

Joint association statement on Bill C-11 to update federal privacy legislation

Privacy and data protection are critical in our modern economy where Canadians are constantly accessing digital services to support their work, connect with friends and family, engage in e-commerce, and access critical government services.

Cybersecurity risks are at an all time high and consumers deserve strong protections to ensure their personal data is safe. At the same time, companies of all sizes, across all sectors, require a flexible framework which aligns with international standards in order to innovate and reach customers in new markets.

To ensure that consumer data is adequately protected and that Canadian businesses remain competitive, it is imperative for the federal government to establish national standards. Bill C-11 provides an opportunity to modernize Canada's federal privacy legislation to achieve this goal.

We call on Parliament to prioritize Bill C-11 so this legislation can be debated, important amendments can be adopted, and it can continue to move forward.

It is important to note that while Bill C-11 retains Canada's largely principles-based and technology neutral approach to privacy, certain targeted amendments are required to ensure balance and avoid unintended consequences. These amendments will align Canada with international privacy laws and ensure Canadian companies can continue to succeed globally. It is vital that we get this right for the security of Canadians and for the future of our economy. We stand ready to work with Parliamentarians to ensure Canada has a robust privacy framework suited to the economy of the future.

A delay in Bill C-11 will encourage a patchwork of privacy frameworks across the country. This will harm both Canadians and businesses. Canadian businesses operating across provincial and global borders need a coherent and consistent set of rules so that they can operate in a predictable environment. Canadians need a clear and consistent set of rules so that they can understand exactly how their privacy and security is protected no matter where they live in Canada.

A patchwork of potentially incompatible rules in different provinces will create confusion for consumers and burdensome compliance for businesses. It could also provide an opportunity for malicious actors to exploit security gaps created by uneven privacy protection regimes, potentially exposing personal data to misuse. A harmonized approach would make it much simpler for consumers to understand how their information is used and protected and for businesses to comply.

Moving forward with amended legislation is also important to ensure we retain adequacy under the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The importance of this cannot be understated. This is critical for Canadian businesses to expand globally and remain competitive. This legislation is essential to ensuring a strong economic recovery from the pandemic.

We stand ready to work with all parliamentarians to improve and strengthen this important legislation to ensure the privacy rights of Canadians are secured and our businesses can innovate, harden their security against privacy breaches, and continue to grow.

