

**Remarks of Senator Patrick Leahy  
Consumer Electronics Association Digital Patriots Dinner  
J.W. Marriott Hotel, Washington, DC  
April 2, 2008**

Thank you, Gary. Gary Shapiro has done a terrific job in recent years as the President of the Consumer Electronics Association. I also want to thank CEA's Senior Vice President, Michael Petricone, who has helped navigate me through the outstanding Consumer Electronics Show.

I am honored to receive CEA's 2008 Digital Patriots Award and to join two other Digital Patriots -- Congressman Tom Davis and Verizon Chairman and CEO Ivan Seidenberg.

As a champion for American innovation, CEA has transformed the digital world by encouraging innovation that protects the rights and interests of American consumers, and has helped to make the United States stand as a world leader in promoting innovation, creativity and ingenuity around the globe.

Growing up in Vermont, my father, who was a printer, taught me the importance of the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of expression. Technology is an essential tool to help guarantee freedom of expression in the Digital Age.

One of CEA's many important contributions to our digital society is its leadership in promoting open and instant access to information for all of the world's citizens. Today, thanks to the many innovative electronic devices championed by CEA, anyone can become an inventor, or a blogger, or a podcaster.

I know all too well how access to technology can protect the rights and freedoms of American consumers. Earlier this year, the Judiciary Committee passed meaningful data privacy legislation that promotes the use of technology to secure American's most sensitive electronic data.

Recent data breaches, including those in Federal agencies, have proven that Congress must act on this important legislation quickly.

As a consumer, I also very much appreciate CEA's efforts to enhance user rights, innovation, interoperability, open standards, trade and market access for consumer electronic products.

I, like probably everyone in this room tonight, appreciate that pro-consumer, pro-innovation policies will help ensure the full benefit of our technological creativity. So, thank you again for what you do and thank for this recognition.

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