

Backers of data privacy measure submit signatures for ballot

3 May 2018, by Sophia Bollag

Supporters of a California initiative aimed at giving consumers more control over their personal data say they have collected enough signatures to qualify for the November ballot.

Proponents of the measure, which would allow consumers to bar companies from selling their [personal information](#), said Thursday they have submitted 625,000 signatures. If the secretary of state certifies that enough of the signatures are valid, the initiative will go before voters in November. Google, AT&T and other tech giants are funding an opposition campaign to quash the measure.

It would require companies to tell users what types of personal information they collect and whether they've sold it. It would also let consumers sue companies for [security breaches](#), even if the consumer can't prove they were harmed as a result.

Supporters say social media companies and others that collect and sell data can easily stop doing so and still make money selling advertisements and charging [consumers](#) to use their products.

"People really want to be able to do something to take control over their personal information," Alastair Mactaggart said, a San Francisco housing developer funding the initiative. "It's entirely feasible, and it's very low-tech."

Facebook gave \$200,000 to the opposition effort before it said it will stop contributing money. Its announcement came amid mounting backlash after news broke that Cambridge Analytica, a Republican-linked consulting firm, had collected data from millions of Facebook users.

Opponents argue the measure would create different standards for companies in California and could limit residents' choices.

"It is unworkable, requiring the internet and businesses in California to operate differently than the rest of the world—limiting our choices, hurting our businesses, and cutting our connection to the global economy," leaders of the opposition campaign said in a statement. "This will open the floodgates for abusive, costly lawsuits."

The initiative wouldn't deter businesses from selling products to California residents, Mactaggart said. Many industries, such as the auto industry, have to comply with different regulations in different states, he said.

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