

ConsumersUnion®

POLICY & ACTION FROM CONSUMER REPORTS

House Rules Committee
Chair, Representative Jennifer Williamson
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301

February 6, 2018

Re: HB 4155 (Williamson)—SUPPORT

Dear Representative Jackson,

Consumers Union, the advocacy division of Consumer Reports,ⁱ writes to strongly support HB 4155, which would provide Oregon residents with increased choice, security, and transparency over how internet service providers (ISPs) use the data they collect from their customers. The amended bill will also require ISPs conducting business in Oregon to adhere to net neutrality principles. Net neutrality is the basic principle that ISPs will treat all websites, apps, and other services on its networks equally. By establishing a net neutrality standard by which a state,ⁱⁱ a large consumer of telecommunication services, will award contracts to ISPs, consumers as a whole benefit from state and local governments stepping up to ensure an open internet. Consumers Union has long supported net neutrality rules that benefit consumers online, and opposed the Federal Communications Commission's recent repeal of its own net neutrality rules last December.ⁱⁱⁱ

Consumers depend on the internet for online banking, accessing employment and health information, social networking, driving directions, and myriad other tasks,^{iv} and they need sufficient protections for their online information and the assurance of a neutral web. Additionally, consumers desire the consumer protections this bill would provide. A recent Consumer Reports survey found that 92% of Americans think companies should get permission before sharing or selling users' online data, and 70% of Americans lack confidence that their personal information is private and secure. In addition, a majority of Americans support net neutrality rules to prevent ISPs from blocking or discriminating against lawful content on the internet: 57% of all Americans support the current net neutrality rules and 67% of all consumers disagree that providers should be able to choose which websites, apps, or streaming services customers can access.^v

Oregon residents need the protections that HB 4155 would provide. This bill would help protect Oregonians' privacy and security by requiring ISPs to protect the information with reasonable safeguards and obtain permission before sharing or selling individuals' personal information. In addition, this pro-consumer legislation would protect and support the internet as we know it, ensuring that consumers have access to an open marketplace where companies large and small compete on equal terms. For these reasons, Consumers Union is proud to support this measure.

Sincerely,
Consumers Union
1101 17th Street, NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20036

ⁱ Consumer Reports is the world's largest independent product-testing organization. It conducts its advocacy work in the areas of privacy, telecommunications, financial services, food and product safety, health care, and other areas. Using its dozens of labs, auto test center, and survey research department, the nonprofit organization rates thousands of products and services annually. Founded in 1936, Consumer Reports has over 7 million members of its magazine, website, and other publications.

ⁱⁱ We have supported other state actions on net neutrality, including in New York. *Consumers Union Praises State Action to Preserve Net Neutrality Rules*, CONSUMERS UNION (Jan. 24, 2018),

<https://consumersunion.org/news/consumers-union-praises-state-action-to-preserve-net-neutrality-rules/>.

ⁱⁱⁱ *FCC Repeal of Net Neutrality Rules a "Big Loss for Consumers"*, CONSUMERS UNION (Dec. 14, 2017),

<http://consumersunion.org/news/consumers-union-fcc-repeal-of-net-neutrality-rules-a-big-loss-for-consumers/>.

^{iv} Andrew Perrin & Maeve Duggan, *Americans' Internet Access: 2000-2015*, PEW RESEARCH CTR. (June 26, 2015), <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/06/26/americans-internet-access-2000-2015>.

^v James K. Wilcox, *Survey: Consumers Favor Strong Net Neutrality Rules*, CONSUMER REPORTS (Sept. 27, 2017), <https://www.consumerreports.org/net-neutrality/most-consumers-still-want-strong-net-neutrality-rules/?loginMethod=auto>.