I think that our nation could be doing a much better job at deploying broadband to all Americans. Technology continues to increase its presence in our daily lives and we can expect significant yearly increases in our data needs for years to come. We have more computers, televisions, security systems, smart phones, health monitoring systems, and other devices that use data. We store data records for years, sync them among multiple devices and in the cloud. We have short term needs for speed as well as longer term needs for volumes of data to be transferred. The current telecommunication regulations seem to be more concerned with enabling a limited number of companies to protect their market and make increase profits than paving the way to enable a more capable and affordable data infrastructure for the people.

I use a few hundred gigabytes of data a month, which can only be affordably provided by the single local cable company in my area. My local phone company hasn’t invested in its local infrastructure in years, resulting in a broadband offering that is too slow, unreliable, and expensive. Cell phone broadband would be prohibitively expensive for this quantity of data and service is too spotty in many locations. Satellite ISPs, though improving, still have limitations and are not a good value.

Our nation could meld private enterprise with a coherent public plan to drive towards a best-in-class data network for our county. There is no excuse for not deploying a fiber optic data cable to every location where we currently run electricity or other utilities. Multiple private or public companies could offer competing data services over this shared infrastructure, resulting in real competition that would drives down prices. Data should be the easiest and cheapest utility of all.

We need to continue to push the definition of broadbands service to higher levels each year, not move backwards.