



# DATA BROKER HARMS TO PUBLIC OFFICIALS

## SUMMARY

**Data brokers build extensive dossiers of information on Americans, including law enforcement officers, judges, and other public officials.**

Personal data is collected as we browse the internet and use online services. Companies sell that information to **data brokers, who compile and resell records containing personal information** like home address, names of close relatives, phone numbers, and location data.

By selling this information, data brokers inadvertently provide tools to locate and track public officials, **creating severe safety threats.**

## Violence against public officials and their families is on the rise.

**July 2020:** Daniel Anderl, son of U.S. District Court Judge Esther Salas, was murdered at home.

**October 2022:** Paul Pelosi, husband of then House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, was attacked.

**February 2023:** New Jersey Councilwoman Eunice Dwumfour was murdered.

**October 2023:** Maryland Judge Andrew Wilkinson was murdered.

## CURRENT PROTECTIONS

In response to recent violence against public officials and their families, Congress and six states have passed laws to protect the personal information of public officials, including home addresses, personal contact information, social security numbers, bank account details, and identities of family members. However, these laws do not protect all public officials.

## STRONGER DATA BROKER RULES ARE NECESSARY

Data brokers enable violence against public officials and their families. **At both the federal and state level, stronger rules and legislation are necessary** to provide guardrails around data brokers' collection and sale of personal information to help prevent harm to public officials.

Minimizing the data that brokers amass and sell would help to protect public officials who are not covered by the federal and state laws already on the books.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND A PLAIN TEXT VERSION:**

<https://epic.org/documents/data-broker-harms-to-public-officials/>

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## RELEVANT LEGISLATION



### UNITED STATES: **THE DANIEL ANDERL JUDICIAL SECURITY AND PRIVACY ACT**

Protects current, senior, recalled, and retired Federal judges.



### NEW JERSEY: **DANIEL'S LAW**

Protects judges, law enforcement officers; active, formerly active, and retired judicial officers; prosecutors; and their family members.



### MARYLAND: **JUDGE ANDREW F. WILKINSON JUDICIAL SECURITY ACT**

Protects current and retired state and federal judges, magistrates, court commissioners, and their spouses, children, and dependents.



### MINNESOTA: **HF 5216**

Protects active, senior, and retired judges, Minnesota Supreme Court justices, Minnesota judicial branch employees, and judicial referees.



### WISCONSIN: **WISCONSIN JUDICIAL PRIVACY ACT**

Protects current and former Supreme Court justices; current and former court of appeals, circuit court, and municipal judges; current and former circuit court commissioners; and their immediate family.



### GEORGIA: **SB 508**

Protects elected and appointed state, county, or municipal judges or justices; federal judges or justices; and their spouses.



### HAWAII: **HB 1916**

Protects Governor, lieutenant governor, administrative director, any department head; members of the legislature; active, formerly active, or retired state and federal justices and judges, administrative directors of courts, deputy administrative directors of courts, election employees and volunteers, appointed public officials, and their families.

## WORKS CITED

1. CFPB Proposes Rule to Stop Data Brokers from Selling Sensitive Personal Data to Scammers, Stalkers, and Spies, CFPB (Dec. 3, 2024), <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/newsroom/cfpb-proposes-rule-to-stop-data-brokers-from-selling-sensitive-personal-data-to-scammers-stalkers-and-spies>.
2. Alonzo Martinez, Protecting Public Officials: Impact of Judicial Privacy Laws on Background Checks, Forbes (May 31, 2024), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/alonzomartinez/2024/05/31/protecting-public-officials-impact-of-judicial-privacy-laws-on-background-checks/>.
3. Justin Sherman, Data Brokers and Threats to Government Employees, Lawfare (Oct. 22, 2024), <https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/data-brokers-and-threats-to-government-employees>.