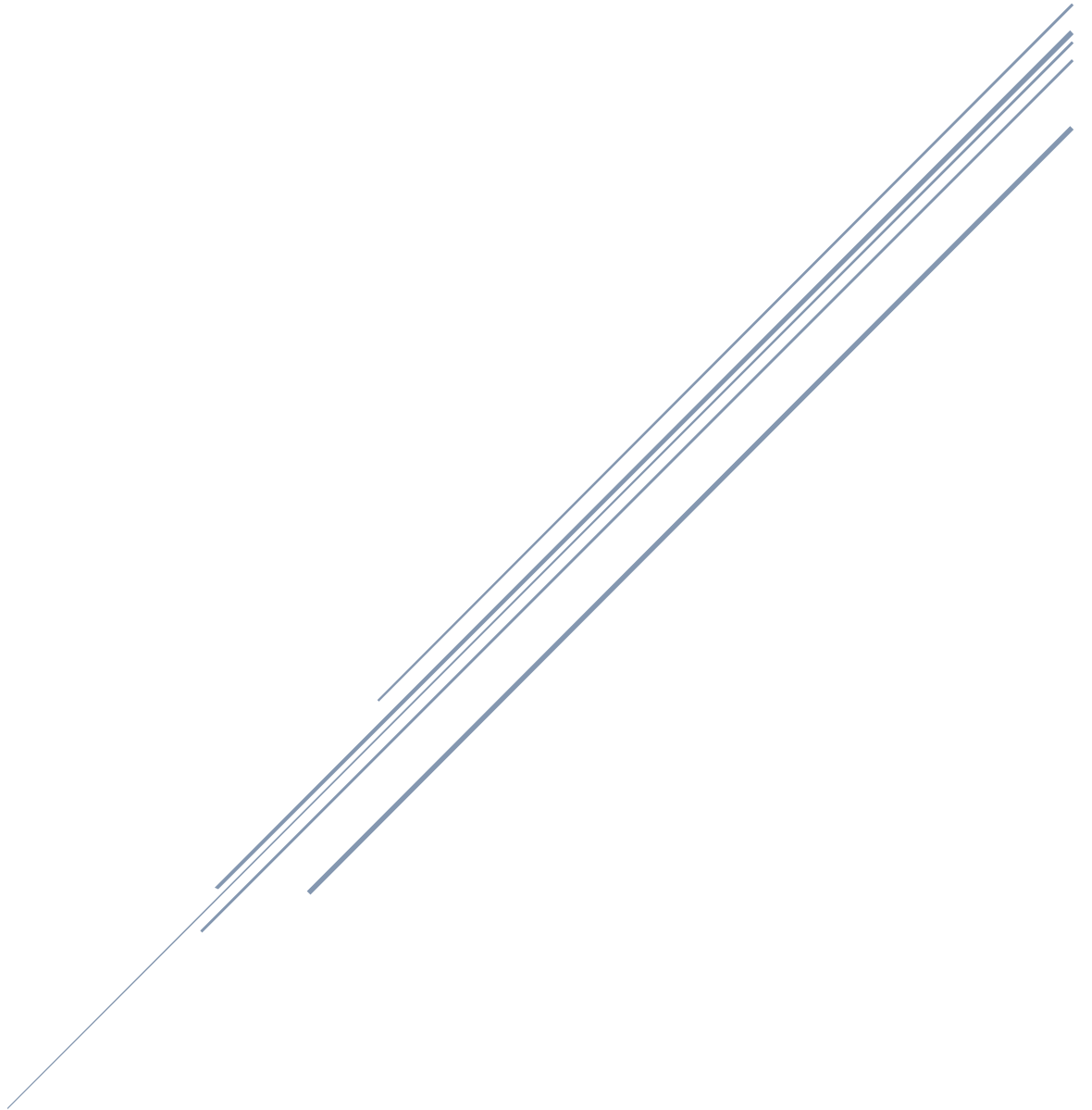


CYSE406 WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2

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Hello Mr. Condit, as per your request, we have concluded our preliminary research into the successfully enacted cybersecurity law S.1917 [\(1\)](#) [\(2\)](#), otherwise known as the K-12 Cybersecurity Act of 2021. Seeing as how you want to prove to your constituents that cybersecurity is one focus of your time in office representing them, I believe this proposal fits that objective perfectly. Essentially what it does is it outlines cybersecurity guidelines to assist both primary and secondary educational institutions. While these guidelines are completely voluntary, they do offer schools a chance to revamp their cybersecurity apparatus, to reduce the risk of a malicious intrusion and the potential compromise of their students and employee records.

These guidelines are developed by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, or CISA. The study is done by analyzing the risks posed to K-12 schools including their information systems, both owned by the school system, and leased from a 3rd party. They also review how student and employee records are stored and secured, offering recommendations on how to better protect them from a rogue intruder. The bill also required CISA to develop and make available online training toolkits for K-12 employees and officials, as well as make the findings of their studies publicly available on the website of the Department of Homeland Security (Peters, 2021). This way, any scrutiny could be given to the study, and employees or school districts who wished to investigate the study before committing would be free to do so.

What this law does is it addresses the danger posed to educational institutions which have been historically vulnerable to hackers attempting to steal information on both adult employees, and the children's student records. With these records, they could potentially fabricate an

identity, or sell those records to other hackers, other countries, or even hold them for ransom against the school district. The risk to these records, while fluctuating over some years, has steadily grown over time from just under 100 incidents in 2016 to almost 400 as of 2020. While many more attempts are aimed at universities and higher education institutions, a substantial number of attacks are also launched against K-12 schools as well (Levin, 2021). This prompted numerous cybersecurity laws aimed at K-12 schools to address these risks. This was especially important when this law was proposed and debated on since the Covid-19 pandemic was in full-swing, and remote learning was being implemented by schools across the world. This opened schools, students, and employees up to potential phishing attacks, ransomware attacks, session hijacking, and general intrusions from hackers seeking to use remote learning to gain access to their systems (Ilascu, 2020).

The law is very much a step in the right direction, but I think it needs to be improved upon. I think making schools voluntarily follow the guidelines is a good start, since not all school systems have the same resources at their disposal, or the same cybersecurity policies in place; some districts desperately need help while others are fine as is. That being said, the law needs to offer more tangible support to protect educational records. Offering professional technical assistance, software or hardware support, as well as an optional yearly review of their cybersecurity apparatus and record keeping could help K-12 schools develop their cybersecurity. Keeping all of this voluntary of course, it offers the assistance that is potentially needed by schools in lower income areas with less resources while not making it mandatory by those same schools, or those that have the money and resources available to develop their own capabilities. Plus, it shows your constituents that the government seeks to offer help where it can to the

people you represent, not simply force the help onto them, which many of your constituents may be heavily against.

Overall, I think this law, or something like it would be a good example to the public about the good you can do for them in terms of cybersecurity. It shows you and the government can study risks and threats, adapt to them promptly, and offer the people you represent help, without forcing it upon them if they don't need or desire it. With the pandemic effectively over the schools reverting to physical classrooms, the risk posed to them is still rising year after year, and something has to be done. This is your chance to show you can do something about it and protect your district's cybersecurity against outside threats.

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