

TEXAS PUBLIC POLICY FOUNDATION

June 17, 2024

Chairwoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Frank Pallone
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Rodgers and Ranking Member Pallone,

The undersigned state-based think tanks and organizations across the country wish to express our support for the spirit of the American Privacy Rights Act of 2024. With our shared belief that online privacy is a prerequisite to liberty and freedom, this bill in its current form is an encouraging step toward putting Americans in the driver's seat with their personal information.

Repeated surveys and polls indicate strong, bipartisan support among Americans for a national data privacy framework. According to a Pew Research Center poll from October 2023, 81% of Americans are concerned about how companies use the data they collect about them. Moreover, polling conducted by the Texas Public Policy Foundation revealed that 97% of parents believe they should have more control over their children's data privacy, and 90% agree that online users should have to grant permission for businesses to be able to collect data or share data with third parties.

In recent years, states have stepped up to fill the void left by the absence of a federal framework, with more than a dozen states passing comprehensive consumer data privacy bills. Despite how encouraging and needed these laws are, uniformity across the country will allow for streamlined enforcement and protections for Americans living in states without such data privacy laws.

This legislation comes at a time when Artificial Intelligence and emerging technologies are enabling faster, more invasive means of surveilling Americans and processing sensitive personal information. Scores of stories highlight some of the more sinister uses of personal information—from rogue foreign actors obtaining granular information on active troops from data brokers to stalkers and nefarious actors purchasing information on their victims to inflict physical harm. More fundamentally, without transparency into how their personal information is being used, Americans are incapable of making informed decisions about their online activity.

Ultimately, this legislation would afford Americans a more comprehensive suite of digital rights and would position America as an international leader in balancing innovation and development with consumer protection. The undersigned are particularly encouraged by the newly proposed language on data minimization standards, digital rights as it pertains to data processors and brokers, privacy-by-design principles, and child data protections. As this bill continues through the legislative process, we look forward to finding ways to further strengthen the bill to the benefit of all Americans.

Thank you for your leadership and courage to fight on behalf of Americans' right to privacy.

Respectfully,

