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## **Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile and Sprint Suspend Selling of Customer Location Data**

Verizon, AT&T and Sprint will no longer share its customers' location information with several third-party companies who failed to handle the data appropriately, the companies said Tuesday. The move to cut off access follows an investigation by Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) into the commercial relationships between Verizon; a pair of obscure data vendors, LocationSmart and Zumigo; and those companies' corporate customers. Wyden's investigation found that one of Verizon's indirect corporate customers, a prison phone company called Securus, had used Verizon's customer location data in a system that effectively let correctional officers spy on millions of Americans. In a letter to the Federal Communications Commission last month highlighting the probe, Wyden said prison officials using Securus's surveillance system could obtain real-time location data on Americans with little more than a "pinky promise" of propriety, leading to "activities wholly unrelated" to prison management. To gain access to the data, prison officers simply visited an online portal and uploaded an "official document" showing they had permission to access the information. But, Wyden told the FCC, senior Securus officials admitted that the company did not review the requests for information or require that supporting documents reflect the decision of a judge or other legal authority. Verizon filed a letter Tuesday saying that it is suspending its data-sharing agreement with LocationSmart and Zumigo until further notice. It will also refrain from signing new data-sharing contracts with third parties. AT&T then said in a statement Tuesday that it also will be ending

its relationship with location data aggregators "as soon as practical" while ensuring that location-based services that depend on data sharing, such as emergency roadside assistance, can continue to function. Sprint said in a statement that it cut ties with LocationSmart on May 25, and has begun cutting ties with the data brokers who received its customers' location data. T-Mobile chief executive John Legere tweeted: "I've personally evaluated this issue & have pledged that @tmobile will not sell customer location data to shady middlemen."