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Alan Butler Named Executive Director of EPIC

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, the Board of Directors of the Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC) announced that Alan Butler has been named Executive Director, effective Monday, March 1, 2021. Mr. Butler first joined EPIC in 2011 and has served as EPIC’s Interim Executive Director since April 2020. “I am thrilled to begin an exciting new chapter in EPIC’s history and to carry forward our global leadership on data protection and civil liberties,” said Mr. Butler when asked about the transition. “EPIC’s mission has never been more important and the last year has shown that protecting digital rights will be essential to preserving our way of life in the face of rapid technological and social change.” Butler’s appointment was advised by Russell Reynolds Associates and a committee of distinguished data protection and privacy experts from law, business and academia.



“We chose Alan because of his deep passion for privacy advocacy, his strong dedication to EPIC, and his stellar reputation in the field,” said Dr. Anita Allen, Chair of EPIC’s Board of Directors and Henry R. Silverman Professor of Law and Philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania. “Alan was selected after a thorough six-month international search. The Board is delighted to have Alan leading EPIC’s efforts to protect privacy, freedom of expression, and democratic values in the information age.” University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) Law Professor Jerry Kang, who served on the search committee and who has worked closely with Butler, predicts that “with piercing intellect and deep care of community, Alan will lead EPIC to its next stage of ambition, collaboration, and effectiveness.” Former EPIC Board Chair and long-time EPIC advisor, University of Virginia Professor Danielle Citron described Butler’s appointment as “thrilling,” adding that “Alan has been a stalwart guide in the fight for privacy, as

appellate litigant, as a congressional expert witness, and as a team player in the advocacy community.”

Mr. Butler was born and raised in Salt Lake City, Utah. He worked as a network technician while an undergraduate at Washington University in St. Louis, studying economics, art, and policy. He earned his J.D. law degree from UCLA Law, where he studied technology policy, intellectual property, and telecommunications law. He has since developed deep expertise in information privacy law, constitutional privacy law, open government law, administrative law, and broader technology policy issues during his ten-year career as a staff member and General Counsel at EPIC. Mr. Butler has also taught information privacy law at Georgetown University Law Center, and frequently speaks on emerging privacy law issues in the media and at academic symposia. He has co-authored the most recent editions of *Communications Law and Policy: Cases and Materials* with Professor Jerry Kang, and has also published articles and essays on emerging privacy issues. He is co-chair of the Committee on Privacy and Information Protection at the American Bar Association Section on Civil Rights and Social Justice. He is a member of the District of Columbia Bar and the State Bar of California, as well as the Bars of the U.S. Supreme Court and other federal courts.

When asked about his priorities at EPIC, Mr. Butler stated that “EPIC has a critical role to play in the most pressing policy debates around data protection, civil rights, and accountability for both government and businesses operating in the digital ecosystem. EPIC will continue to advocate for a comprehensive baseline privacy law in the United States and a U.S. Data Protection Agency to ensure that the law is fully enforced.” Mr. Butler also announced that he intends to “expand EPIC’s work on other emerging privacy issues, including reigning in data brokers, protecting sensitive location data, ensuring that AI systems are fair and accountable, and establishing redress mechanisms for victims of data misuse and abuse.”

“The threats to privacy from public and private sources have never been as serious as they are today,” says EPIC Board member Dr. Harry Lewis, the Emeritus Gordon McKay Research Professor of Computer Science at the Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences. “Alan Butler is a skilled and sophisticated advocate and a relentlessly principled defender of privacy. EPIC is very fortunate to have such masterful leadership as it confronts the new challenges of the era.” Dr. Shoshana Zuboff, an EPIC Board member, Charles Edward Wilson Professor of Business Administration Emeritus at the Harvard Business School, and author of *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* says she is “proud to welcome Alan Butler as EPIC’s new leader.” Moreover, “At a time when the assault on privacy is inextricably linked to the durability of our democratic institutions,” Zuboff stated, “Alan’s unusually broad range of talents as a deep thinker, meticulous practitioner, respected team leader, steadfast manager, and passionate, tireless champion will put EPIC on the frontlines of the struggles that define our century.”

Deborah Hurley, a globally renowned data protection and privacy expert who chaired EPIC’s board for a decade and advises governments, international organizations, companies, civil society, and foundations on advanced science and technology policy, was a member of the search committee that recommended Butler’s appointment. Hurley summed up her enthusiasm by saying that “Alan Butler is uniquely qualified to lead EPIC into its next phase. I look forward to working

with him as a member of the EPIC Advisory Board to build on EPIC's accomplishments, as he leads the organization to even greater impact and success." Moreover, she observed, "EPIC is needed now more than ever. Alan deeply understands the critical issues and the organization. He is a principled, rigorous advocate, with strong intellect, directed passion, and ability to inspire loyalty and a sense of shared purpose to meet the civil liberties challenges of the 21st century."

ABOUT EPIC

The Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC) is a nonpartisan 501(c)3, public interest research, advocacy and education center headquartered in Washington, DC. EPIC was established in 1994 to focus public attention on emerging privacy and civil liberties issues and to protect privacy, freedom of expression, and democratic values in the information age. EPIC pursues a wide range of program activities, including policy research, public education, conferences, litigation, publications, and advocacy, locally, nationally and internationally. EPIC routinely files amicus briefs in federal courts, pursues open government cases, defends consumer privacy, organizes conferences for NGOs, and speaks before Congress and judicial organizations about emerging privacy and civil liberties issues. EPIC works closely with a distinguished membership advisory board, with expertise in law, technology and public policy.