

## Dr. Burgess Weekly Video Address November 6, 2015 “Safe Harbor Negotiations”

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Hello, this is your Congressman, Michael Burgess.

Today I want to talk about a subject that is out of the headlines—but not far from the economic lifelines on which we all depend.

This week I chaired a hearing to review the status of the negotiations between the United States and the European Union on something called the Safe Harbor Agreement.

Different countries have different definitions and different laws protecting the privacy of individuals.

The Safe Harbor Agreement was enacted back in 1998 and allows for the free flow of data across the Atlantic between the United States and the European Union.

And even though privacy protections differ, companies could receive some legal certainty.

Recently, a European court invalidated the current safe harbor agreement. The European court concluded the U.S. could not adequately protect the privacy of the data.

The U.S. has recently made reforms to its surveillance laws and processes that address these concerns.

The lesson that we have learned from the past few years is the government must be more transparent and certainly must be accountable to the people it governs.

There is no U.S. trade partnership more important or larger than the trade partnership with the U.S. and Europe. And the U.S. and Europe are not as far apart in terms of privacy practices as some may think.

It is urgent that these negotiations are solidified quickly.

This agreement is important because it allows U.S. businesses to operate in European countries by sharing data across the Atlantic.

As we know, in today's world you cannot do business without digital data flow.

The economic impact of cross border data flows will only increase as our reliance on the Internet increases across the world.

Over 4,400 large and small businesses were certified under the Safe Harbor Agreement through the Department of Commerce. Companies that include Facebook, Google, Microsoft and other names.

Jobs and industries are connected to those 4,400 businesses.

Thank you for taking the time to listen. May God bless you and your family, and may God bless Texas.