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# U.S. Senator Ron Wyden

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## **Remarks of Chairman Wyden Senate Subcommittee on Science, Technology and Space Hearing on ICANN Governance**

“The Subcommittee on Science, Technology and Space has focused in the last year on a number of challenges facing the Internet. In particular, this panel has looked at questions of cybersecurity in the context of e-commerce and as it relates to the terrorist threat.

“Just last month the full Commerce Committee reported out S. 2182. The Cyber Security Research and Development Act seeks to significantly increase the amount of cybersecurity research being done. It also seeks to coordinate the research efforts of government, academia, and industry, and educate more cybersecurity researchers to deal with future threats.

“Today the Subcommittee takes on a different challenge, examining issues relating to the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers or “ICANN.” ICANN is, of course, the non-profit corporation that manages the system of Internet domain names and addresses.

“ICANN isn’t exactly a household name; I think it is a safe bet that most Americans know little about what ICANN is or what it does. But virtually all Americans want an Internet that functions smoothly, that uses easy-to-remember addresses, and that enables users to consistently and reliably find the websites they need. They also want a fair, reasonably priced system for registering Internet addresses.

“In short, management of the domain name system may seem like a technical subject, but it is crucially important to the continued success of the Internet.

“The question of how best to perform this important function is still unsettled. The Internet has become such a daily fact of life that it is easy to forget just how new it is. It wasn’t that long ago that the Internet’s addressing system was managed largely by a single individual, and key decisions could be made on a consensus basis by a small handful of interested parties.

“But as the Internet transcended its academic roots to become a mainstream avenue of communications and commerce both in the United States and worldwide, management of the domain name system became more complicated.

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“ICANN, created in late 1998, was really something of an experiment. And as the recent spate of ICANN reform proposals suggest, there is a widespread feeling that changes are needed.

“I look forward to hearing the views of today’s witnesses about ICANN’s performance and potential reforms to its structure. But a few things seem clear. To be successful, ICANN needs a clearly defined mission. It needs sufficient resources to fulfill that mission. It needs an organizational structure that ensures input from a wide range of voices and interests. And it needs processes that are transparent and fair, to earn the trust and confidence of the broad Internet community.

“I would like to thank the witnesses for agreeing to appear today. I would also like to thank my colleague, Senator Burns, for his continuing concern and leadership on this issue. He has been one of the foremost voices in Congress on the subject, and I welcome his presence here today.”

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