

December 13, 2017

The Honorable Ajit Pai  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

We write to share our thoughts on the impact of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) proposed repeal of net neutrality protections on our nation's libraries and urge the abandonment of this proposal.

Protecting the open Internet is essential to our citizens and our democracy. Our nation's 120,000 libraries depend on equitable and robust access to the Internet to provide a wide range of vital services to meet the needs of their respective communities. This is especially true in rural areas, where more than 83 percent of libraries report they serve as their community's only provider of free Internet and computing services.

Millions of Americans who do not have broadband access at home depend on the availability of Internet access at their local libraries. From helping with homework to searching for work and starting a small business to applying for jobs and government assistance and paying taxes—people come to libraries to fulfill essential functions of daily life.

America's libraries also collect, create, provide access to, and disseminate essential information to the public over the Internet. The digital collections of the Library of Congress, National Library of Medicine, college and university libraries, and public libraries provide a vast amount of information-based services, ranging from video tutorials to oral histories of our country's founding to downloads of large research datasets.

A world in which this information may be limited to the Internet's "slow lanes" while other content generated by large corporations who can pay for preferential treatment undermines a central tenet of a democratic society. By and large, our public institutions cannot afford to pay for prioritized Internet access. Those who can pay will likely have their uses of the Internet prioritized ahead of education and other public interests, with significant negative consequences to communities across the nation.

Furthermore, we have concerns about the process the FCC has used in its actions to repeal these critical protections. The FCC has not satisfactorily responded to concerns about the potentially thousands of fake public comments submitted on its proposal. Nor has the FCC seriously investigated the source of the comments. Ignoring glaring concerns about the public record and charging ahead with a plan to end net neutrality seriously endangers the public trust.

We ask that the FCC instead go back to the drawing board and ensure that it takes no actions that will harm our public libraries, schools, and institutions of higher education and the citizens they serve. The FCC should be working to ensure that those most in need are able to access the Internet, not undermining that goal.

Thank you for your timely consideration of these vital concerns.

Sincerely,

Jack Reed

Patrick Leahy

Kirsten Gillibrand

Shirley

Ron Wyden

Edward J. Markey

Barack Sanders

Elizabeth Warren

Anthony Brown

Angie Baldi

Richard Blumenthal

Mazie Hironaka

Richard E. Mott Chris Van Halen





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

May 16, 2018

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Bernard Sanders  
United States Senate  
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Sanders:

Thank you for your letter regarding the *Restoring Internet Freedom Order*, which returned to the light-touch regulatory framework that governed the Internet for almost twenty years while reestablishing the authority of the Federal Trade Commission to oversee the network management practices of Internet service providers.

At the dawn of the commercial Internet in 1996, President Clinton and a Republican Congress agreed that it would be the policy of the United States “to preserve the vibrant and competitive free market that presently exists for the Internet . . . unfettered by Federal or State regulation.” This bipartisan policy worked. Encouraged by light-touch regulation, the private sector invested over \$1.5 trillion to build fixed and mobile networks throughout the United States. Innovators and entrepreneurs grew technology startups into global giants. America’s Internet economy became the envy of the world.

Then, in early 2015, the FCC jettisoned this successful, bipartisan approach to the Internet and decided to subject the Internet to utility-style regulation designed in the 1930s to govern Ma Bell. This decision was a mistake. For one thing, there was no problem to solve. The Internet wasn’t broken in 2015. We weren’t living in a digital dystopia. To the contrary, the Internet had been a stunning success.

Not only was there no problem, this “solution” hasn’t worked. The main complaint consumers have about the Internet is not and has never been that their Internet service provider is blocking access to content. It’s that they don’t have access at all or enough competition between providers. The 2015 regulations have taken us in the opposite direction from these consumer preferences. Under Title II, annual investment in high-speed networks declined by billions of dollars—the first time that such investment has gone down outside of a recession in the Internet era. And our recent Broadband Deployment Report shows that the pace of both fixed and mobile broadband deployment declined dramatically in the two years following the *Title II Order*.

