



MONICA WALLACE
Assemblymember 143rd District
Erie County

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

CHAIR
Subcommittee on
Volunteer Emergency Services
COMMITTEES
Aging
Consumer Affairs and Protection
Energy
Local Governments
Veterans' Affairs

December 20, 2018

Assemblymember Michael DenDekker
75-35 31st Ave.
Suite 206B (2nd Floor)
East Elmhurst, NY 11370

Senator-elect Kevin Thomas
NYS Senate
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Assemblymember DenDekker and Senator-elect Thomas:

In light of recent reporting by the New York Times on egregious personal privacy infringements by tech companies like Facebook (article enclosed), I believe that the New York State Legislature must act by holding hearings and exploring regulations that will protect New Yorkers from harmful bad actors. As the incoming chairs of the Assembly and Senate Consumer Affairs committees, it is my sincere hope that you both will help facilitate these hearings and New York's response to aggressive privacy breaches and betrayal of trust.

For years, Facebook has cultivated partnerships with other tech companies based on the sharing of our personal data, and the data of our families, friends, and constituents. Indeed, the report by The Times highlights that Spotify, a music streaming company and one of Facebook's partners, has access to send, delete, and read the private messages of more than 70 million Facebook users each month. Facebook, and similar tech giants, have gone unchecked by governments around the world. This must stop, and New York must lead on this issue.

This is an area of concern for New Yorkers in every Assembly and Senate district across the state. As you may recall, I introduced legislation (a.7191 of 2017) which would give New Yorkers control over whether their personal data may be disclosed and shared by internet service providers (ISPs). It would require ISPs to obtain the express consent of each customer prior to disclosing any personally identifiable information of that customer. The bill would also prohibit ISPs from denying service to customers who do not give consent to disclosure. Although this bill gained strong bipartisan support and passed the Assembly overwhelmingly, it died in the state Senate. I intend to reintroduce this legislation, and I look forward to working with each of you to advance this bill to the governor.

While I firmly believe my bill is a step in the right direction, New Yorkers count on us to protect their private information from misuse by not only ISPs, but from companies like Facebook, Google, Amazon, Microsoft, Apple, and many others which have an unprecedented breath of information about their users. I believe we must hear from industry experts, tech companies, and everyday New Yorkers in a public setting as we work toward safeguarding personal data in the 21st Century.

I look forward to hearing each of your thoughts on how New York can protect its residents' personal information.

Sincerely,

Monica Wallace