defensible and resilient.

I have observed how the Office of the National Cyber Director has risen to address these obstacles. The inaugural National Cyber Director did yeoman's work crafting and standing up the office with the support of the President and this Committee. The current Acting National Cyber Director has carried on that legacy. Just in the past year, the office spearheaded the President's National Cybersecurity Strategy, a public implementation plan for the Strategy, and the National Cyber Workforce and Education Strategy. It produced joint guidance with the Office of Management and Budget for federal agency cybersecurity spending priorities. And, it has hosted leaders from numerous industries at the White House seeking substantive feedback on core cybersecurity issues and driving subsequent public-private collaboration.

Collaboration with many stakeholders is what motivates me to return to public service just as eagerly as I did when a Navy recruiter visited my high school many years ago. Today cyber is often front-page news, and I remain both humbled and honored by the opportunity to again serve our great Nation. If confirmed, I will bring the full complement of my experience, expertise and ethos to the position of National Cyber Director.

Thank you for considering my nomination and I look forward to answering your questions.