Prioritizing Cybersecurity through Organizational Structure

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Introductions

Kevin McMahan, Assistant Secretary of State

- Oversees Elections and ISR divisions, and Civic Engagement Program
- MAs in Homeland Security and Public Administration; BS in Telecommunications
- 10 years in industry; 20 years in military

Kylee Zabel, Information Security & Response Director

- Manages Information Security & Response Division
- BA in Communications and Political Science
- 10 years in strategic communications for government and nonprofit sectors
The Threat

Compromise Trends 2015 to 2021

Data Source: 2021 in Review Data Breach Annual Report, Identity Theft Resource Centre
Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges
• Greater interest in election security
• State actors who want to undermine reputations
• Rapid growth in AI and the impact on misinformation

Opportunities
• To educate/inform the public
• To work with legislature to create and establish policy
• To build cyber resilient organizations
Our Solution: Information Security & Response

Mission: The Information Security & Response Division protects the integrity of the Office of the Secretary of State and Washington’s election process through cybersecurity and strategic messaging.

Objectives:
• Detect and mitigate cybersecurity risk within the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) to ensure fulfillment of its constitutional and legislative responsibilities.
• Collaborate and share cybersecurity best practices with state, local, tribal, and private stakeholders to enable unity of effort.
• Identify and counter rumors that threaten the public’s trust in Washington’s electoral process to enable greater confidence in the integrity of elections.
• Create messaging and resources about cybersecurity and election integrity to support civic outreach and stakeholder engagement.
How are we similar?

- Collaboration with OSOS IT
- National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Standards
- Leverage strengths of federal and industry partners
  - Washington National Guard
  - Center for Internet Security
  - MS - & EI-ISACs
How are we different?

• CISO reports to the ISR Director, not the CIO
• Regionalized operations to assist counties with limited resources
• Cyber efforts nest with strategic messaging campaign
  • Integrity
  • Security
  • Education
• Election Security Funds
Election Security Funds

ISR Manages the Election Security Funds

• Legislative appropriations to support election security at the county
• Counties can receive $80k per year for FY23, FY24, and FY25 ($240K)
• Counties must have an operational and monitored Albert sensor
• Counties receive reimbursement for approved expenditures
Questions?