Returning to the legal framework that governed the Internet from President Clinton’s pronouncement in 1996 until 2015 is not going to destroy the Internet. It is not going to end the Internet as we know it. It is not going to undermine the free exchange of ideas or the fundamental truth that the Internet is the greatest free market success story of our lifetimes.

By returning to the light-touch Title I framework, we are helping consumers and promoting competition. Broadband providers will have stronger incentives to build networks, especially in unserved areas, and to upgrade networks to gigabit speeds and 5G. This means there will be more competition among broadband providers. It also means more ways that companies of all kinds and sizes can deliver applications and content to more users. In short, it's a freer and more open Internet.

The *Restoring Internet Freedom Order* also promotes more robust transparency among ISPs than existed three years ago. It requires ISPs to disclose a variety of business practices, and the failure to do so subjects them to enforcement action. This transparency rule will ensure that consumers know what they're buying and that startups get information they need as they develop new products and services.

Moreover, we reestablish the Federal Trade Commission's authority to ensure that consumers and competition are protected. Two years ago, the *Title II Order* stripped the FTC of its jurisdiction over broadband providers by deeming them all Title II "common carriers." But now we are putting our nation's premier consumer protection cop back on the beat.

Furthermore, the Commission is grateful to all commenters who engaged the legal and public policy questions presented in this rulemaking. These comments ensured that the Commission considered all important aspects of its proposal to reclassify broadband Internet access service as an "information service" and restore the light-touch regulatory framework that fostered a free and open Internet in the United States prior to 2015.

To be sure, this proceeding carried the potential for advocates on either side to abuse the process to create an appearance of numerical advantage. But the Commission does not make policy decisions merely by tallying the comments on either side of a proposal; were it otherwise, agency decisions would require not Commissioners exercising reasoned judgment but calculators performing a simple count. Nor does the Commission attribute greater weight to comments based on the submitter's identity. Accordingly, the Commission has never burdened commenters with providing identity verification or expended the massive amount of resources necessary to verify commenters' identities. Rather than dwell on how well automated or form submissions reflect actual popular support, the Commission has instead focused on encouraging robust participation in its proceedings and ensuring that it has considered how the substance of submitted comments bear on the legal and public policy consequences of its actions.

Despite any suggestion that the public comment process was somehow "flawed" by the alleged submission of comments under false names, any such activity did not affect the Commission's actual decision-making—that is, the agency's ability to review the record, respond to comments that raised significant issues, and make a reasoned judgment. I am not aware of any evidence to the contrary. Indeed, any reasonable review of the *Order* would demonstrate precisely the opposite—that the Commission painstakingly engaged with the voluminous public record in this proceeding (namely, the many substantive comments that meaningfully grappled with the policy issues raised in the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking) in reaching its conclusions. To the extent you are concerned with non-substantive comments submitted under multiple different names that stated simply that the commenter supported or was

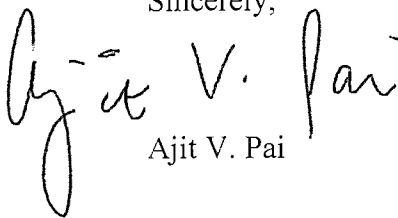
opposed to the Title II classification without substantive explanation, as you can see in the *Order*, the agency did not rely on or cite any such comments.

The Commission is staunchly committed to transparency and integrity in rulemaking proceedings, including in connection with the *Restoring Internet Freedom* proceeding. To that end, when individuals contacted the Commission to complain that a comment was falsely filed in their name, the Commission responded by inviting them to file a statement to that effect in the public record. In addition, members of the public had an opportunity to comment on the substance of the public draft released three weeks prior to the scheduled vote, pursuant to my transparency initiative.

In sum, Americans will still be able to access the websites they want to visit. They will still be able to enjoy the services they want to enjoy. There will still be regulation and regulators guarding a free and open Internet. This is the way things were prior to 2015, and this is the way they will be in the future.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Your views are important and will be entered into the record of the proceeding. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

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Ajit V. Pai





OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

May 16, 2018

The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senate  
B40A Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cortez Masto:

Thank you for your letter regarding the *Restoring Internet Freedom Order*, which returned to the light-touch regulatory framework that governed the Internet for almost twenty years while reestablishing the authority of the Federal Trade Commission to oversee the network management practices of Internet service providers.

