

Kemba Walden

Cybersecurity & Emerging Technology Policy Leader, Former Acting U.S. National Cyber Director, President of the Paladin Global Institute

Kemba Walden stands at the forefront of cybersecurity, combining a wealth of government and private sector experience with a vision for a secure digital future. As the Acting United States National Cyber Director from February to November of 2023, our nation's highest-ranking leaders looked to her to shape the national cybersecurity policies and strategies that protect our critical infrastructure and make cyberspace safer for the organizations and individuals who depend on its stability and security. Walden, who has also served as assistant general counsel for Microsoft's Digital Crimes Unit, is regarded among the most respected figures in cybersecurity circles, as well as one of the most sought-after thought leaders for organizations seeking to better understand how they can maximize the security of their businesses in a constantly evolving cyber landscape.

Exclusively represented by Leading Authorities speakers bureau, she is a frequent speaker at conferences and events across industries — sharing unparalleled insight and expertise on the evolving cyber threat landscape, as well as essential practices for protecting vital data and enhancing an organization's security posture. Weaving in engaging narratives with her expert guidance, she demystifies complex cyber concepts and demonstrates how leaders and their teams can own their roles in ensuring their businesses can proactively defend themselves in an increasingly interconnected (and vulnerable) world.

Today, she is the president of the Paladin Global Institute, which was founded to protect global critical infrastructure and enhance safety online through research, advocacy, informed policy recommendations, and cross-sector collaboration. At the Office of the National Cyber Director (ONCD), her tenure was marked by the implementation of innovative initiatives that bolstered the nation's cyber defense capabilities, as well as a refreshingly collaborative approach between the private and public sectors to secure critical technology from increasingly complex cyber threats. Among various roles of influence throughout her career, Walden also served a decade at the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) — most recently at the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. Following her tenure at the DHS, she was the primary cybersecurity legal advisor for securing election infrastructure. Between the DHS and ONCD, she was at Microsoft for three years, advising on advancing its cyber practices and promoting responsible innovation, and providing legal counsel to the Defending Democracy Program for the 2020 election cycle.

Since 2019, Walden has been an adjunct professor of information security law and regulatory compliance at Georgetown University's School of Continuing Studies, which she balances with her duties as a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and Atlantic Council Board of Directors, as well as co-chair of the Aspen Digital U.S. Cybersecurity Group. She was also appointed as an inaugural member of the Cyber Safety Review Board. Holding a Juris Doctor degree from Georgetown University Law Center, her academic background, coupled with her extensive professional experience, has equipped her with a unique perspective on the intersection of law, policy, and technology.