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House Passes Homeland Security Cyber Overhaul Bill

House lawmakers have passed legislation that would reorganize the Department of Homeland Security's cybersecurity mission. The House passed the legislation, which is spearheaded by Homeland Security Committee Chairman Michael McCaul (R-Texas), by a voice vote Monday evening. The bill would reorganize the National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD) at Homeland Security, elevating it into its own operational agency. The NPPD is responsible for securing federal networks and U.S. critical infrastructure from cyber and physical threats. Officials in both the Obama and Trump administrations have voiced the need for an overhaul at the NPPD, which is currently a component within Homeland Security headquarters. The legislation would rename the NPPD the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, a standalone agency to handle cyber and critical infrastructure protection. The bill's pathway in the Senate is uncertain; currently, no companion legislation has been offered. The vote comes about a week after the department got a new leader in Kirstjen Nielsen, whom President Trump chose to serve as Homeland Security secretary in October. John Kelly initially helmed the department but moved to the White House to serve as Trump's chief of staff at the end of July. Nielsen, a cybersecurity

expert, served at Homeland Security and then as Trump's deputy chief of staff in the new administration.