

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS
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Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Legislative Hearing on H.R. 5777, the BEST PRACTICES Act, and the Boucher-Stearns
Privacy Discussion Draft
Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection
June 22, 2010

Today's hearing examines two important bills that address consumer privacy:

- H.R. 5777, the BEST PRACTICES Act introduced by Chairman Bobby Rush this week; and
- A privacy discussion draft released in May by Rick Boucher, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, and the Internet and Cliff Stearns, Ranking Member of that Subcommittee.

I commend all three Members for their leadership in the important area of consumer privacy and I thank Chairman Rush for holding this hearing on both bills. These bills follow a series of five hearings over the past 15 months – including three joint subcommittee hearings – that explored a wide range of privacy issues. The hearings examined topics from offline data brokers to online behavioral advertising and cutting-edge location-based services.

These hearings highlighted the tremendous benefits that the reasonable collection, use, and dissemination of consumer information may provide to consumers, businesses, and the marketplace. But we also documented legitimate concerns about the potential adverse impact of data collection on consumer privacy. In today's complex marketplace, consumers often do not understand when their personal information is collected, how it is used, and with whom it is shared.

These issues have been increasingly highlighted by the concerns over privacy in online commercial and financial transactions, in social media, and with the increasing ability of technology to tell the world where we are, what we are doing, and who we are interacting with through digital platforms.

The two bills being discussed this afternoon seek to address the privacy concerns raised by commercial uses of personal information. Through increased transparency, meaningful notice and choice, and tough enforcement, these bills seek to provide consumers with more control over

their personal information and foster more responsible data collection practices by companies. I fully support the objectives of these two bills.

I would like to thank the witnesses for being here this afternoon. As these bills move through the legislative process, I look forward to working in a bipartisan fashion with Representatives Rush, Boucher, Stearns, and Whitfield as well as Ranking Member Joe Barton, a well-known champion of privacy.

Privacy is one of the most important issues in modern society, and I hope that working together we can move legislation through the Committee that will benefit both American consumers and American businesses.