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Eggman Introduces Legislation to Create a “Right to Repair” for Electronics

SACRAMENTO—Assemblymember Susan Talamantes Eggman (D-Stockton) has announced that she will be introducing the California Right to Repair Act. The legislation would require manufacturers of electronics to make diagnostic and repair information, as well as equipment or service parts, available to product owners and to independent repair shops.

“The Right to Repair Act will provide consumers with the freedom to have their electronic products and appliances fixed by a repair shop or service provider of their choice, a practice that was taken for granted a generation ago but is now becoming increasingly rare in a world of planned obsolescence,” Eggman said.

People who can’t afford the high price of manufacturer-based repair services are increasingly forced to prematurely replace durable goods, such as phones, TVs, and appliances. Repairing and reusing electronics is not only a more efficient use of the scarce materials that go into manufacturing the products, but it can also stimulate local economies instead of unsustainable overseas factories.

“People shouldn’t be forced to ‘upgrade’ to the newest model every time a replaceable part on their smartphone or home appliance breaks,” said Mark Murray, Executive Director of Californians Against Waste. “These companies are profiting at the expense of our environment and our pocketbooks as we become a throw-away society that discards over 6 million tons of electronics every year.”

"The bill is critical to protect independent repair shops and a competitive market for repair, which means better service and lower prices. It also helps preserve the right of individual device owners to understand and fix their own property," Kit Walsh, Senior Staff Attorney with the Electronic Frontier Foundation said. "We should encourage people to take things apart and learn from them. After all, that's how many of today's most successful innovators got started."

"Consumers Union thanks Assemblymember Eggman for her efforts to ensure consumers have the choice to fix their own electronic devices or have them fixed by an independent repair servicer", said Maureen Mahoney, Policy Analyst for Consumers Union. "Consumers are now being forced to go back to the manufacturer for even simple repairs or refurbishing, or to throw out the device and buy a new one. We look forward to working with Assemblymember Eggman to secure this important ownership right for consumers."

"We should be working to reduce needless waste – repairing things that still have life -- but companies use their power to make things harder to repair. Repair should be the easier, more affordable choice and it can be, but first we need to fix our laws," said Emily Rusch, Executive Director of CALPIRG. "Our recent survey, Recharge Repair, showed a surge in interest in additional repair options after Apple announced battery issues. The Right to Repair Act would give people those options."

California joins 17 other states who have introduced similar legislation, which includes: Washington, Massachusetts, Vermont, New York, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Virginia.

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