[Today's date]

The Honorable [Sen./Rep.] [name]
[Senator/Representative] of [state/congressional district]
[address]

Dear [Sen./Rep.] [name],

I write to respectfully request that you consider introducing, sponsoring, or cosponsoring a revised version of the DATA Privacy Act (introduced by Sen. Cortez Masto in the 116th United States Congress), which you can find at the website, projectforprivacy.org/petition/dataprivacy.pdf. Please feel free to adapt or revise the act as you see fit.

In the age of the internet, we have not yet fully developed norms, regulations, or laws for data privacy online. Before the internet, a company from Menlo Park, California would not normally know the "**location, generation, education level, 'ethnic affinity,' property size, and relationship status**" (as well as ninety-two other data points[1]) of millions of individuals from Texas, or New York, or anywhere else in the United States. Now, in the internet age, these **users are unable to defend themselves** against encroachments upon their privacy. Facebook[2], Google[3], Twitter[4], Amazon[5], Apple[6], and other "big tech" giants all employ tracking schemes to find information about individuals that use their services, and subsequently use that information for profit. Especially since at least some of **these companies are considered "monopolies"** by the United States government, their consistent growth only leads to exponential profit margins. This creates a new incentive for these entities to encroach further into the private business of unknowing Americans.

The companies in question will go to any lengths to make a profit. For example, Facebook's "social plugins" - "like" and "share" buttons - that can be embedded in any website give them access to the data of anyone who visits those websites - even if those individuals don't have an account with the service. Eventually, without further regulation, Facebook will have data on everyone in America.

There are two reasons that the **collection of this data is dangerous.**

The first is **targeted advertising**. Targeted advertising is any advertising promoted by an entity that directly targets a user or non-user by specifically using collected data, regardless of what entity is performing the targeting or whether the individual gave the data to the entity directly. There are three ways that advertisers can utilize in order to target users on Facebook[7]: by monitoring their activity on the social network, by digitally following them outside of Facebook itself, and through Facebook's dynamic ads, which shows a user the most relevant of the company's ads to their interests without the advertiser having to select a target audience.

[1]https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2016/08/19/98-personal-data-points-that-facebook-uses-to-target-ads-to-you/
[2]https://privacyspy.org/product/facebook/
[3]https://privacyspy.org/product/google/
[4]https://privacyspy.org/product/twitter/
[5]https://privacyspy.org/product/amazon/
[6]https://gizmodo.com/apples-ad-practices-are-the-latest-target-for-privacy-a-1845691038
[7]https://www.cbsnews.com/news/how-do-facebook-ads-target-you/

Targeted advertising directly leads to the spread of misinformation online, which is **dangerous for democracy.**[8]

The second is a potential **data breach**. While you still may not consider companies like Facebook or Google having users' personal information dangerous, a potential large-scale data breach that could cause a dangerous third party to gain access to the personal information of American citizens is a threat to national security. In fact, a large data breach involving Facebook users has already occurred: in August 2019, more than 540 million records about Facebook users were publicly exposed on Amazon's cloud computing service, according to a cybersecurity research firm.[9]

What's more, the **constant need for profit at all costs,** enabled by data mining and misuse, has led to a crackdown on workers who would choose to oppose misleading or invasive privacy policies. For instance, a labor agency says that Google illegally fired and spied on workers who tried to organize a labor union to oppose the company's policies.[10]

The American people are losing their freedoms to these companies due to the lack of federal oversight or regulation of data and targeted advertising practices. Before long, the American people will lose not only our freedoms, but America itself as well.

It shouldn't be a partisan issue to protect the privacy and safety of the American people. It's time to implement greater regulations on big tech before it's too late.

[Signed/Sincerely],
[Your name]

[8]https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/05/targeted-ads-fake-news-clickbait-surveillance-capitalism-data-mining-democracy
[9]https://www.cbsnews.com/news/millions-facebook-user-records-exposed-amazon-cloud-server/
[10]https://www.npr.org/2020/12/03/941860802/google-illegally-fired-and-spied-on-workers-who-tried-to-organize-labor-agency-s