

Congressman David Schweikert Testimony for Judiciary Committee Member Day

Chairman Nadler, Ranking Member Jordan, Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me this opportunity to speak with you today.

I'd like to talk with you about one of my priorities this Congress, which is finding creative and radical solutions to effectively protecting individuals' personal data on online platforms.

We all know the monopoly Big Tech holds, and their constant influence in our daily lives. As our world continues to shift into a more virtual landscape, and more of our daily lives are spent online, privacy laws must adapt.

Data protection and privacy must be a priority. Our current systems are outdated, and too many individuals and families fall victim to data theft or misuse, without even realizing it. The demand for online transparency from digital platforms has drastically grown, and many of the current data protection laws have not gone far enough to instill the protections and safeguards needed. We need more creative, tangible solutions that put individuals in control of their information.

The solution I propose is to make an individual's online data a property right. This creates concrete and structured ownership of data that allows individuals themselves to hold tech companies accountable, should their rights be violated. The economic value of a person's data is fundamental to protect it as a form of property. Each platform can establish and disclose this information to the user. In doing so, a user will have more robust protections in the case of a breach of information.

This idea presents a forward-thinking solution that guards privacy and protects information from large digital platforms and third-party tracking. It revolutionizes an individual's ability to own their information. It takes radical but necessary steps to address violations of privacy and misuse of personal information.

Advancements in technology and sharing of our personal data has become a permanent facet of our everyday lives. Going forward, nearly all private information will be handed over to companies and digital platforms, either willingly or unwillingly. The power of Big Tech companies to collect, store, and use an individual's data has widened the scope for potential misuse of personal information and diminished the autonomy of Americans' ownership over their privacy.

I recently introduced a bill, H.R. 4240, the User Data Protection Act, that enacts this solution. While this bill does not reside under your committee jurisdiction, it is my hope that the committee will consider these policies that make a person's data their property right.

I strongly urge the committee to consider this idea as you continue your work in online data protection.

Thank you again Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member for holding this hearing.