

Senate Panel Moves Forward with Plankey Nomination to Lead Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

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The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee voted on July 30, 2025, to advance Sean Plankey's nomination to lead the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), amid ongoing restructuring and scrutiny of the agency's role in election security.

President Donald Trump nominated Plankey, a retired U.S. Coast Guard officer who previously held cybersecurity roles at the Department of Energy and the National Security Council. The Senate committee approves his nomination by a 9-6 vote, sending it to the full chamber for consideration.

Plankey appeared before lawmakers during a tense confirmation hearing, pledging to prioritize the protection of federal systems and critical infrastructure. He states his willingness to reorganize the agency or request additional funding if needed. Plankey also expresses support for renewing the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act of 2015 and strengthening the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program.

CISA, an agency under the Department of Homeland Security, faced criticism for pausing election security initiatives and reducing its workforce by nearly one-third earlier this year. The agency also suspends several partnerships with private cybersecurity organizations, raising concerns about its ability to assist state and local officials in defending election systems and responding to cyber threats.

Senator Ron Wyden placed a procedural hold on Plankey's nomination, demanding the release of a 2022 report detailing potential security vulnerabilities in U.S. telecommunications networks. Wyden accused CISA of suppressing the findings and called the situation a "multi-year cover-up."

Senator Richard Blumenthal questioned Plankey on whether he believes the 2020 presidential election was rigged. Plankey declines to offer a personal opinion, stating that his views are irrelevant to CISA's mission.

Blumenthal responds by warning that such neutrality could affect public confidence in the electoral infrastructure.

Despite partisan disagreements, the committee vote moved the nomination forward. The full Senate is expected to debate the appointment, with some lawmakers seeking more details on how Plankey intends to guide the agency amid operational challenges.

Plankey's confirmation may determine whether CISA maintains a broad role in election protection or shifts to a narrower focus on federal infrastructure. His leadership will likely influence how the federal government addresses rising cybersecurity risks ahead of the 2026 midterm elections.