At the dawn of the commercial Internet in 1996, President Clinton and a Republican Congress agreed that it would be the policy of the United States “to preserve the vibrant and competitive free market that presently exists for the Internet . . . unfettered by Federal or State regulation.” This bipartisan policy worked. Encouraged by light-touch regulation, the private sector invested over \$1.5 trillion to build fixed and mobile networks throughout the United States. Innovators and entrepreneurs grew technology startups into global giants. America’s Internet economy became the envy of the world.

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Moreover, we reestablish the Federal Trade Commission's authority to ensure that consumers and competition are protected. Two years ago, the *Title II Order* stripped the FTC of its jurisdiction over broadband providers by deeming them all Title II "common carriers." But now we are putting our nation's premier consumer protection cop back on the beat.

Furthermore, the Commission is grateful to all commenters who engaged the legal and public policy questions presented in this rulemaking. These comments ensured that the Commission considered all important aspects of its proposal to reclassify broadband Internet access service as an "information service" and restore the light-touch regulatory framework that fostered a free and open Internet in the United States prior to 2015.

To be sure, this proceeding carried the potential for advocates on either side to abuse the process to create an appearance of numerical advantage. But the Commission does not make policy decisions merely by tallying the comments on either side of a proposal; were it otherwise, agency decisions would require not Commissioners exercising reasoned judgment but calculators performing a simple count. Nor does the Commission attribute greater weight to comments based on the submitter's identity. Accordingly, the Commission has never burdened commenters with providing identity verification or expended the massive amount of resources necessary to verify commenters' identities. Rather than dwell on how well automated or form submissions reflect actual popular support, the Commission has instead focused on encouraging robust participation in its proceedings and ensuring that it has considered how the substance of submitted comments bear on the legal and public policy consequences of its actions.

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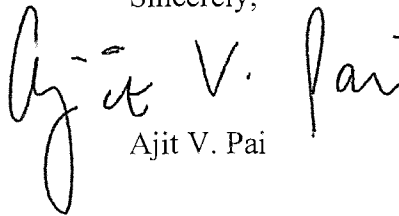
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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

May 16, 2018

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senate  
B40C Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Van Hollen:

Thank you for your letter regarding the *Restoring Internet Freedom Order*, which returned to the light-touch regulatory framework that governed the Internet for almost twenty years while reestablishing the authority of the Federal Trade Commission to oversee the network management practices of Internet service providers.

At the dawn of the commercial Internet in 1996, President Clinton and a Republican Congress agreed that it would be the policy of the United States “to preserve the vibrant and competitive free market that presently exists for the Internet . . . unfettered by Federal or State regulation.” This bipartisan policy worked. Encouraged by light-touch regulation, the private sector invested over \$1.5 trillion to build fixed and mobile networks throughout the United States. Innovators and entrepreneurs grew technology startups into global giants. America’s Internet economy became the envy of the world.

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Moreover, we reestablish the Federal Trade Commission's authority to ensure that consumers and competition are protected. Two years ago, the *Title II Order* stripped the FTC of its jurisdiction over broadband providers by deeming them all Title II "common carriers." But now we are putting our nation's premier consumer protection cop back on the beat.

Furthermore, the Commission is grateful to all commenters who engaged the legal and public policy questions presented in this rulemaking. These comments ensured that the Commission considered all important aspects of its proposal to reclassify broadband Internet access service as an "information service" and restore the light-touch regulatory framework that fostered a free and open Internet in the United States prior to 2015.

To be sure, this proceeding carried the potential for advocates on either side to abuse the process to create an appearance of numerical advantage. But the Commission does not make policy decisions merely by tallying the comments on either side of a proposal; were it otherwise, agency decisions would require not Commissioners exercising reasoned judgment but calculators performing a simple count. Nor does the Commission attribute greater weight to comments based on the submitter's identity. Accordingly, the Commission has never burdened commenters with providing identity verification or expended the massive amount of resources necessary to verify commenters' identities. Rather than dwell on how well automated or form submissions reflect actual popular support, the Commission has instead focused on encouraging robust participation in its proceedings and ensuring that it has considered how the substance of submitted comments bear on the legal and public policy consequences of its actions.

