

US lawmaker unveils Internet, finance privacy bills

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A man surfing the web at an internet cafe. Cheered on by civil liberties advocates and consumer groups, a US lawmaker introduced legislation Friday to help safeguard Internet users' privacy and rein in dissemination of personal financial data.

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"These two bills send a clear message -- [privacy](#) over profit," Democratic Representative Jackie Speier said as she unveiled the Do Not Track Me Online Act and the Financial Information Privacy Act of 2011.

"Consumers have a right to determine what if any of their information is

shared with big corporations and the [federal government](#) must have the authority and tools to enforce reasonable protections," she said.

The first bill would direct the US [Federal Trade Commission](#) to develop a mechanism for consumers to be able to opt out of having their online activity tracked, stored, or shared and require companies to abide by that decision.

The [American Civil Liberties Union](#) hailed the legislation, with legislative counsel Christopher Calabrese saying: "Signing on to the Internet shouldn't mean signing away your privacy."

"It's crucial that Americans have as much control over their online privacy as possible and this bill is a welcome and important first step toward that goal," Calabrese said in a statement.

The second bill aimed to give consumers more control over whether and how [financial institutions](#) share or sell personal, non-public information.

It would enable people to opt out of such sharing between a parent company and an affiliate, and require that consumers explicitly opt-in to allow a firm to share such information with an unaffiliated third party.

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