

CTIA Backs CISPA Amid Privacy Concerns

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CTIA is throwing its support behind a controversial cybersecurity bill set for a House vote this week.

The association says the Cyber Information Sharing and Protection Act, or CISPA, is needed to improve the security of wireless networks by allowing operators to voluntarily share information with the government without fear of legal reprisal.

The legislation "will promote robust and effective voluntary information sharing of cyber threat information between and among government and private sector partners," Jot Carpenter, CTIA vice president of government affairs, said in a Friday blog post.

"It will do this with appropriate privacy protections, as well as with the sort of immunity from lawsuits that will genuinely incent sharing of cyber threat information that will help our nation get ahead of the challenge," he said.

Privacy has become an increasingly important issue for the wireless industry as companies seek to use consumer information to improve and market their services.

But groups including the ACLU and the Electronic Frontier Foundation have expressed concern that the bill would be "devastating" to consumers' privacy rights.

At issue is a section of the bill that states "notwithstanding any other provision of law" a company is granted legal immunity to share information about potential security threats with the federal government. Opponents to the proposed law say CISPA's language is so broad it could nullify existing privacy laws.

"Keeping our computer systems secure is a real concern, but CISPA is absolutely the wrong answer," the ACLU said in a statement. "The bill would create a loophole in all existing privacy laws, allowing companies to share Internet users' data with the National Security Agency, part of the Department of Defense, and the biggest spy agency in the world—without any legal oversight."

CISPA has received broad bipartisan support and has 112 co-sponsors in Congress. It is set for a floor vote this week.

Michigan Republican Mike Rogers, the sponsor of the bill, last week attempted to appease concerns over the bill with new language allowing businesses to "minimize" the amount of personal information passed along to the government.

The changes did little to assuage consumer advocates, who continue to insist that the legislation will mark a major setback for privacy protections.

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Lawmakers hope to avoid similar public outcry to the January protests over two anti-piracy bills intended to fight theft of copyrighted content. The bills were eventually dropped amid [widespread opposition](#) [1] from the tech industry.

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