

Excerpts of remarks by Congressman Chris Smith
Ribbon Cutting - **Center of Excellence for Cybersecurity Education**
at Brookdale Community College, Lincroft, NJ
January 22, 2024

Thank you, Dr. Stout, for your leadership and commitment to Brookdale Community College. Your influence and more than 20 years of contributions to the school are many, and I am personally grateful for your dedication to education here in Monmouth County.

Director Arnone, thanks to you and the entire Board of Commissioners for your dedication to building and growing this world class college—ranked the best community college in New Jersey for the second year in a row.

And special thanks to Professor Michael Qaissaunee, Director of the Cyber Center and the Chair of the Brookdale Engineering and Technology Department for your vision and leadership.

We have all seen the headlines of cyberattacks shutting down hospitals and businesses, sophisticated political “hacktivists” targeting government agencies, banking network breaches, as well as spyware, ransomware and other forms of cyber-criminality intended to disrupt our economy, security, freedom and our way of life.

Cyber-attacks are not new—but they are growing almost exponentially in number and sophistication.

In [2006 and again 2007](#), the Chinese Communist Party hacked into both my Washington office and my human rights committee’s computers and stole files related to Chinese dissidents and legislative

proposals I was drafting to expose and combat the CCP's egregious violations of human rights. (Congressional investigators traced it all to Beijing.)

Today—more than ever—individuals, businesses, organizations and governments here and around the world need expertly trained cybersecurity professionals to protect sensitive data and systems, and to defend against malicious attacks that could compromise privacy and safety.

And government entities—from municipalities and states to Congress, the Department of Defense, Homeland Security and CIA to name a few—must be ever vigilant in protecting us from criminal actors as far away as China or as close as next door, from electronic espionage that could devastate our futures and disrupt our national security.

At all levels of government, we work daily to contain spending and direct our taxpayer funds to projects that are cost effective and will benefit our immediate communities and national goals. The **Center for Excellence for Cybersecurity Education** is one of those projects that stands head and shoulders above others and is truly worthy of federal financial support.

For that reason, I was pleased to have authored the legislative earmark of \$439,000 to the project and ensure that the federal government would be a contributing partner in this important endeavor.

As a Department of Homeland Security and NSA-designated National Center of Excellence in Cyber Defense Education, Brookdale has a strong history of exceptional training to support the cybersecurity ecosystem, and this new center will not only help to advance the

College's cybersecurity training efforts; it will help to train up a new generation of "super cyber cops" to defend our information systems, infrastructure, cloud computing capabilities and networks.

Make no mistake about it—this is life-changing work, and we cannot be more grateful that Brookdale is leading the way.