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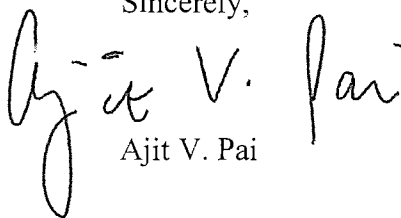
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Ajit V. Pai





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

May 16, 2018

The Honorable Edward J. Markey  
United States Senate  
255 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Markey:

Thank you for your letter regarding the *Restoring Internet Freedom Order*, which returned to the light-touch regulatory framework that governed the Internet for almost twenty years while reestablishing the authority of the Federal Trade Commission to oversee the network management practices of Internet service providers.

At the dawn of the commercial Internet in 1996, President Clinton and a Republican Congress agreed that it would be the policy of the United States “to preserve the vibrant and competitive free market that presently exists for the Internet . . . unfettered by Federal or State regulation.” This bipartisan policy worked. Encouraged by light-touch regulation, the private sector invested over \$1.5 trillion to build fixed and mobile networks throughout the United States. Innovators and entrepreneurs grew technology startups into global giants. America’s Internet economy became the envy of the world.

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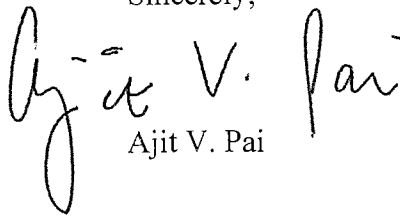
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Ajit V. Pai





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

May 16, 2018

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senate  
317 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Warren:

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Furthermore, the Commission is grateful to all commenters who engaged the legal and public policy questions presented in this rulemaking. These comments ensured that the Commission considered all important aspects of its proposal to reclassify broadband Internet access service as an "information service" and restore the light-touch regulatory framework that fostered a free and open Internet in the United States prior to 2015.

To be sure, this proceeding carried the potential for advocates on either side to abuse the process to create an appearance of numerical advantage. But the Commission does not make policy decisions merely by tallying the comments on either side of a proposal; were it otherwise, agency decisions would require not Commissioners exercising reasoned judgment but calculators performing a simple count. Nor does the Commission attribute greater weight to comments based on the submitter's identity. Accordingly, the Commission has never burdened commenters with providing identity verification or expended the massive amount of resources necessary to verify commenters' identities. Rather than dwell on how well automated or form submissions reflect actual popular support, the Commission has instead focused on encouraging robust participation in its proceedings and ensuring that it has considered how the substance of submitted comments bear on the legal and public policy consequences of its actions.

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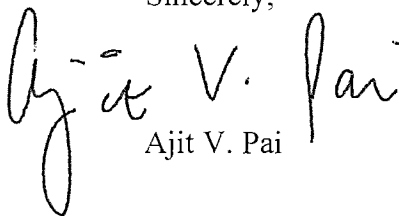
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The Commission is staunchly committed to transparency and integrity in rulemaking proceedings, including in connection with the *Restoring Internet Freedom* proceeding. To that end, when individuals contacted the Commission to complain that a comment was falsely filed in their name, the Commission responded by inviting them to file a statement to that effect in the public record. In addition, members of the public had an opportunity to comment on the substance of the public draft released three weeks prior to the scheduled vote, pursuant to my transparency initiative.

In sum, Americans will still be able to access the websites they want to visit. They will still be able to enjoy the services they want to enjoy. There will still be regulation and regulators guarding a free and open Internet. This is the way things were prior to 2015, and this is the way they will be in the future.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Your views are important and will be entered into the record of the proceeding. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

May 16, 2018

The Honorable Jack Reed  
United States Senate  
728 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Reed:

Thank you for your letter regarding the *Restoring Internet Freedom Order*, which returned to the light-touch regulatory framework that governed the Internet for almost twenty years while reestablishing the authority of the Federal Trade Commission to oversee the network management practices of Internet service providers.

