

Written Statement to the Senate Institutions Committee of the Vermont General Assembly in Support of Bill H.342

Testimony of:

Debbie Reynolds, "The Data Diva"

Global Data Privacy & Emerging Technology Expert

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Chairperson and Members of the Senate Institutions Committee of the
Vermont General Assembly,

My name is Debbie Reynolds, and I am an internationally recognized data privacy expert, technologist, and thought leader. I am the Founder & Data Privacy Officer of Debbie Reynolds Consulting, LLC, where I advise multinational corporations, governments, and organizations on global data privacy, emerging technologies, and regulatory standards.



Expert Credentials

1 U.S. Senate Speaker

A recent speaker addressing the U.S. Senate and staff, where I provided expert insights on data privacy and cyber risks affecting individuals and organizations.

2 IEEE Committee Chair

Chair of the Industry Connections, IEEE Cyber Security for Next Generation Connectivity Systems Committee, focusing on human control of data and data privacy.

3 IoT Advisory Board Member

One of 16 members of the U.S. Department of Commerce Internet of Things (IoT) Advisory Board, where I help provide advise on data privacy and technology standards.

4 Podcast Host

Host of the #1 award-winning global podcast "The Data Diva Talks Privacy," which has reached listeners in over 120 countries, providing thought leadership on critical data privacy and emerging technology issues.

5 Keynote Speaker

Keynote speaker at leading organizations, including TikTok, PayPal, Johnson & Johnson, S&P Global, and Uber, where I have shared expert insights on data privacy, cybersecurity, and regulatory compliance.

The New York Times

Forbes

Forbes.

Bloomberg

WIRED

**EHTD INEY
Business Insider.**

Professional Recognition

Global Recognition

With over two decades of experience, I have been recognized as one of the Top 8 Global Privacy Experts and a top 30 CyberRisk Communicator.

Media Presence

My insights have been featured in The New York Times, Forbes, Bloomberg, Wired, Business Insider, PBS, and USA Today.

Purpose of Testimony

I am here today to strongly support Vermont's Bill H.342, which is an essential step toward protecting public servants from the real and increasing dangers of data exploitation.

Why Vermont Bill H.342 Is Necessary

Inherent Risks

The role of public servants and the high availability of their personal data inherently places them at risk of harassment, threats, and violence. The availability of their home addresses, phone numbers, and other personal details through data brokers increases the likelihood of targeted attacks.

Stalking and Intimidation

Stalking and intimidation, which can put both public officials and their families in danger. (80% of stalking victims report being tracked using technology – SafeHome.org)

Doxxing

Doxxing, where malicious actors publicly expose personal details to encourage harassment or violence. (1 in 4 Americans have been affected by doxxing – Pew Research, 2023)

Swatting

Swatting, where false emergency reports lead to dangerous law enforcement encounters at a victim's home. (500+ swatting incidents were tracked by the FBI in 2023)

Real-World Cases of Harm



Daniel's Law

Daniel's Law in New Jersey (P.L. 2021, c.371 (A6171 2R CC) (njleg.gov)) was enacted after Judge Esther Salas' son, Daniel, was murdered by an attacker who used publicly available information to find their home.



Amy Boyer Case

In Amy Boyer Case (Remsburg v. Docusearch 149 N.H. 148, 816 A.2d 1001 (2003)) Amy Boyer was murdered by a stalker who obtained her personal information through a data broker. This case led to a landmark legal ruling in New Hampshire, establishing that data brokers have a legal duty to protect individuals whose information they sell.



FTC Actions

In December 2024, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) banned data brokers Gravy Analytics and Mobilewalla from collecting, using, and selling sensitive location data. These companies unlawfully tracked individuals to military bases, religious sites, and other sensitive locations, putting law enforcement personnel and other individuals at risk.

Vermont's Leadership in Data Privacy

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Pioneer in Regulation

Vermont was the first state in the U.S. to establish a Data Broker Registry in 2018, recognizing early on the risks associated with unregulated data collection and sale.



Building on Success

Bill H.342 builds upon Vermont's leadership in data privacy by further protecting individuals whose exposure to these practices poses an increased security risk.



Safety and Control

Vermont's Bill H.342 enables more safety and control ensuring that public servants can request the removal of their personal information from data broker databases.



Consistent Framework

The requirement that data brokers honor opt-out requests on behalf of public servants through H.342 is a logical and necessary extension of Vermont's existing framework to ensure consistency in protecting sensitive information and mitigate risks associated with the exposure of personal data.



Legal and Constitutional Justification



Not Protected Speech

The sale of personal data is not constitutionally protected speech. A New Jersey court rejected First Amendment challenges to Daniel's Law, setting a legal precedent.



Compelling Interest

Protecting public servants from targeted threats is a compelling government interest, aligning with constitutional principles that allow reasonable privacy protections.



