



**Computer & Communications  
Industry Association**  
Tech Advocacy Since 1972

February 29, 2016

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte  
Chairman, Judiciary Committee  
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable John Conyers  
Ranking Member, Judiciary Committee  
United States House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Goodlatte and Ranking Member Conyers:

The technology industry consistently cooperates with law enforcement in its important work to deter and investigate crimes and terrorism. Companies large and small comply with lawful and appropriately scoped legal orders, and devote significant resources to responsibly aiding government efforts to combat extremist and exploitative content.

The ongoing debate about the availability and use of encryption and other security technologies in digital devices and services often focuses on a narrowly defined trade-off between users' privacy and our collective security. That framing underrepresents other vital and legitimate equities at stake.

Our system of limited government is predicated on the principle that ends do not justify all means. While the government's goal is to obtain possibly important investigative information, it seeks to do so through methods that will undermine other goals that both the government and the public often consider to be of equal or greater importance, including personal safety, security, and freedom online.

The public has chosen to keep significant portions of their personal and financial lives in digital services and devices. But users worldwide also see the growing dangers of criminals, hackers, terrorists, and oppressive or intrusive regimes. As a result, they have demanded that the caretakers of their personal information develop the tools to stay a step ahead of those bad actors. Internet users are growing increasingly vigilant, but fundamentally the public must be able to trust that companies will do their part to keep sensitive data safe.

That trust, and more importantly, the aggregate personal well-being and security of the public, are risked when service providers and device manufacturers can be asked or compelled to weaken the digital security technologies that users demand. Safety, expression, and commerce online are all threatened by creating vulnerabilities desired by the same bad actors from whom the government seeks to protect us.

I recognize the government's desire to test the limits of the law in its efforts to prevent and investigate serious crimes. However, a fulsome consideration of the public interest makes clear



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that the government's efforts should not come at the expense of the rights and overall security of the public and digital ecosystem.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed Black". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ed Black  
President & CEO  
Computer & Communications Industry Association

Cc: House Judiciary Committee