

The Location Privacy Protection Act of 2015

Senator Al Franken

Location information reveals a wealth of sensitive information: where you live, where you drop your kids off at school, your place of worship, the doctors you visit. **Yet under the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, the companies that get this data are free to give or sell it to almost anyone.** This loophole is misused by popular companies – and abused by stalkers:

- At least 25,000 adults are victims of GPS stalking annually ([Wall Street Journal](#)). “Stalking apps” are freely available online and brazenly [market](#) themselves to stalkers.
- [Half](#) of top apps (including [kids apps](#) and dating apps like [Tinder](#)), top mobile [operating systems](#), and top device [makers](#) have all been found collecting or sharing user location data *without users’ affirmative consent*.
- Top car companies have disclosed their users’ movements to third parties without consent ([Nissan](#)). A [Ford](#) exec has said: “We know everyone who breaks the law, we know when you’re doing it. We have GPS in your car, so we know what you’re doing.” (Ford retracted the comments.)
- Separate GAO investigations found that [app companies](#) and [in-car navigation](#) companies gave users too little information about how their location information was used or shared.

The **Location Privacy Protection Act of 2015** fixes this outdated federal law to protect consumers and victims of stalking. The bill:

- (1) Requires that companies get individuals’ consent before collecting location data off of their smartphones, tablets, or in-car navigation devices, and before sharing it with others. *This rule doesn’t apply to parents tracking kids, emergencies, and similar scenarios;*
- (2) Stymies GPS stalking by preventing companies from collecting location data in secret;
- (3) Requires that *any* company that collects the location data of 1,000 or more devices publicly disclose the data they’re collecting, what they do with it, who they share it with, and how people can stop that collection or sharing.;
- (4) Bans the development, operation, and sale of GPS stalking apps – and allows law enforcement to seize the proceeds of those sales; and
- (5) Requires that the federal government gather more information about GPS stalking, facilitate reporting of GPS stalking, and prioritize training grants for law enforcement.

The bill is co-sponsored by Senators **Chris Coons** (D-Del.) and **Elizabeth Warren** (D-Mass.), **Richard Blumenthal** (D-Conn.), **Dick Durbin** (D-Ill.), **Dianne Feinstein** (D-Calif.), and **Ed Markey** (D-Mass.), and it has the support of the nation’s leading consumer and anti-domestic violence groups, including the **National Center for Victims of Crime**, the **National Network to End Domestic Violence**, the **National Women’s Law Center**, the **Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women**, **Consumer Action**, **Consumers Union**, the **National Association of Consumer Advocates**, the **National Consumers’ League**, and the **Online Trust Alliance**.