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To

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary

Federal Communications Commission

Office of the Secretary

445 12th Street, SW

Room TW-B204

Washington, DC 20554

RE: WC Docket No. 17-108

Dear Commissioners

I am writing in support of strong net neutrality regulations and keeping broadband internet services classified under Title II.

I am a Technical Support Specialist by trade and a computer hobbyist and researcher in my personal time. I have worked on computers since elementary school learning, tweaking, and experimenting with technology and learning how things work. I vividly remember the beginnings of the internet with the passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

One of the founding principles of the internet was open, unhindered access. The idea anyone can connect with any person, or any piece of information, anywhere in the world at any time is at the very root of its revolutionary history. As Internet inventor Tim Berners-Lee wrote “This is for everyone.”

ISPs have argued that Net Neutrality is not necessary because it was never necessary before. After all, why change what isn’t broken? The truth is many ISPs honored the ideas of the open internet. Many were not content providers themselves, or if they were, realized that competition was essential to the health of their business. As a result, companies such as Google, Apple, and Facebook, became household names.

But as time went on, independent Internet providers were giving way to cable and phone companies. These companies did not have competition in the beginning as they were also the sole source of cable and phone services in the area as well. Internet access was just another service they provided. This changed when online streaming services became popular. Taking advantage of the ideals of the open internet, companies such as Hulu, Netflix, Amazon became disruptors of the cable industry. People began to question the predatory methods of the cable companies and began to eliminate cable TV services from their home. Later, Dish would create Sling TV and Sony’s PlayStation Vue would start offering live TV as a service. Some channels even decided to eliminate the middle man and offer their subscription services directly to customers.

These cable and telephone companies who traditionally held monopolies in their service areas, began to see direct competition in their markets. These streaming services were offering everything cable and telephone companies were offering more for a fraction of the cost. And, giving up on poor customer service, frustrating hurdles, and overpriced service, their customers were quickly becoming “cord cutters”.   
  
To adapt to the changing landscape, these companies started offering rival services such as TV on Demand and TV Anywhere. Despite the arguments of ISPs, these innovations to these services are the direct result of Net Neutrality.

ISPs have argued that the situations proponents of net neutrality are simply hypotheticals. But we have documented situations where ISPs have abused their power over content providers. One of the most infamous examples was Comcast vs Netflix. In this situation, Netflix was asked to pay exorbitant prices to connect to Comcast services. Under Title II, the FCC has the power to investigate such situations similar to how they are able to investigate phone and carriage disputes.

An additional argument against Title II regulations for ISPs is that Title II regulations, are antiquated for to be practical. The origins of Title II, known as Common Carrier, was created under the Communications Act of 1934. During this time, Bell Systems held an almost complete monopoly over all telecommunication systems in the US and in the world. Title II allowed the FCC to regulate interconnection between various telephone networks to ensure individuals across the country can communicate with one another no matter who their phone provider was.

The internet is in almost every way identical to the phone systems. Computers, who act as endpoints, communicate directly to other networks, both local and through their ISPs. ISPs in turn connect to other networks, who transmit the signal to the destination computer. For this reason, Title II makes simply makes sense.   
  
Previously ISPs were listed as an information provider. However, common sense would tell that internet communications are not one-way. Rather than an information service, the Internet is a communication system requiring two-way communication.

Net Neutrality does not ask for additional regulations. It simply requires ISPs to maintain the status quo. Giving ISPs the freedom to create fast lane service for certain content providers while allowing fast lanes for others does not help innovation, it stifles it. It was through Net Neutrality that we can enjoy streaming services, and online gaming. It allows small business owners and startup companies to compete on a level playing field. Net Neutrality created much needed competition in cable television markets, where before only one company held a monopoly. If it wasn’t for net neutrality, we would not be able to enjoy many of the technological advances we have seen in this century, such as smartphone and digital camera.

For this reason, the FCC must vote against reinstating broadband internet an information service.