Maine’s right-to-repair law for cars wins with 84 percent of the vote

The right-to-repair movement gained a significant victory yesterday as a Maine law regarding auto repair rights won over 84 percent public support, according to Ballotpedia’s unofficial tally. As *404 Media* reported, the “Question 4” measure asked if voters want auto manufacturers to enable owners and their preferred mechanics to access their car’s diagnostics systems. Voters said yes.

One exclusion in Maine’s law lets carmakers offer a secure portal where owners and independent mechanics can look up how to reset a car’s security features rather than publicizing that information. The law requires that automakers standardize unfettered “access to the vehicle on-board diagnostic systems of all motor vehicles” for owners and independent mechanics.

There’s more specific language for heavy-duty vehicles, such as a requirement for automakers to sell tools and parts for 2002 vehicles that weigh over 14,000 pounds, and a requirement for a “motor vehicle telematics system notice” for car buyers to explain how access to the car’s data works.

Manufacturers would be allowed to require authorization to access diagnostics systems, but only with a standardized procedure approved by a third-party panel of industry representatives from car companies, independent repair shops, aftermarket parts makers, and others.

The head of consumer rights group USPIRG’s right to repair project, Nathan Proctor, said to *404 Media* that people support

the right to repair “because it’s common sense—at least to those who aren’t manufacturers.” Tim Winkeler, who runs VIP Tire and Service in Auburn, Maine, told *News Center Maine* that the vote will let Maine families “rely on their local repair shop, who knows them and their vehicle.”

https://www.theverge.com/2023/11/8/23952928/maine-right-to-repair-law-passed-auto-repair-diagnostics