At the dawn of the commercial Internet in 1996, President Clinton and a Republican Congress agreed that it would be the policy of the United States “to preserve the vibrant and competitive free market that presently exists for the Internet . . . unfettered by Federal or State regulation.” This bipartisan policy worked. Encouraged by light-touch regulation, the private sector invested over \$1.5 trillion to build fixed and mobile networks throughout the United States. Innovators and entrepreneurs grew technology startups into global giants. America’s Internet economy became the envy of the world.

Then, in early 2015, the FCC jettisoned this successful, bipartisan approach to the Internet and decided to subject the Internet to utility-style regulation designed in the 1930s to govern Ma Bell. This decision was a mistake. For one thing, there was no problem to solve. The Internet wasn’t broken in 2015. We weren’t living in a digital dystopia. To the contrary, the Internet had been a stunning success.

Not only was there no problem, this “solution” hasn’t worked. The main complaint consumers have about the Internet is not and has never been that their Internet service provider is blocking access to content. It’s that they don’t have access at all or enough competition between providers. The 2015 regulations have taken us in the opposite direction from these consumer preferences. Under Title II, annual investment in high-speed networks declined by billions of dollars—the first time that such investment has gone down outside of a recession in the Internet era. And our recent Broadband Deployment Report shows that the pace of both fixed and mobile broadband deployment declined dramatically in the two years following the *Title II Order*.

Returning to the legal framework that governed the Internet from President Clinton’s pronouncement in 1996 until 2015 is not going to destroy the Internet. It is not going to end the Internet as we know it. It is not going to undermine the free exchange of ideas or the fundamental truth that the Internet is the greatest free market success story of our lifetimes.

By returning to the light-touch Title I framework, we are helping consumers and promoting competition. Broadband providers will have stronger incentives to build networks, especially in unserved areas, and to upgrade networks to gigabit speeds and 5G. This means there will be more competition among broadband providers. It also means more ways that companies of all kinds and sizes can deliver applications and content to more users. In short, it's a freer and more open Internet.

The *Restoring Internet Freedom Order* also promotes more robust transparency among ISPs than existed three years ago. It requires ISPs to disclose a variety of business practices, and the failure to do so subjects them to enforcement action. This transparency rule will ensure that consumers know what they're buying and that startups get information they need as they develop new products and services.

Moreover, we reestablish the Federal Trade Commission's authority to ensure that consumers and competition are protected. Two years ago, the *Title II Order* stripped the FTC of its jurisdiction over broadband providers by deeming them all Title II "common carriers." But now we are putting our nation's premier consumer protection cop back on the beat.

Furthermore, the Commission is grateful to all commenters who engaged the legal and public policy questions presented in this rulemaking. These comments ensured that the Commission considered all important aspects of its proposal to reclassify broadband Internet access service as an "information service" and restore the light-touch regulatory framework that fostered a free and open Internet in the United States prior to 2015.

To be sure, this proceeding carried the potential for advocates on either side to abuse the process to create an appearance of numerical advantage. But the Commission does not make policy decisions merely by tallying the comments on either side of a proposal; were it otherwise, agency decisions would require not Commissioners exercising reasoned judgment but calculators performing a simple count. Nor does the Commission attribute greater weight to comments based on the submitter's identity. Accordingly, the Commission has never burdened commenters with providing identity verification or expended the massive amount of resources necessary to verify commenters' identities. Rather than dwell on how well automated or form submissions reflect actual popular support, the Commission has instead focused on encouraging robust participation in its proceedings and ensuring that it has considered how the substance of submitted comments bear on the legal and public policy consequences of its actions.

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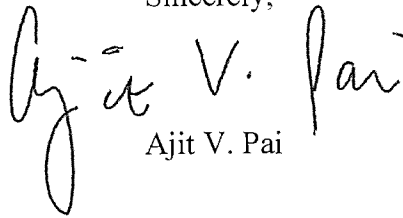
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Sincerely,

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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

May 16, 2018

The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senate  
478 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Gillibrand:

Thank you for your letter regarding the *Restoring Internet Freedom Order*, which returned to the light-touch regulatory framework that governed the Internet for almost twenty years while reestablishing the authority of the Federal Trade Commission to oversee the network management practices of Internet service providers.

