

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and distinguished members of the judiciary committee,

My name is Myles Smith, I live in Portland, and I write today **in support of LD 1822**, and in **opposition to LD 1088, LD 1224, and LD 1294**.

I submit this testimony in my personal capacity. I am the former director of the Maine Broadband Coalition, which supported Maine's ISP data privacy law. I am disappointed, and not the least bit surprised, that Facebook, Charter/Spectrum, Google and other data miners and profiteers are back to lock in their faux privacy standards. I just spoke to friends with whom I worked to defend our privacy rights last year, who alerted me to these bills.

Before coming home to Maine a couple years ago, I spent almost two decades living and working in unfree societies in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. I spent much of that time supporting journalists and internet freedom defenders. While there, I saw the consequences of the unregulated collection and circulation of Internet user data by their governments.

We are not in that place quite yet. Here, corporations are doing as good a job or better of profiling us and our children and selling off those profiles to anyone. Governments have all the data they need to monitor and manipulate us, which can be freely bought for a miniscule price. Until recently, this data has been used to sell us things. Now, it is used to train machines to mimic our behaviors. Soon, [user data profiles will be good enough to allow AI to mimic specific individuals](#). All the data needed to do this is freely collected by for-profit companies, from ISPs to social media platforms, from email providers and search engines providers to gaming and gambling sites.

These companies value us as a collection of data points. They can't see us any other way - their fiduciary responsibility to shareholders and the competitive billionaire leadership mindset affords no other way. We must value ourselves as free thinking and freely associating individuals. And our government must affirm our value if we're going to have any.

Americans are rapidly losing trust in their government's ability to act in the interest of the public. Folks see a government serving the needs of the wealthy and powerful. Data is now the currency of the powerful, and the easiest vehicle to access wealth.

This was clear in the work of the broadband coalition, where our polling data showed concerns about privacy as the top reason to avoid going online for anything. The

ability to protect oneself online is correlated to youth, wealth, and tech proficiency. This is unfair, unjust, and unsustainable.

Without some expectation of privacy on the communication platforms of society, we are not free. Privacy lets us develop ideas and new patents. Privacy allows us to think outside current social norms, which makes progress possible. Privacy enables investigating power and holding it to account. Soon, the only places where we will expect some privacy will be our own homes, with the curtains drawn and all devices unplugged, or on a walk in the woods. This was the limit of freedom in places like Turkmenistan and Russia.

I urge you to send a strong signal to Mainers that we care about their privacy, and that we will take steps to protect each other. This is a critical next step we can take, building on our ISP privacy law, to turn the corner towards freedom.

Myles Smith  
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