

Testimony
Dustin Brighton, Government Relations
Representative Repair Done Right Coalition
Rhode Island House Corporations
Committee

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

Chair Solomon and members of the committee,

My name is Dusty Brighton, and I represent the Repair Done Right coalition.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in opposition to the current version of House Bill 5246.

The Repair Done Right coalition consists of companies, organizations, and people who care deeply about ensuring that innovative products are repaired and maintained in a safe, private, and authorized manner.

These companies assist in connecting consumers, businesses, and governments through products designed to assist in improving the lives of those who use them. The products and services which these companies manufacture are essential in ensuring that commerce and personal relationships remain intact.

The Repair Done Right coalition is opposed to the current

version of HB 5246 which would mandate original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) of digital electronic equipment to make tools, parts, and documentation available to third-party repair providers. The effects of this bill would lead to both physical safety risks and threats to the security and privacy of the people of Rhode Island.

- OEMs currently offer a wide range of safe, secure, and affordable repair options through their authorized networks and self-service repair offerings. Mandating that companies outsource their repair service to a third-party network prevents them from being able to fully stand behind their products' safety and security.
- A 2021 study done by researchers at University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada found that personal data from computers was accessed at least 50 percent of the time when taken to third-party repair shops. These violations disproportionately affected women, with female customers having their data accessed more often than their male counterparts. Concerningly, in some cases the customer's data was not only accessed, but copied onto another device.
- A 2024 white paper done by UL solutions found that 88 percent of aftermarket battery brands failed to

meet regional safety standards. In addition, 100% of batteries tested in North America failed to meet those safety standards. This trend of aftermarket batteries failing to meet safety requirements poses a significant threat to consumer safety, while also demonstrating that it is preferable for consumers to purchase repair equipment and services from the original manufacturer.

- Manufacturers should be able to ensure that their products are repaired by professionals whom they trust, and whom they know will go about the repair with safety and security as a top priority.
- In addition, inclusion of parts pairing language jeopardizes the possibility of remote repair and reduces the level of security in a product. Also, some OEM's would be at an advantage from a competition perspective. Any piece of legislation with regard to "right to repair" should be technology neutral.

Our members are dedicated to working with you to promote digital safety while rejecting unwarranted intervention which would put the cybersecurity of Rhode Island citizens at risk.

HB 5246 would prevent manufacturers from ensuring that the privacy, safety, and security of their customers is protected at all times.

Sources:

Battery Safety:

<https://www.ul.com/insights/safety-concerns-aftermarket-smartphone-lithium-batteries>

Security concerns/women being disproportionately affected:

<https://arstechnica.com/information-technology/2022/11/half-of-computer-repairs-result-in-snooping-of-sensitive-data-study-finds/#:~:text=Researchers%20at%20University%20of%20Guelph,data%20onto%20a%20personal%20device.>