At the dawn of the commercial Internet in 1996, President Clinton and a Republican Congress agreed that it would be the policy of the United States “to preserve the vibrant and competitive free market that presently exists for the Internet . . . unfettered by Federal or State regulation.” This bipartisan policy worked. Encouraged by light-touch regulation, the private sector invested over \$1.5 trillion to build fixed and mobile networks throughout the United States. Innovators and entrepreneurs grew technology startups into global giants. America’s Internet economy became the envy of the world.

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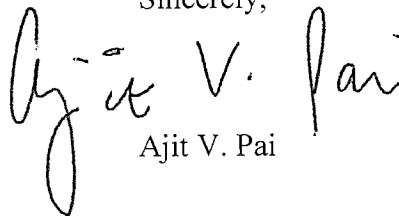
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Ajit V. Pai





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

May 16, 2018

The Honorable Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senate  
330 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Hirono:

Thank you for your letter regarding the *Restoring Internet Freedom Order*, which returned to the light-touch regulatory framework that governed the Internet for almost twenty years while reestablishing the authority of the Federal Trade Commission to oversee the network management practices of Internet service providers.

At the dawn of the commercial Internet in 1996, President Clinton and a Republican Congress agreed that it would be the policy of the United States “to preserve the vibrant and competitive free market that presently exists for the Internet . . . unfettered by Federal or State regulation.” This bipartisan policy worked. Encouraged by light-touch regulation, the private sector invested over \$1.5 trillion to build fixed and mobile networks throughout the United States. Innovators and entrepreneurs grew technology startups into global giants. America’s Internet economy became the envy of the world.

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Furthermore, the Commission is grateful to all commenters who engaged the legal and public policy questions presented in this rulemaking. These comments ensured that the Commission considered all important aspects of its proposal to reclassify broadband Internet access service as an "information service" and restore the light-touch regulatory framework that fostered a free and open Internet in the United States prior to 2015.

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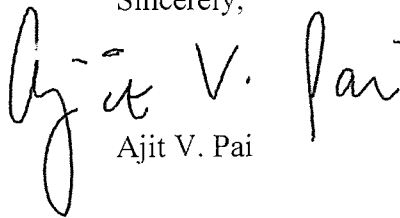
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Ajit V. Pai





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

May 16, 2018

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy  
United States Senate  
437 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Leahy:

Thank you for your letter regarding the *Restoring Internet Freedom Order*, which returned to the light-touch regulatory framework that governed the Internet for almost twenty years while reestablishing the authority of the Federal Trade Commission to oversee the network management practices of Internet service providers.

At the dawn of the commercial Internet in 1996, President Clinton and a Republican Congress agreed that it would be the policy of the United States “to preserve the vibrant and competitive free market that presently exists for the Internet . . . unfettered by Federal or State regulation.” This bipartisan policy worked. Encouraged by light-touch regulation, the private sector invested over \$1.5 trillion to build fixed and mobile networks throughout the United States. Innovators and entrepreneurs grew technology startups into global giants. America’s Internet economy became the envy of the world.

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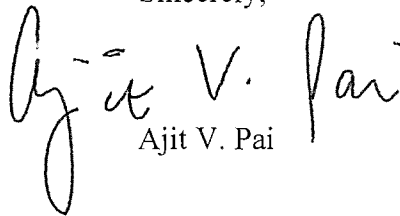
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

May 16, 2018

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senate  
706 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Blumenthal:

Thank you for your letter regarding the *Restoring Internet Freedom Order*, which returned to the light-touch regulatory framework that governed the Internet for almost twenty years while reestablishing the authority of the Federal Trade Commission to oversee the network management practices of Internet service providers.