State Precedents

States like Hawaii, Iowa, Missouri, Maryland, and New York, have passed similar legislation to protect data public servants, and this ability to exercise opt-out rights.

Impact on Businesses and Data Brokers



Narrow Scope

This bill only applies to a narrow group of individuals whose exposure poses clear risks of harm. This bill does not ban all data collection or sales.



Existing Regulation

The State of Vermont already regulates professions such as Private Investigative & Security Services, which gather similar types of personal information without causing financial harm to those businesses.



Financial Sector

Financial services organizations already operate under stricter data regulations, such as the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), without harming the economy.

Conclusion



Bill H.342 is a measured, necessary, and enforceable step to protect Vermont's public servants from preventable harm. It is built on proven legal precedent, aligns with best practices in data privacy, and ensures that Vermont remains a leader in protecting individuals from data exploitation.

Support of Vermont Bill H.342

I urge the Vermont Legislature to pass this bill and stand in defense of those who serve and protect Vermont communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Debbie Reynolds

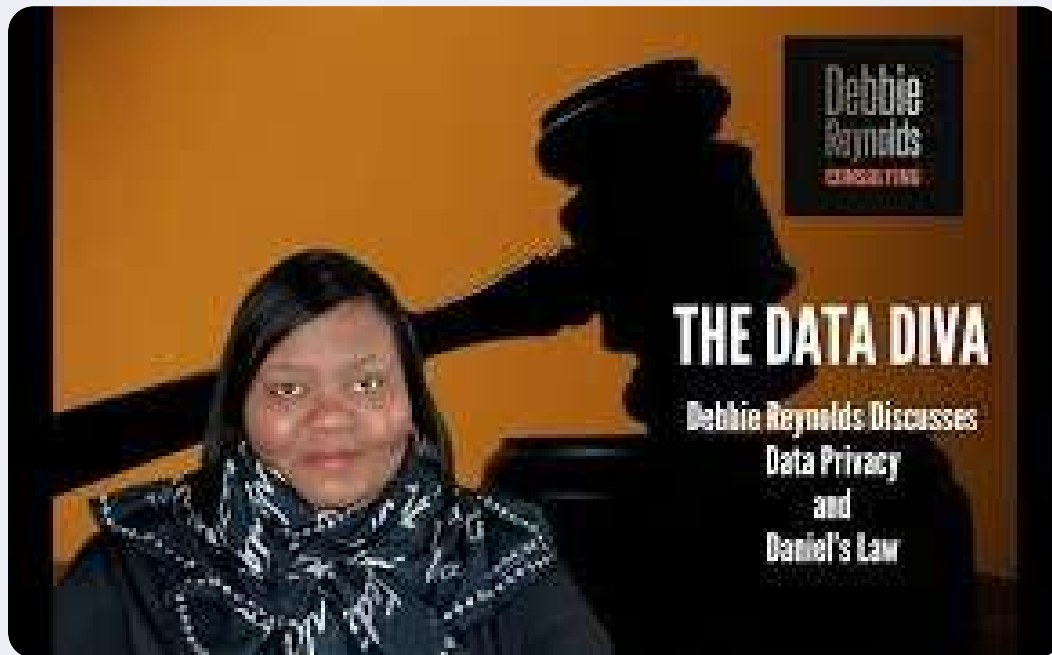
Global Data Privacy & Emerging Technology Expert

Founder & CEO, Debbie Reynolds Consulting, LLC

Debbie Reynolds



Supplementary Video Resources



Daniel's Law and the Fight for Data Privacy (4:39 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MGNFRecDI60>

Description: In this video, Debbie Reynolds, "The Data Diva," discusses Daniel's Law, a critical data privacy regulation enacted in New Jersey to protect judges, law enforcement officers, and public officials from targeted harassment and violence. The law was passed following the tragic murder of Judge Esther Salas' son, Daniel, after an attacker used publicly available information to find their home. Debbie highlights the legal challenges, enforcement efforts, and national implications of this law, as well as how other states, including Vermont, can adopt similar protections for public servants.



The Growing Risks of Data Brokers and Why Regulation Matters (3:19 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L326S4pyx9c>

Description: The video examines the constitutional challenges to Daniel's Law, focusing on First Amendment concerns and legal precedents surrounding restrictions on data brokers. It explains how courts have upheld such laws as a legitimate government interest in protecting public servants from targeted harm. This directly supports H.342, demonstrating that restricting the sale of sensitive personal data is both constitutional and necessary for public safety.

Contact

Debbie Reynolds, "The Data Diva"

Global Data Privacy & Emerging Technology Expert

Email: dr@debbiereynoldsconsulting.com

Website: www.debbiereynoldsconsulting.com

