

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **U.S. Senate Bill Would Stop Companies from Violating Children's Privacy**

U.S. Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Ted Stevens (R-AK) introduced legislation today to prohibit corporations from selling the personal information of children below 16 years of age for commercial marketing purposes, without parental consent.

Commercial listbrokers have targeted our nation's children. They actually sell lists of the names and personal information of children as young as two years of age. For example, the Student Marketing Group sells a list of "Preschool children between the ages of 2 and 5," its website boasts. "Each record includes the child's full name, address, and age" and can include other information, such as gender and telephone number ([www.studentmarketing.net/dataserv.htm](http://www.studentmarketing.net/dataserv.htm)). American Student List sells a list of "Over 20 million students ranging in age from 2-13," ([www.studentlist.com/products/index.shtml](http://www.studentlist.com/products/index.shtml)) according to its website.

"The sale of children's personal information by listbrokers is despicable and dangerous," said Gary Ruskin, executive director of Commercial Alert. "Children's names and personal information should not be for sale."

"Children are naturally more trusting than adults, and that trust is often easy to exploit," Ruskin said. "This bill restores to parents the ability to protect the privacy of their own children, especially from sleazy corporate marketers and child predators."

Text of the legislation is available at: <http://www.commercialalert.org/kidsprivacy.pdf>.

The listbroker privacy bill is a part of the Parents' Bill of Rights, a package of legislation to help parents combat the commercial influences that prey upon their children and that promote products and values of which parents do not approve. The nine provisions of the Parents' Bill of Rights ([www.commercialalert.org/pbor.pdf](http://www.commercialalert.org/pbor.pdf)) would help right the balance between parents and the commercial culture and would enable parents to reduce the role of the latter in their children's lives if they so choose.

Another provision in the Parent's Bill of Rights, to require fast food restaurant chains to disclose calorie and nutritional contents of their food, was introduced last November in the U.S. House of Representatives by Rep. Rosa DeLauro (H.R. 3444), and this February in the U.S. Senate by Senator Tom Harkin (S. 2108).

Commercial Alert is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to keep the commercial culture within its proper sphere, and to prevent it from exploiting children and subverting the higher values of family, community, environmental integrity and democracy.

Commercial Alert has more than 2000 members, representing all 50 states and the District of Columbia. For more information, visit our website at <http://www.commercialalert.org>.