

March 14, 2016

Congressman Michael McCaul, Chairman
10th Congressional District Representative
Homeland Security Committee
131 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman McCaul,

Please accept this letter as my endorsement and support for the formation of the McCaul\Warner Encryption Committee. The technical aspects of protecting American lives and safeguarding our interests around the globe depend on our capabilities in handling electronic devices, data networks, as well as access to encrypted files. Our safety and security is tightly intertwined within technology that is rapidly developing and ever changing. Encryption technology is just such an arena where burgeoning criminal activity threatens not only the safety of our homeland, but our ability to respond to and properly investigate everything from terrorist acts to child exploitation.

As Chairman of the Local Executive Board of the Greater Houston Forensic Computer Lab, I have extensive experience in managing forensic analysts, as well as the rules and tools of federal evidence. Such issues face us daily in just being able to provide law enforcement access to the data and electronic files they need for standard investigations. As a member of the National Advisory Committee for the FBI's National Program Office that oversees the network of forensic laboratories, we can see the trends involving issues like encryption and cloud storage as challenges for our future. Such challenges can and should be addressed through the kind of dialog your committee approach will address. I would ask that you please consider greater representation by law enforcement if at all possible.

There is a compelling motivation for serious dialog with developers and the technical community to search for both common ground and solutions. I hope law enforcement representation in such conversations will be significant and meaningful, as the future of law enforcement will be increasingly more technical in nature.

If there is anything I can do to assist in this endeavor, including assisting with this committee, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Ron Hickman, Sheriff
Harris County
FBI NA # 256