



Rita Gunther McGrath · Armstrong Hall, 2880 Broadway – 4th Floor · New York, NY 10025

February 17, 2019

Senator Floyd Prozansky
900 Court St. NE, H-471
Salem, Oregon 97301
Regarding: SB 703

Dear Senator Prozansky;

As a management scholar who studies business strategies and their evolution, I am writing to support the introduction and passage of SB 703.

The advance of digital technologies has outpaced the institutional and regulatory regimes designed to ensure an appropriate balance between citizens' privacy rights and the profit motivations of corporations. We now find ourselves in a situation in which the most personal, private and potentially consequential information we will ever possess – information about our health – is being bought and sold on open markets with very little oversight and astonishingly few checks on the purposes to which these data are being applied.

Data brokers, who make handsome profits from the commercial sale of healthcare data, claim that this data does not violate privacy laws because identifying data points, as prescribed in a decades old Federal law, are removed from each record. The easy, inexpensive and rapid combining of datasets renders this argument false. As long ago as 2009, Dr. Latanya Sweeney, was able to identify the personal medical records of then-Massachusetts Governor William Weld using only the anonymized medical records made available by the Massachusetts Group Insurance Commission and combining this information with readily available voter roll data. She was able to obtain every bit of his medical information, including diagnoses and prescriptions. She subsequently demonstrated that some 87 percent of Americans can be personally identified using only three bits of information: ZIP code, birthdate, and gender.

We are at an inflection point. If this bill does not pass, we are essentially permitting companies to ignore the 4th Amendment to the American constitution, which states "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated..." What could be more in violation than to have our most personal data up for sale by anyone with the funds to bid on it?

While this matter is of great importance and is critical today, my greatest concerns, lie with the future. Should we not act now, in the face of the exponential growth of personal data, collected from hundreds of sources, this challenge will only increase in severity. The inflection point I mention above is a wakeup call. A call to action. It is our duty as citizens to take action to protect our sacrosanct rights.

No one should have the right to profit from data taken from another person without their permission. Your bill makes it clear that such information is personal property and should be treated as such.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rita Gunther McGrath', written over a light blue horizontal line.