

Written Testimony of Turner Loesel
Before the Rhode Island House of Representatives Corporations Committee
February 11, 2025
Regarding H 5246

Chair Solomon and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding the Digital Electronics Right to Repair Act. I am Turner Loesel, a Technology Policy Analyst at the James Madison Institute. JMI is a free market think-tank based in Tallahassee, Florida.

While I commend the committee's dedication to improving repair accessibility, I must emphasize that this legislation as currently written, could have serious unintended consequences for consumer safety and device security. The proposed legislation risks undermining established consumer protections that have been meticulously developed over decades. The bill's current language overlooks two critical protections that are fundamental to consumer's needs:

First, parts pairing serves as a vital defense against counterfeit components, which pose significant risks to consumer safety. We have witnessed countless documented instances of counterfeit batteries causing substantial fires and device failures.¹ The parts pairing system serves as a crucial line of defense against similar counterfeit products being unwittingly installed onto our devices. Weakened parts authentication could enable the proliferation of substandard components that could compromise device functionality or pose safety risks. These concerns extend beyond individual devices to affect consumer confidence in product safety and reliability.

Second, this legislation is unnecessary given the market's reaction to repair accessibility concerns. Major manufacturers have already launched comprehensive self-repair initiatives that provide consumers with unprecedented access to repair resources including official repair documentation, genuine parts at competitive prices, specialized tools, and technical support.^{2,3}

¹Doudna, Bethany. 2024. "Counterfeit power tool batteries can cause unexpected damage." KTVF. <https://www.webcenterfairbanks.com/2024/06/13/counterfeit-power-tool-batteries-can-cause-unexpected-damage/>.

²Apple. 2024. "Apple to expand repair options with support for used genuine parts." Apple Newsroom. Available Online: <https://www.apple.com/newsroom/2024/04/apple-to-expand-repair-options-with-support-for-used-genuine-parts/>.

³Samsung. 2022. "Samsung Expands Customer-First Care Experience with New Self-Repair Program." Samsung Newsroom. Available Online: <https://news.samsung.com/us/samsung-self-repair-program-ifixit-customer-first-care-experience/>.

These programs have substantially reduced repair costs while maintaining crucial quality and safety standards. Furthermore, Rhode Island residents benefit from an extensive network of manufacturer-authorized repair providers employing reliable certified technicians. These established facilities employ highly-trained technicians who undergo rigorous certification processes to maintain exceptional repair quality.

The current market-driven approach successfully balances consumer choice with essential safety protections. Rather than impose regulations that could disrupt this ecosystem, I urge the committee to allow these market solutions to continue expanding access to safe, affordable repairs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.