November, 1, 2017

Mr. Ajit Pai

Chairman

Federal Communications Commission

445 12th Street, SW

Washington, DC 20554

**RE: Restoring Internet Freedom, WC Docket No. 17-108**

Dear Chairman Pai:

Consumer Action for a Strong Economy (CASE) continues to fully support your Restoring Internet Freedom proposal. As explained in my recent opinion editorial below, we firmly believe that – in addition to reversing the Title II reclassification – you should formally recognize the internet as an interstate service and set a national broadband framework. This will be critical to ensuring that the internet is best positioned for boundless growth. It will also guard against a mish-mash of state-level frameworks that could undermine what should be a politically neutral goal of strengthening investments and ensuring broadband is made readily available to anyone who wants it.

Sincerely,

Matthew Kandrach

President, Consumer Action for a Strong Economy (CASE)

[**Rolling back 'net neutrality' is essential to the free internet's future**](http://thehill.com/opinion/technology/356420-rolling-back-net-neutrality-is-essential-to-the-free-internets-future)

*The Hill* by Matthew Kandrach

October 20, 2017

The arrival of the internet and connected technologies sparked an almost unimaginable growth in commerce and communication. Their advancements led to the creation of vast new citadels within our economy that has enabled millions of consumers to not only connect with one another but also access information and services like never before. Predictably, investment in broadband access rose right alongside the internet’s burgeoning capabilities. Then suddenly, not so much.

So, what happened?

Investment declined around the Federal Communications Commission’s 2015 absurd decision to reclassify internet service providers (ISPs) as common carriers under Title II of the 1934 Communications Act. That is to say, the FCC granted itself the power to subject internet service to higher regulation and taxation. FCC Chairman Ajit Pai noted that the overreaching misstep caused the United States to experience, “the first-ever decline in broadband investment outside of a recession.” In fact, Pai said earlier this year, broadband investment “remains lower today than it was when the FCC changed course in 2015.”

Under Pai’s leadership, the FCC announced its intention to roll back Title II reclassification and spur a pro-growth environment once again. The move will reintroduce the light-touch regulation that enabled the internet to become the innovative tool that it is today, and the result will undoubtedly benefit consumers.

Improved broadband access is one of the most important benefits of reversing Title II overreach. The internet brought us what seems like endless opportunities. The corollary to this, however, is that Americans without access to the internet are left behind. Internet access and computer skills are key to being connected, well-informed and competitive — not only in today’s job market, but ultimately in today’s digital era. By returning to commonsense regulation that incentivizes broadband investment and expansion, we can build out more robust networks that keep the American dream alive for those striving to succeed in today’s technology-driven world.

At least ten percent of Americans (35 million people) lack adequate broadband access, according to the FCC’s 2016 Broadband Progress Report. This includes 23 million Americans in rural communities. Faced with these troubling statistics, priority should be heightened to champion the urgency of broadband deployment.

In addition to a course-correction — reimplementation of Title I classification — the FCC’s coming order should formally recognize the internet as an interstate service and set a national broadband framework. Time is of the essence as it’s likely that some state legislatures will move to pass laws that are at odds with the successful, light-touch approach to internet regulation of the Clinton and Bush years that Chairman Pai is attempting to restore. It makes absolutely no sense to treat the internet one way in one state, while treating it differently in another. Doing so would create a new wave of regulatory uncertainty, economic inefficiency, and consumer confusion.

To be clear, states play an important role in our nation’s internet policy. But, agendas that are pushed by netroots activists (and funded by tech giants and their billionaire friends) stand to overturn good policy in the name of appeasing radical political interests. If successful, they will ultimately undermine what should be a politically neutral goal of strengthening investments and ensuring broadband is made readily available to anyone who wants it.

America’s internet story is being written anew every day, but rolling back the crippling Title II order of 2015 is essential to protect the internet’s future and ensure we remain on a path of continued growth and innovation. Lawmakers, investors, stakeholders and consumers — regardless of which side of the aisle they favor — must accept the FCC’s upcoming proposal to ensure we govern with one set of national guidelines and not a mish-mash of individual frameworks and agendas.

*Mathew Kandrach is the president of Consumer Action for a Strong Economy (CASE), a free-market oriented consumer advocacy organization.*