

Western Illinois University
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Abstract

Recorded Scholarly Presentation

Major: Liberal Arts and Sciences

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Policy Brief: Right to Repair Laws

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This presentation provides an overview of the research conducted for a project as part of the Senior Capstone course in the Liberal Arts and Sciences. The policy brief focuses on sustainability and discusses the social justice impact of Right to Repair laws. The Right to Repair movement is a pushback against planned obsolescence and consumer electronic product design trends that prevent consumers from repairing their own devices. The policy discussed would require electronics manufacturers to design products so that they may be repaired or disassembled by consumers or independent repair shops using standard tools, make unique replacement parts available for sale, and provide documentation to consumers that would allow them to understand the schematics of their device and disassemble it safely and without causing permanent damage. The social justice impacts of such a policy are far-reaching. The immediate beneficiary would be consumers; who would see a reduced financial burden by repairing broken devices rather than purchasing a brand new one at retail price. The brief also explores the positive economic impacts of increased opportunities for third-party repair shops independent of the original manufacturer, the environmental costs of consumer electronics overproduction, and the public health costs associated with mining raw materials for lithium-ion batteries and the mass producing semiconductors.