



January 7, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Mitch McConnell, Charles Schumer, Madam Speaker and Representative Kevin McCarthy:

On behalf of the IEEE-USA, representing about 180,000 individual technology professionals across the United States, I urge Congress to take strong steps to provide every American with strong digital privacy rights, suitable for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

IEEE members are the men and women who created the technology that defines the modern America. We built the internet, cell phones, satellites, power stations and other innovations that allow our modern society to function. As such, IEEE has a unique perspective on the benefits of these technologies – and the risks.

We are increasingly concerned about Americans' rapidly eroding privacy. Corporations constantly collect reams of data on most Americans with little oversight or limits. Few Americans realize just how encompassing, and potentially powerful, this data is, or how much companies can do with it.

We believe this needs to change, and change quickly. Every American has an inalienable right to own his or her personal data and control its use, and the government needs to set clear, enforceable and transparent rules for the collection, storage and use of personal data.

We call on Congress to pass legislation recognizing every American's clear legal rights to his or her personal data. Individuals deserve to have enforceable rights to remain anonymous when they go on-line, to live their lives without being monitored or tracked, to know what companies are collecting, and to opt out of tracking. Further, American citizens deserve the right to assert ownership of their data, including the right to have it corrected or deleted as they see fit.

Lastly, citizens deserve the right to know that any data they voluntarily agree to give to companies is protected. When companies decide to gather personal information, they assume responsibility for protecting that information, and should be subject to legal consequences when they do not.

IEEE-USA is ready to help Congress tackle this difficult challenge, including providing legislators with neutral experts on modern technology. Russell Harrison, Director of Government Relations in our Washington Office, can be reached at [r.t.harrison@ieee.org](mailto:r.t.harrison@ieee.org) or (202) 530-8326. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Thomas Coughlin  
2019 IEEE-USA President

**IEEE-USA** | 2001 L Street, N.W., Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20036-4928 USA

Office: +1 202 785 0017 | Fax: +1 202 785 0835 | E-mail: [ieeeusa@ieee.org](mailto:ieeeusa@ieee.org) | Web: <http://www.ieeeusa.org>