Brian C. Burwell

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Dear Mr. Pai:

Internet providers have long operated as utilities, yet never suffered any repercussions when they have abused their power and harmed consumers. Without regulatory protection, abuse by Internet service providers can only be expected to increase. This will be exasperated as the few companies consumers have for choice consolidate.

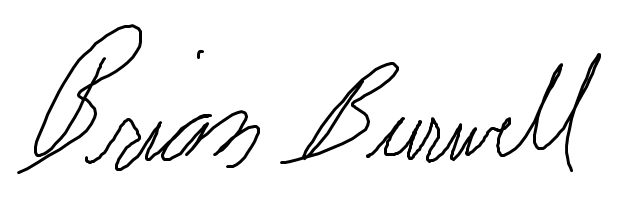
We already see this in the cost for Internet service when compared to the costs in other countries. As reported by PBS merely two years ago, Internet customers in the United States pay nearly twice as much for Internet as people living in the United Kingdom, South Korea, and Romania, while customer receive a much higher quality service for less in countries such as Japan and France. (http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/internet-u-s-compare-globally-hint-slower-expensive/)

To add insult to injury, most of these companies act like utilities and charge based on usage. Yet, you do not want them classified as utilities, so the meters they use to determine customers’ bills will not have anyone one verifying and certifying the meters to assure accurate measurements. Without access to the meters, customers are at the mercy of the Internet service provider’s sole claim the meter is accurate, a meter that too often does not match the few consumer tools to track their own usage.

As if the costs alone were not a problem in this country, just last week, one of the largest Internet service providers, Verizon, announced it will be terminating customer’s service for exceeding an arbitrary limit for a resource limited only by the laws of physics. Come mid-October, there will be about 8,500 rural customers in 13 states having their Internet turned off, because you do not want to fulfill your duties. You would rather take a light touch with regulations while you as the chairperson of the FCC receive full salary yet delegate your responsibilities to other agencies.

We have seen the state of infrastructure and build-out under a "light touch" FCC governing body. It lead to deprecated infrastructure and only had affluent communities receiving something that could be consider investments in infrastructure. This lead to a massive digital divide throughout the country and often in communities where one neighbor one side of the street was able to benefit from investment, while a neighbor on the other side was left with a deteriorated network. Your plan to deregulate is a formula to bring back this dystopian past.

Do not deregulate the Internet. It is too vital of a communication system to have it privatized for the profit of a handful of companies. They have proven there is no future in their business model. If you do remove regulation from Internet service providers and have them regulated by the Federal Trade Commission, you must resign. It is the duty of the Federal Communication Commission to “provide for the regulation of interstate and foreign communication by wire or radio, and for other purposes” as stated by the Communications Act of 1934 (Chapter 5 of Title 47 of the United States Code, 47 U.S.C. § 151 et seq.). While the Act may have been amended since 1934, the core of the Act remains to regulate wired and wireless communications such as the Internet.

Thank You,  
  
Brian C. Burwell