

# US lawmakers roll back privacy rules for internet carriers

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US lawmakers voted Tuesday to roll back rules that would block internet service providers from selling user data to third parties, following a heated debate over privacy protections.

The House of Representatives voted 215-205 to overturn the Federal Communications Commission rule, following last week's 50-48 vote in the Senate.

The move followed a fierce debate over digital [privacy protections](#) over the rule that would have required service providers to get permission before selling customer data to third parties.

Some activists say the latest vote frees major providers like Comcast and Verizon to sell sensitive private data for targeted advertising; others contend these firms will now be able to compete on an equal footing with internet giants like Google and Facebook for online marketing.

The rule was passed last year by the US regulator with a majority of Democrats appointed by former president Barack Obama, a scenario that has been reversed with the election of President Donald Trump.

Dallas Harris of the consumer group Public Knowledge said lawmakers "voted to strip Americans of the strongest online privacy protections to date" and added that "there will be no effective federal cop on the beat to proactively protect consumer information."

Democratic House leader Nancy Pelosi opposed the measure, saying "Americans shouldn't have to give up every shred of privacy when they go online."

During floor debate, she said "Republicans want this (private) information to be sold without your permission."

Others said the rule passed last year imposed unnecessary regulations on carriers that already must comply with laws on consumer [protection](#) and deceptive practices.

Republican Representative Greg Walden said the bill would roll back "short-sighted rules that only apply to only one part of the internet," and exempt the big online firms like Google and Facebook.

The White House said it supported the move, saying "the [rule](#) departs from the technology-neutral framework for online privacy" by creating "very different regulatory regimes based on the identity of the online actor."

Ajit Pai, the Trump-appointed Federal Communications Commission chairman, said existing privacy protections would remain in place.

"Moving forward, I want the American people to know that the FCC will work with the FTC to ensure that consumers' online [privacy](#) is protected though a consistent and comprehensive framework," Pai said in a statement.

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