At the dawn of the commercial Internet in 1996, President Clinton and a Republican Congress agreed that it would be the policy of the United States "to preserve the vibrant and competitive free market that presently exists for the Internet . . . unfettered by Federal or State regulation." This bipartisan policy worked. Encouraged by light-touch regulation, the private sector invested over \$1.5 trillion to build fixed and mobile networks throughout the United States. Innovators and entrepreneurs grew technology startups into global giants. America's Internet economy became the envy of the world.

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Moreover, we reestablish the Federal Trade Commission's authority to ensure that consumers and competition are protected. Two years ago, the *Title II Order* stripped the FTC of its jurisdiction over broadband providers by deeming them all Title II "common carriers." But now we are putting our nation's premier consumer protection cop back on the beat.

Furthermore, the Commission is grateful to all commenters who engaged the legal and public policy questions presented in this rulemaking. These comments ensured that the Commission considered all important aspects of its proposal to reclassify broadband Internet access service as an "information service" and restore the light-touch regulatory framework that fostered a free and open Internet in the United States prior to 2015.

To be sure, this proceeding carried the potential for advocates on either side to abuse the process to create an appearance of numerical advantage. But the Commission does not make policy decisions merely by tallying the comments on either side of a proposal; were it otherwise, agency decisions would require not Commissioners exercising reasoned judgment but calculators performing a simple count. Nor does the Commission attribute greater weight to comments based on the submitter's identity. Accordingly, the Commission has never burdened commenters with providing identity verification or expended the massive amount of resources necessary to verify commenters' identities. Rather than dwell on how well automated or form submissions reflect actual popular support, the Commission has instead focused on encouraging robust participation in its proceedings and ensuring that it has considered how the substance of submitted comments bear on the legal and public policy consequences of its actions.

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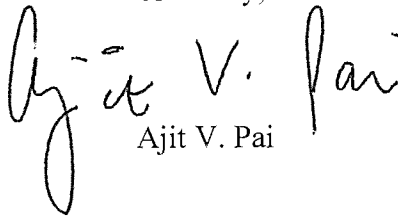
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I appreciate your interest in this matter. Your views are important and will be entered into the record of the proceeding. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

May 16, 2018

The Honorable Ron Wyden  
United States Senate  
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Wyden:

Thank you for your letter regarding the *Restoring Internet Freedom Order*, which returned to the light-touch regulatory framework that governed the Internet for almost twenty years while reestablishing the authority of the Federal Trade Commission to oversee the network management practices of Internet service providers.

At the dawn of the commercial Internet in 1996, President Clinton and a Republican Congress agreed that it would be the policy of the United States “to preserve the vibrant and competitive free market that presently exists for the Internet . . . unfettered by Federal or State regulation.” This bipartisan policy worked. Encouraged by light-touch regulation, the private sector invested over \$1.5 trillion to build fixed and mobile networks throughout the United States. Innovators and entrepreneurs grew technology startups into global giants. America’s Internet economy became the envy of the world.

Then, in early 2015, the FCC jettisoned this successful, bipartisan approach to the Internet and decided to subject the Internet to utility-style regulation designed in the 1930s to govern Ma Bell. This decision was a mistake. For one thing, there was no problem to solve. The Internet wasn’t broken in 2015. We weren’t living in a digital dystopia. To the contrary, the Internet had been a stunning success.

Not only was there no problem, this “solution” hasn’t worked. The main complaint consumers have about the Internet is not and has never been that their Internet service provider is blocking access to content. It’s that they don’t have access at all or enough competition between providers. The 2015 regulations have taken us in the opposite direction from these consumer preferences. Under Title II, annual investment in high-speed networks declined by billions of dollars—the first time that such investment has gone down outside of a recession in the Internet era. And our recent Broadband Deployment Report shows that the pace of both fixed and mobile broadband deployment declined dramatically in the two years following the *Title II Order*.

Returning to the legal framework that governed the Internet from President Clinton’s pronouncement in 1996 until 2015 is not going to destroy the Internet. It is not going to end the Internet as we know it. It is not going to undermine the free exchange of ideas or the fundamental truth that the Internet is the greatest free market success story of our lifetimes.

