

**Statement of Support For Senate Bill 412**  
**Consumer Protection - Right to Repair**  
**Finance Committee**  
**February 1, 2021**

I am writing this statement of support for Senate Bill 412 as a consumer of both digital electronic equipment and of independent repair services. Ensuring that independent repair service providers have access to the documentation, parts, tools, and updates required to perform maintenance and repairs is essential for a consumer such as myself having access to a healthy competitive market of duly qualified professionals when I desire the services of an independent repair provider.

Industry groups and large corporations may argue that restricting access to these materials, parts, and documentation is required to ensure the quality of the product. I believe that consumers such as myself are well protected without these limits on repair providers. In 2006 I broke the screen on my smartphone because I had left it in my back pocket when I went to an outdoor "go-kart" track in Baltimore. I was able to get my screen repaired to my level of satisfaction because I could take it to an independent repair provider who was able to apply a replacement part for far less cost than the original manufacturer would have done so for. I am able to perform my own due diligence as a consumer to compare the service offerings of multiple repair providers, including independent and original equipment manufacturers.

Just last week, my wife expressed frustration that the battery on her iPhone SE (the older model) was not holding a charge. Without the consumer protections in this bill, our options for replacing the battery (and not being without a phone for weeks) all include visiting an Apple store in person. With the pandemic and the impacts of COVID-19, the ability to keep our business with local trusted professionals is more important than ever. We will not want to risk going into a store during this time, so are probably going to pay the extra money to buy a new phone, just because the battery is dying in the old one. I wish we didn't have to make a decision like this, just because local repair shops are not given the access to the tools they need to perform repairs of our electronics. Without a doubt, if we were able to take the iPhone to a local store, we would be able to replace the battery more safely, with less expense, and would support and build a relationship with a local small business.

The pandemic has thrust the importance of consumer electronics into sharp focus this last year. More families depend on laptops, cell phones, and data plans, just to get their kids to school and to provide income and support at home. We need Maryland to be a leader in protecting our rights as consumers by ensuring independent repair professionals have access to the tools and documentation needed to even offer these services.

When I was still in high school, I lived on a street in Catonsville, Maryland which was also home to an independent repair provider who specialized in fixing TVs, VCRs, and electronics. The simple existence of this business allowed me to grow my own interest in technology,

build a relationship with a local business, and even perform some part time work. This business was trusted by myself and many of my friends and family over the years to repair laptops, remove viruses, and backup personal files safely and reliably. I urge the committee to support this bill and maintain the broad scope to which it applies, and not allow amendments to limit the scope, nor restrict the applicability, nor burden the independent repair provider with any special requirements.

This bill is good for consumer and independent local business. It is about competition, cost, and quality of services. I urge your favorable report for SB 412. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Maxwell Bloch  
615 Southmont Road Catonsville, MD 21228  
(240)-242-5624  
maxwellb@gmail.com