



February 19, 2020

The Honorable Delores G. Kelley, Chair
Senate Finance Committee Members
3 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB443, Security Features for Connected Devices—SUPPORT

Dear Chair Kelley and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for considering SB443, which would mandate security features for connected devices.

Common Sense is a national organization representing kids, parents, and educators that is dedicated to helping kids and families thrive online and on social media. We are particularly concerned with the spread of insecure and unsafe connected devices and toys sold to kids and families across the country.

While Maryland has existing data security protections as part of its data breach notification rules, these rules apply only to certain categories of personal information whose unauthorized disclosure would trigger a breach notification. Specifically, existing law applies to an individual's first name or first initial and last name in combination with one of six data elements like Social Security numbers or driver's license number. In other words, the vast majority of data exhaust created by devices and so-called "Internet of Things" devices is not protected under the law.

The threat is acute. In 2017, the FBI warned that smart toys threaten children's privacy and put them at risk for child identity theft and inappropriate contacts. Last Christmas, hackers used Ring surveillance cameras to look into and listen inside homes and even talk with children.

Many of the most popular connected products target families. For instance, 800,000 Spiral Toys & Cloud Pets were compromised, alongside 2 million voice recordings of families. A so-called smart toaster was hacked within minutes of being installed. Thousands of ordinary devices in American homes made into a botnet to attack parts of the internet. The German government declared the "My Friend Cayla" doll unsafe due to security lapses.

SB443 begins to address this by requiring manufacturers to equip their devices with reasonable security features appropriate to the nature of the device. This simple standard will protect families in Maryland from manufacturers who continue to cut corners on basic security features for smart connected products. Requiring "reasonable security standards" is a flexible standard that allows



companies to tailor their security features and protections in a fashion that will best help consumers and families of connected products.

works to protect Maryland families from security and privacy harms caused by connected devices that are unregulated and unsafe by requiring manufacturers to equip their devices with reasonable security features appropriate to the nature of the device. This simple standard will protect families in Maryland from manufacturers who continue to cut corners on basic security features for smart connected products.

Self-regulation and best practices have been insufficient to improve the security of connected devices. Legislation is needed, and SB443 is a positive first step. Common Sense is eager to work with members of this committee to advance this bill, and please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions to 563.940.3296 or via email at tjerome@commonsense.org

Sincerely,
Joseph Jerome
Multistate Policy Director