

## Protecting Privacy Without Hurting Vermont's Economy

Vermont has an opportunity this legislative session to pass comprehensive data privacy legislation which strikes a responsible balance between protecting consumer data and ensuring businesses and nonprofits can continue to thrive. The introduction of a common-sense data privacy bill by Senator Thomas Chittenden, with bipartisan cosponsors including both the Senate Majority and Senate Minority Leaders, represents a thoughtful, regionally compatible approach—one that safeguards personal information while fostering economic stability.

Across New England, states have recognized the importance of enacting clear, practical data privacy standards. Vermont must follow suit, not with one-size-fits-all mandates that place undue burdens on small businesses and nonprofits, but with a model that is regionally aligned and grounded in common sense. S.93, introduced by Senator Chittenden reflects what has already been adopted in New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Connecticut—ensuring consumer data is limited to what is “adequate, relevant, and reasonably necessary” for the purposes disclosed. This approach is not only aligned with regional partners, but consistent with laws on the books in California and the European Union.

The ability of Vermont's businesses and nonprofits to connect with their customers is critical. Digital advertising, customer engagement tools, and loyalty programs are not luxuries; they are essential components of a modern economy. Vermont cannot afford to isolate itself with policies that hinder innovation, drive up compliance costs, and invite costly litigation. Instead, we must ensure that any new data privacy law provides clear definitions, reasonable guardrails, and protection against profit-driven lawsuits that benefit national special interests, not Vermont consumers.

Equally important, Vermont must recognize that economic competitiveness depends on regulatory consistency. Businesses operating across state lines should not have to navigate a patchwork of conflicting rules. By embracing a New England model, Vermont ensures that organizations—large and small—can remain competitive without unnecessary regulatory burdens that stifle growth.

The stakes are high. Between workforce shortages, rising costs, and economic uncertainty, Vermont businesses and nonprofits are already operating in a challenging environment. They need clarity, consistency, and policies that enable them to compete and succeed—not legislation that creates uncertainty and unnecessary obstacles.

Vermont's policymakers have a choice. They can adopt a practical, regionally consistent data privacy framework that protects consumers while supporting businesses and nonprofits, or they can risk making Vermont an outlier with policies that hurt the very organizations that drive our economy forward. The path forward is clear: lawmakers should rally behind the New England model and ensure Vermont's data privacy laws are built for

both security and success.

As this legislative session unfolds, we urge lawmakers to move swiftly and decisively. Vermont businesses and nonprofits deserve a seat at the table—and a data privacy framework that works for everyone.

Signed,

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**Austin Davis**, Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce

**Devon Green**, Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems

**Ed Fox**, Vermont Retail & Grocers Association

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