

Senator Chip Shields
Senator Tim Knopp
Representative John Huffman
Representative Jennifer Williamson



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Contact: Caitie Osborne
(503) 986-1950

Bipartisan Privacy Coalition Testifies in Favor of Updates to Oregon's Digital Privacy Laws

Salem, OR – Today, Senator Chip Shields (D-Portland), Senator Tim Knopp (R-Bend), Representative Jennifer Williamson (D-Portland), and Representative John Huffman (R-The Dalles) joined the ACLU in testifying for a bipartisan package of bills they introduced to update Oregon's digital privacy laws and protect Oregonians' right to privacy.

"The laws designed to protect the privacy rights of Oregonians have not kept pace with technology," said David Fidanque, Executive Director of the ACLU of Oregon. "We are delighted to be working with this bi-partisan coalition of legislators to establish clear ground rules for the government collection, use and searches of personal communications and location tracking information."

SB 639, SB 640 and SB 641 address privacy concerns over electronic and cellular data and automatic license plate readers. A fourth bill, SB 904, establishes the Joint Legislative Committee on Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight.

"Updating Oregon's surveillance laws to reflect advances in modern surveillance technology is critical," said Senator Shields. "The growing ability to collect and disseminate information electronically means we need to ensure the privacy of average Oregonians is protected."

SB 640 and SB 641 require law enforcement to obtain a warrant before accessing certain electronic communications, including data stored on a cell phone, and information about cell phone location. The four members of the privacy coalition engaged key law enforcement groups to determine the best balance of personal privacy and public safety.

"Rapid advances in the technology we use every day require new policies for data collection and surveillance," said Representative Williamson. "These bills ensure law enforcement can access the data they need to keep the public safe without compromising the privacy of Oregonians."

Alongside the bills to protect personal data on electronic or cellular devices, SB 639 creates new statewide guidelines for law enforcement using automatic license plate readers.

“These bills are a critical part of our effort to update Oregon’s privacy laws to reflect the digital world we live in,” said Senator Knopp. “We need legislation that balances the privacy of individuals with the need to keep the public safe.”

The four privacy coalition bills received their first public hearing on March 17th.

“I am proud of the collaborative results of this bipartisan coalition,” said Representative Huffman. “With input from key stakeholders, these bills effectively address concerns over the intersection of surveillance, data collection and personal privacy and we look forward to continued conversations on the issues of personal privacy and safety.”

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