

Parts Pairing and the Advancement of Right to Repair Legislation

This year has so far been a big year for the right to repair movement with more than 30 different laws proposed in the states to protect a consumer's right to repair the products they own.

[Colorado](#) and [Oregon](#) both signed comprehensive right to repair laws which are the first ones in the nation to prevent the pernicious practice of software pairing.

Parts pairing, which refers to a manufacturer's practice of using software to identify component parts through a unique identifier, is a relatively new threat infringing on a consumer's right to repair. Manufacturers use parts pairing to prevent access to repair or confuse the consumer about a third-party repair's efficacy. As consumers increasingly purchase products with a software component and those products are connected to the internet, the lack of clarity around repair rules can mean that these devices exist in a gray area where even after a consumer purchases a product, the manufacturer retains control and ownership of it.

This is why we have adapted our model legislation protecting the right to repair to address the practice of parts pairing. We have added language that prevents manufacturers from using parts pairing to reduce the functionality of replacement parts, and stops manufacturers from using misleading error messages to call a replacement part into question. New language around parts pairing also prevents manufacturers from using the practice to limit who can perform repairs by restricting their access to the software responsible for linking paired parts together.

Consumer Reports has worked with [Repair.org](#) in adapting its model legislation to continue to ensure that everyone can access repairs, even as more and more devices rely on software and connectivity to ensure correct functioning of repairs. We are excited to see Oregon's new law, and hope Colorado's governor signs the right to repair law that also prevents parts pairing.

We expect lawmakers to focus on parts pairing in future legislative sessions, and hope that our updated model legislation can help them serve their constituents more effectively as they tackle this important issue.