

Emerson Levy
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
House District 53



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Testimony in Support of HB 3127

March 9, 2023

Chair Grayber, Vice-chairs Tran and Lewis,

For the record my name is Emerson Levy, State Representative for House District 53.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB 3127, and thanks to Rep. Bowman and Sen. Knopp for their leadership on this legislation.

This important legislation follows state and federal concerns of cyber security of certain mobile based applications that ownership is either state owned, partially owned or the government asserts substantial power over the company data assets. There is a disturbing trend of the Chinese Communist Party buying a 1% share in these technology companies, which has been dubbed a “golden ticket.”

This potentially gives governments access to personal data. Data is power and it’s important that any mobile based application meets all the security expectations set forth by the Chief Information Officer (“CIO”), we believe empowering the CIO allows for flexibility to respond to the ever changing world of mobile based applications and cyber security. Cyber security is not static.

This is a broad bipartisan policy: Nancy Pelosi, Joe Biden, and Mitch McConnell all support this security measure. This legislation is narrow, applying to only a handful of state mobile devices, however, it is important to step back and look at the global picture of social media and the ways that it can influence democratic institutions. For example, in the Philippines, the Marcos regime was able to come back to power recently, largely due to the influence of Tik Tok, where the regime used the app to rebrand brutality, high debt and corruption, as the golden years of the Philippines.

We can all agree that without data privacy and blurred lines between business and state, these companies pose serious threats to our state and to our nation. It is the job of the Legislature to put in sideboards to protect democracy, even in small ways.

Thank you, I am happy to answer any questions and urge your support.

