

# California Right to Know Act - AB 1291 (Lowenthal)

## Protecting the Privacy, Personal Safety, and Financial Security of Californians

The Right to Know modernizes current privacy law (Cal. Civil Code 1798.83) to give Californians an effective tool to monitor how personal information about who they are, where they go, and what they do is being collected and disclosed by companies in unexpected and potentially harmful ways.

**The Right to Know Act works like this:** A Californian asks a company what personal information it has collected and shared about them with other companies. And the company answers.

The law does not limit or control company information collection, use, or sharing. It brings the big business of personal data collection and sharing out of the shadows. It makes sure that when Californians search online, shop in a store, or use an app, they know what's happening to their personal information and can take steps and make informed choices to better protect their privacy, personal safety, and financial security.

### It's Time to Modernize California Transparency Law for the Digital Age

In 2003, Californians were promised the right to know the "who, what, where, and when of how a business handles personal information." Fast forward a decade - exponential advances in technology and drastic changes in business practices have outpaced current law and it's failing to live up to its promise to protect Californians.

- Websites incorporate [up to 100 tracking tools](#) that collect personal information about age, gender, race, income, health concerns and recent purchases for ad and marketing companies.
- Many [mobile apps share](#) location, age, gender, phone numbers, and other personal details of both adults and children with third party companies.
- Facebook [apps](#) used by a "friend" could access religious, political, and sexual preferences.
- Data brokers buy, sell, and trade [personal information](#) from mobile phones, banks, social media, and stores.

### Privacy, Personal Safety, and Financial Security of Californians is Now at Risk:

Women and children have been [hurt or killed](#) when location data was shared with abusers. Target revealed that [a woman was pregnant](#) and Facebook [outed the sexual orientation of college students](#) before they told their families. Americans have [lost jobs](#) and been [denied mortgages](#) when data brokers shared incorrect information and scammers use data broker lists to target [vulnerable populations](#) like seniors.

### AB 1291 Makes Current California Transparency Law Work Better for Consumers and Companies

**AB 1291 will modernize current law's obsolete focus** on direct marketing (postal mail, email, telephone call) and cover modern types of sharing with online advertisers, data brokers, and third party applications.

**AB 1291 will update the definition of personal information** to include Californians' sensitive location information, personal or political associations, Internet and mobile activities and sexual orientation.

**AB 1291 will give Californians the right to know how their personal information** has been collected (rights Europeans already have) and shared.

**AB 1291 will simplify** compliance requirements, **reward** companies that take privacy-protective steps, and **create new flexibility** so companies can provide necessary information to Californians in cost-efficient and effective ways.

### Broad Political Support for the Right to Know

- The [White House](#), [Federal Trade Commission](#), and [California Attorney General](#) all call for data transparency and access for consumers. AB 1291 would meet that call by giving Californians the Right to Know.
- [82% of registered California voters](#) across demographic, regional and political spectrums are concerned about how their personal information is being collected by companies, and [69% of Americans](#) believe there should be a law giving them the right to know everything a website knows about them.

**It's time to modernize California privacy law to keep personal information safe.**

**It's time to pass the Right to Know Act.**

**AB 1291** is supported by diverse coalition of organizations and companies that work every day to safeguard the privacy, personal safety, and financial security of Californians



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*ACLU of California, California NOW, California Partnership to End Domestic Violence, California Public Interest Research Group (CalPIRG), Consumer Action, Consumer Federation of California, Consumer Watchdog, Electronic Frontier Foundation, Equality California, Gay-Straight Alliance Network (GSA), Patient Privacy Rights, Privacy Activism, Privacy Rights Clearinghouse, Privacy Times, SpiderOak Inc., World Privacy Forum, Youth + Tech + Health.*