

Google Urged to Stop Tracking Location Data Ahead of Roe Reversal | WIRED

By Jon Brookin, Ars Technica

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More than 40 Democratic members of Congress called on Google to stop collecting and retaining customer location data that prosecutors could use to identify women who obtain abortions.

“[W]e are concerned that, in a world in which abortion could be made illegal, Google’s current practice of collecting and retaining extensive records of cell phone location data will allow it to become a tool for far-right extremists looking to crack down on people seeking reproductive health care. That’s because Google stores historical location information about hundreds of millions of smartphone users, which it routinely shares with government agencies,” Democrats wrote Tuesday in a letter led by Senator Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-Calif.). The letter was sent to Google CEO Sundar Pichai.

Specifically, Google should stop collecting “unnecessary customer location data” or “any non-aggregate location data about individual customers, whether in identifiable or anonymized form. Google cannot allow its online advertising-focused digital infrastructure to be weaponized against women,” lawmakers wrote. They also told Google that people who use iPhones “have greater privacy from government surveillance of their movements than the tens of millions Americans using Android devices.”

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