



Position on Anti-Swatting Legislation

Introduction

In recent years, criminals have used our nation's 911 systems to deceive telecommunicators and emergency dispatchers into sending a law enforcement or emergency service response to a business or person's address. These false reports, referred to as "swatting," often endanger law enforcement personnel and the individuals targeted by these calls. At least two people have already died as the result of a swatting incident. Diverting critical law enforcement resources to false emergencies also decreases the number of officers available to respond to a real emergency.

Previous Congressional efforts to address swatting have focused on increasing incarceration penalties including enhanced penalties for the transmission of misleading or inaccurate caller identification information with the intent to trigger an emergency response. While anti-swatting legislation was first introduced in 2018 and has been introduced in each successive Congress,¹ to date, none of these bills have become law.

iCERT Position

iCERT supports Federal legislation that would substantially decrease incidents of swatting. While we support increased penalties for criminals who engage in this nefarious practice, a more comprehensive approach is needed that would provide more effective solutions. iCERT supports a legislative framework that includes:

- Provisions that promote the development of best practices and training relating to swatting incident responses for both 911 authorities and law enforcement agencies.
- Provisions that promote Federal level law enforcement coordination to enable interstate investigation and prosecution of swatting incidents.
- Provisions that promote the development and use of a system, or systems, used to record data regarding swatting incidents, such as the National Common Operational Picture Virtual Command Center (NCOP-VCC) implemented by the FBI.
- Provisions that would enable communities to recover costs for responses and/or restitution for victims of swatting incidents.
- Federal grant funding to enable state and local agencies to implement technologies that would improve 911 authentication capabilities and help 911 authorities to identify, mitigate, and prevent swatting incidents.

¹¹ See H.R.6003 (115th Congress, 2018), H.R.156 (116th Congress, 2019), H.R.4523 (117th Congress, 2021), and H.R.3913 (118th Congress, 2023).