

**Testimony Submitted by
Chris Coughlin, Policy Director
Oregon Consumer Justice
To the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment**

February 8, 2024

Regarding: Support for SB 1596
Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Findley, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Chris Coughlin, and I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Oregon Consumer Justice in support of SB 1596.

Oregon Consumer Justice (OCJ) is a nonprofit consumer advocacy organization committed to advancing a justice movement that puts people first through policy, community engagement, and the law. We believe all should be free to thrive and equitably share in our abundance of resources. For too long, flawed systems and economic policies that favor profits over people have stood in the way of this reality, with communities of color most often experiencing the most significant harm. Strengthened through responsive and reciprocal community relationships, OCJ is building a future where financial and business transactions can be relied upon as safe and where all Oregonians know and have recourse to exercise their consumer rights.

Consumers should be able to economically and safely make repairs to items they own, either by themselves or by having options about where to take their items for repair without arbitrary barriers set up by the item's manufacturer.

SB 1596 will require manufacturers to make available replacement parts, software, physical tools, and any documentation or schematics needed for repair, including the materials they make available to their authorized repair providers or that they use to repair their products. The bill covers common household and consumer products, including phones, computers, and appliances. For an item to be covered

by SB 1596, it must have "digital electronics that are embedded within or attached to the product." Essentially, it has to have a computer chip.

Some companies are currently using their power in the marketplace to make things harder to repair, costing Oregonians money. Being able to fix phones, computers, and appliances rather than buying new ones will save the average Oregon household \$330 per year.¹ Moreover, this is an issue surveys have shown to be a concern of Oregonians, with 70% surveyed supporting the legislation requiring technology and equipment manufacturers to make parts, tools, and documents publicly available to allow consumers to repair their products.²

SB 1596 represents collected efforts and lessons learned from other states that have passed Right to Repair laws over the past 12 months to better preserve Oregonians' rights. Of specific note is the "parts pairing" section of the bill. This addition will prevent manufacturers from remotely causing the repaired device to experience a reduction in functionality if parts are swapped out as part of a repair. This inclusion would make Oregon's Right to Repair law the most comprehensive in the country.

The bill also limits covered devices, clarifies data security protection, expands intellectual property protections, and adds language requiring repair shops to notify consumers if they use parts not authorized by the manufacturer.

Right to Repair has broad support among Oregonians, with majority support across demographic, geographic, and even political lines that are often seen as dividing Oregonians.³

We urge your support of SB 1596 to give consumers the right to repair.

Thank you for your consideration and your service to Oregon's communities.

¹ <https://pirg.org/resources/repair-saves-families-big/>

² OVBC September–October 2023 Key Findings – This was an online survey which consisted of 1,489 Oregon residents ages 18+. A variety of quality control measures were employed. Further information may be provided upon request.

³ OVBC September–October 2023 Key Findings