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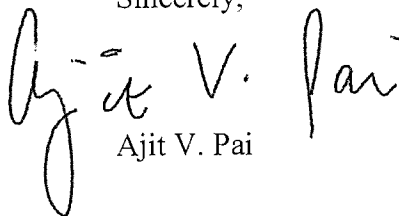
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Ajit V. Pai





OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

May 16, 2018

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senate  
530 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Whitehouse:

Thank you for your letter regarding the *Restoring Internet Freedom Order*, which returned to the light-touch regulatory framework that governed the Internet for almost twenty years while reestablishing the authority of the Federal Trade Commission to oversee the network management practices of Internet service providers.

At the dawn of the commercial Internet in 1996, President Clinton and a Republican Congress agreed that it would be the policy of the United States “to preserve the vibrant and competitive free market that presently exists for the Internet . . . unfettered by Federal or State regulation.” This bipartisan policy worked. Encouraged by light-touch regulation, the private sector invested over \$1.5 trillion to build fixed and mobile networks throughout the United States. Innovators and entrepreneurs grew technology startups into global giants. America’s Internet economy became the envy of the world.

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Moreover, we reestablish the Federal Trade Commission's authority to ensure that consumers and competition are protected. Two years ago, the *Title II Order* stripped the FTC of its jurisdiction over broadband providers by deeming them all Title II "common carriers." But now we are putting our nation's premier consumer protection cop back on the beat.

Furthermore, the Commission is grateful to all commenters who engaged the legal and public policy questions presented in this rulemaking. These comments ensured that the Commission considered all important aspects of its proposal to reclassify broadband Internet access service as an "information service" and restore the light-touch regulatory framework that fostered a free and open Internet in the United States prior to 2015.

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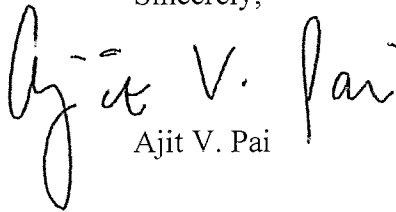
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

May 16, 2018

The Honorable Sherrod Brown  
United States Senate  
713 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Brown:

Thank you for your letter regarding the *Restoring Internet Freedom Order*, which returned to the light-touch regulatory framework that governed the Internet for almost twenty years while reestablishing the authority of the Federal Trade Commission to oversee the network management practices of Internet service providers.

At the dawn of the commercial Internet in 1996, President Clinton and a Republican Congress agreed that it would be the policy of the United States “to preserve the vibrant and competitive free market that presently exists for the Internet . . . unfettered by Federal or State regulation.” This bipartisan policy worked. Encouraged by light-touch regulation, the private sector invested over \$1.5 trillion to build fixed and mobile networks throughout the United States. Innovators and entrepreneurs grew technology startups into global giants. America’s Internet economy became the envy of the world.

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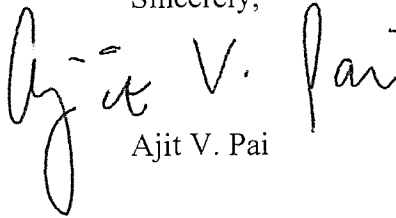
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

May 16, 2018

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senate  
717 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Baldwin:

Thank you for your letter regarding the *Restoring Internet Freedom Order*, which returned to the light-touch regulatory framework that governed the Internet for almost twenty years while reestablishing the authority of the Federal Trade Commission to oversee the network management practices of Internet service providers.

At the dawn of the commercial Internet in 1996, President Clinton and a Republican Congress agreed that it would be the policy of the United States “to preserve the vibrant and competitive free market that presently exists for the Internet . . . unfettered by Federal or State regulation.” This bipartisan policy worked. Encouraged by light-touch regulation, the private sector invested over \$1.5 trillion to build fixed and mobile networks throughout the United States. Innovators and entrepreneurs grew technology startups into global giants. America’s Internet economy became the envy of the world.

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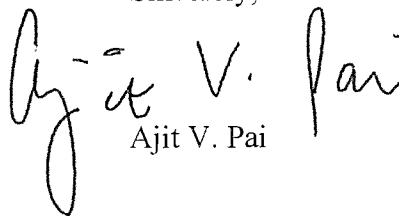
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