
CALIFORNIA PRIVACY PROTECTION AGENCY

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Date: April 16, 2026

To: California Privacy Protection Agency Board
(Meeting of May 1, 2026)

From: Maureen Mahoney, Deputy Director of Policy and Legislation

Subject: Agenda Item 3 — Legislative Update and Authorization of Agency Positions on Pending Legislation. AB 1542 (Ward, Sensitive personal information)

AB 1542, authored by Assemblymember Ward, seeks to strengthen protections for sensitive personal information by amending the California Consumer Privacy Act to prohibit the sale and sharing of sensitive personal information.¹ The bill is currently in Assembly Appropriations. Staff recommend a support position because the bill increases privacy protections for Californians.

Summary

The California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) provides key consumer privacy rights to Californians. The rights granted include the right to know what personal information businesses have collected and how that information is being used, sold, and shared; the right to delete personal information; the right to correct inaccurate personal information, the right to limit a business’s use and disclosure of sensitive personal information to certain business purposes, and the right to stop businesses’ sale and sharing of personal information, among other protections.

The majority of the rights and obligations provided by the CCPA apply to personal information, defined as information that identifies, relates to, or could reasonably be linked with a particular consumer or household.² Sensitive personal information is a subset of personal information that includes, among other things, social security numbers, precise geolocation information, citizenship or immigration status, genetic data, and the contents of messages.³ The CCPA provides consumers with a right to limit the use and disclosure of sensitive personal information.⁴

¹ AB 1542 (2026) https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB1542

² Civ. Code § 1798.140 (v).

³ Civ. Code § 1798.140 (ae).

⁴ Civ. Code § 1798.121.

This bill amends the CCPA to prohibit businesses and their service providers and contractors from selling or sharing sensitive personal information to a third party. It also makes conforming changes to business' disclosure obligations to remove the requirement that the notice at collection include information about whether the business sells or shares sensitive personal information.

Analysis

Sensitive personal information deserves heightened protections. The sale and use of information related to health conditions, race, or immigration status, for example, can lead to discrimination and harassment. Similarly, disclosures of personal identifiers and financial data can cause identity theft and fraud.

These risks are magnified by data brokers that collect, aggregate, and sell highly sensitive data — including health records, financial information, location data, and citizenship data — with minimal oversight or consumer consent. Recent Federal Trade Commission enforcement actions in 2024 against four large data brokers demonstrated how companies sold sensitive location data tracking individuals' visits to medical clinics, places of worship, and other sensitive location to data brokers.⁵ These brokers then combined that data with other sensitive information and sold detailed profiles of individual's most intimate behaviors and traits to virtually anyone.

Increasing consumer rights to limit the sale and sharing of their sensitive data to address these concerns is an important goal. Limiting both the sale and sharing of sensitive personal information would provide protection against the significant risks of fraud, discrimination and extortion. Such a prohibition would ensure that everyone's most personal and sensitive information is automatically protected from widespread circulation, minimizing downstream risks that could arise from sharing, such as, risk of data breach and misuse. It would also enable California to keep pace with other states like Maryland, whose recently enacted privacy law prohibits the sale of sensitive personal information.⁶

The Agency has supported similar increased protections for sensitive data in the past — in 2025 the Board voted to support AB 322 (Ward) a still-active bill which seeks to prohibit the sale of geolocation data, among other things. Like AB 322, this bill expands protections for sensitive personal information which is a goal consistent with the Agency's mission to protect Californians' consumer privacy. For these reasons, staff recommends supporting this bill.

⁵ *FTC Takes Action Against Gravy Analytics, Venntel for Unlawfully Selling Location Data Tracking Consumers to Sensitive Sites*, December 3, 2024, <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2024/12/ftc-takes-action-against-gravy-analytics-venntel-unlawfully-selling-location-data-tracking-consumers>; *FTC Takes Action Against Mobilewalla for Collecting and Selling Sensitive Location Data*, December 3, 2024, <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2024/12/ftc-takes-action-against-mobilewalla-collecting-selling-sensitive-location-data>; *FTC Finalizes Order with X-Mode and Successor Outlogic Prohibiting it from Sharing or Selling Sensitive Location Data*, April 12, 2024, <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2024/04/ftc-finalizes-order-x-mode-successor-outlogic-prohibiting-it-sharing-or-selling-sensitive-location>; *FTC Finalizes Order with InMarket Prohibiting It from Selling or Sharing Precise Location Data*, May 1, 2024, <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2024/05/ftc-finalizes-order-inmarket-prohibiting-it-selling-or-sharing-precise-location-data>

⁶ Maryland Online Data Privacy Act, MD Code Ann., Com. Law § 14-4601 et seq (2024).

Recommendation: Support

Public Support/Opposition:

Per the April 13 Assembly Privacy Committee bill analysis:⁷

Support:

Asian Americans Advancing Justice Southern California (Co-Sponsor)
California Initiative for Technology & Democracy, a Project of California Common
CAUSE (Co-Sponsor)
Consumer Reports (Co-Sponsor)
A Voice for Choice Advocacy
Aapis for Civic Empowerment
California Coalition for Worker Power
California Domestic Workers Coalition
California Federation of Labor Unions
California Health Coalition Advocacy
California Immigrant Policy Center
California Work & Family Coalition
Calpirg, California Public Interest Research Group
Chinese Progressive Association
Consumer Attorneys of California
Courage California
Electronic Frontier Foundation
Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC)
End Child Poverty California Powered by Grace
Equal Rights Advocates
Equality California
Indivisible Ca: Statestrong
Kapor Center Advocacy
Lgbt Tech
Oakland Privacy
Pilipino Workers Center
Privacy Defense Alliance
Privacy Rights Clearinghouse
Reproductive Freedom for All
Secure Justice
Seiu California
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Techequity Action
Ultraviolet Action
Warehouse Worker Resource Center
Western Center on Law & Poverty
Women's Foundation California

⁷ California Assembly Privacy & Consumer Protection Committee Analysis at 15 (April 13, 2026), https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billAnalysisClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB1542

Opposition:

American Advertising Federation (AAF)
American Association of Advertising Agencies (4A's)
American Property Casualty Insurance Association
Association of National Advertisers
California Chamber of Commerce
California Retailers Association
California's Credit Unions
Civil Justice Association of California (CJAC)
Computer and Communications Industry Association
Digital Advertising Alliance
Insights Association
Internet.works
Software Information Industry Association
Technet

Oppose Unless Amended:

Ata Action California
Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce
Inmarket Media, LLC
Network Advertising Initiative

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