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In support of SB 6, An Act Concerning Net Neutrality Principles and Internet Privacy.

I am a computer scientist, and the vast amount of personal data that collected and stored in the world is terrifying. Companies of all types and sizes are collecting as much information as possible, often merely in the hopes that this data will someday be valuable. They often cast their effort as a benefit to customers.

The giant internet companies all say their intentions good, but those assurances are irrelevant because once the data is collected, it beyond our control forever. A \$100 hard drive that can fit your coat pocket can hold hundreds of millions of text files. Hundreds of duplicates of that drive can be made in no time. Once the records exist, we have to face the fact that they will outlive us, and they will outlive the corporate executives who promise it will not be abused.

Our only recourse is to consider carefully what data society allows to be collected – by anyone, private enterprise or public agencies.

One group of companies is in a more powerful role in that they see every move that everyone makes on the Internet. These are the cable operators and telephone companies that the FCC declared last year do not need regulation. They can, if they want, collect every destination you visit on the web. We can refuse to be part of Facebook; we can use alternative search engines instead of Google, but we cannot connect to the Web without a wire controlled by an ISP.

In a fragmented way, businesses, organizations and governments already hold an uncomfortable amount of material, but the maximum damage would follow from a single repository of all of it.

Then there is the safety of the data. We can choose to believe the assurances that companies take every measure possible, yet several of the major data thefts in recent years belie that. My friends who specialize in computer security point out that the bad guys are always one step ahead of the good guys because the systems are too

complex to recognize every vulnerability before the bad guys do.

Beyond that, we have seen massive data thefts occur because of negligence. Not too long ago, someone, criminals or a hostile government, broke into the computer system of the giant credit reporting agency, Equifax, and stole comprehensive data on 148 million people. The thieves weren't diabolically clever. They used a known flaw in the basic web server program because Transunion failed to apply the widely distributed patch.

Ultimately, the greatest danger lies in the future in the public realm. I don't think I'm overly dramatic, but doesn't the history of the vicious totalitarian regimes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century frighten us? Doesn't the rise of nationalists regimes around the world concern us? No one at this hearing can guarantee it won't happen again, and won't happen here. And what a weapon we are building for them.

All for what? Some movie recommendations? Some ads that you might find interesting?

Net neutrality is a separate but related issue, more technical but the arguments against giving up this principle are similar.

Your cable operator or cell phone carrier may promise anything today and be acting in good faith, but they have no means of restraining future chief executives and boards of directors from adopting new policies. In recent years, we've seen several examples of ISP's restricting the web, occasions when the threat of the FCC caused them to back down.

Net neutrality is in a broad way the principal that all content flowing through the web must be treated equally. Who owns the content and what political views it contains cannot legally determine what is available to us.

Ajit Pai, the recently appointed chair of the FCC has characterized the net neutrality principle as a solution in search of a problem. I argue that the Internet has been integrated so far into our cultural, commercial and political lives that it now belongs to society, and must be kept free and open.

Since the 1990s the Internet has thrived by being open, and has fueled a tremendous amount of growth in the United States and around the world. By refusing to make this clear in the law, we are inviting the owners of the wires to throttle its growth, and even worse, restricting the information available -- not far-fetched in our hyperpartisan politics today.