Testimony: Paul Roberts, Founder, Securepairs.org

Co-Chairs Maroney and D'Agostino and members of the General Law Committee:

My name is Paul Roberts. I am a resident of Belmont Massachusetts and the founder of Securepairs.org, a group of more than 200 cyber security experts who support the creation of new consumer protection laws enshrining a digital right to repair. I speak to you today to voice my support for Senate Bill 121 establishing a Right to Repair in Connecticut. I am also offering myself to answer any questions you may have, particularly in regard to cyber security risk as it relates to repair.

SB 121 is modest in its scope. It requires companies that sell electronic products to consumers in Connecticut to make available to device owners and independent repair professionals the same diagnostic software, service manuals, schematics and information they give to their *authorized* repair providers. SB 121 seeks to prevent costly aftermarket monopolies on repair and service enforced using software locks and other unfair practices. Full stop.

What it doesn't do is create new cybersecurity- or privacy risks. Cyber criminals don't hack connected electronic devices by reading their way through service manuals and schematics or gaming diagnostic software. Hacks happen in the real world because electronics, smart home appliances, cameras, phones and machinery ship with software that contains easily exploitable software vulnerabilities. Or they are insecure by default: shipped with the digital equivalent of unlocked or unlockable doors that malicious actors can step through.

Recently, for example, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency issued a warning about a software flaw that is found in more than 70 different types of internet connected cameras made by the firm Hikvision. These cameras are deployed in Connecticut homes and businesses as we speak. This flaw in software written and shipped by the manufacturer- allows a remote attacker to take complete control of a Hikvision device without any user interaction.

Why bring this up? Because the lawyers and PR people representing big tech told you today that data security and privacy are their top priority. The record and their actions tell us otherwise. Raising alarms about the potential danger of hacking and data theft is a cynical effort to derail new laws that will frustrate lucrative monopolies in service and repair that dealerships for John Deere, Apple and other manufacturers currently enjoy.

A digital right to repair is a vital tool that will extend the life of electronic devices, ensure their safety, security and integrity. In this time of increasing wealth inequality and concentrations of market power by large technology firms, a digital right to repair ensures that the spoils of the coming Internet of Things are shared with consumers, communities and small businessmen and women. I urge you to support these bills.

Paul Roberts
Founder, SecuRepairs.org

--
Paul Roberts
Founder, SecuRepairs.org
twitter: securepairs | signal: 6178170198