

Statement of Laura Chadwick  
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Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Information Technology, and Government Innovation  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
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Subcommittee Chairwoman Mace, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

My name is Laura Chadwick, and I have served as president & CEO of the Travel Technology Association – known as Travel Tech – since October 2022.

Travel Tech is the voice of the travel technology industry, advocating for public policies that promote transparency, competition, and consumer choice. For over 25 years, Travel Tech has consistently advocated for these values. Our members include Online Travel Agencies, Metasearch Engines, Short-Term Rental Platforms, Travel Management Companies, Global Distribution Systems, and a growing number of early-stage travel tech startups.

Many of our consumer-facing members are marketplace platforms that connect travel service suppliers and would-be travelers online, facilitating information sharing and e-commerce. In the travel industry, suppliers such as hotels, airlines, car rental companies, and short-term rental owner/operators choose to provide information about their offerings on our members' platforms. Millions of consumers worldwide visit these sites to easily research various travel options, compare, and book travel services. It is on our members' platforms where travel service providers directly compete, which in turn helps keep travel affordable for everyday Americans. It is important to note that Travel Tech does not represent individual short-term rental owner/operators, travel agencies, or hotels; Travel Tech is the trade association for the leading platforms in the United States.

Travel Tech's advocacy on behalf of its members and industry segment focuses on —platform-related issues, such as mandatory and ancillary fee transparency and industry competition.

However, the purpose of my testimony today is to speak broadly about the policies that Travel Tech member companies facilitating short-term rental bookings have in place to help protect guests from surveillance in private spaces. I am not here to represent any one short-term platform but to speak for the industry at large.

Before I begin, though, on behalf of myself, Travel Tech, and our member companies, I want to make it clear that secret recordings of any unsuspecting person in any private space is wrong. Individuals who engage in such acts violate the fundamental human rights principles of autonomy, consent, privacy, and trust, wherever secret recordings occur – be it in a rental property, hotel, locker room, dressing room, spa, medical settings, or even in an airplane bathroom. As a woman and mother, I am deeply concerned about this issue, and I must remain vigilant to protect myself and my twin sons from such individuals.

I know that our member companies that facilitate short-term rental bookings are likewise focused on these issues. Having policies to help protect guests' safety and privacy as they travel is their highest priority.

One of the many benefits of short-term lodging is that the properties come in various configurations, offering consumers a wide range of competitive choices to meet their travel needs and budget. A common configuration is a full house or apartment rental, where all the space is considered private. Another popular configuration is a private rented room within a house or apartment with shared common space.

For these configurations and others, our members that facilitate short-term rental bookings have unequivocal policies to help protect guests in these private spaces: no surveillance devices are allowed, full stop. This means for full house or apartment rentals, no surveillance devices are allowed throughout. In private rooms within a house or apartment, this means no surveillance devices too. Further, no cameras are allowed outside that record guests inside. Our members also have policies for outdoor-facing surveillance devices, like doorbell cameras.

Violations of these policies are extremely rare but when a guest does report an alleged hidden camera our members take it extremely seriously. Our members encourage guests to report actions by short-term rental owners and/or operators that violate the platforms' surveillance policies, and our members take actions to investigate the customer report and address accordingly, such as removing the listing from the platform. Our members provide resources to help guests report incidents to law enforcement, and they cooperate with police as they investigate.

In addition to our members' strict policies, laws that protect individuals from secret video recordings and punish perpetrators exist at both the federal and state levels in the United States. The Video Voyeurism Prevention Act of 2004 (at 18 U.S.C. § 1801) criminalizes secretly recording a person's sensitive body parts in situations where he or she has a reasonable expectation of privacy. However, as Subcommittee Chairwoman Mace has noted, the current law is limited to federal properties only. The proposed legislation by Chairwoman Mace and Congresswoman Luna—H.R. 1203, the Stop VOYEURS Act of 2025—would significantly expand that scope and serve as a strong deterrent to potential offenders.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify at today's hearing, and I look forward to answering your questions to the best of my ability.