I am against your decision to allow a vote to put an end to its net neutrality rules next month, The proposal will reverse the Title II classification of internet providers, which allows the agency to put strict limits on their behavior, and replace it with the old “information service” classification, which a federal court has ruled is less comprehensive, weakening any protections that might replace those currently in force.

The FCC’s goal is to set up the Federal Trade Commission to handle all anti-competitive disputes, and the idea is that if ISPs violate their stated policies, the FTC will be able to take action. However, companies’ terms of service and related policies aren’t meant to protect consumers, they’re meant to protect companies, and can change at a moment’s notice. While it’s entirely possible that a company could violate its own policies and get in trouble with the FTC, a company could also just promise open internet protections until it doesn’t feel like following them anymore, rewrite its policies, and then implement new and potentially discriminatory practices. This wouldn’t be a problem if American consumers had several internet providers to choose from at home, so that they could switch away from a bad provider and over to one that values an open internet, but less than a quarter of the country has two or more home internet providers that offer basic broadband speeds, so if a consumer doesn’t like what their provider is doing, they’re stuck.

The FTC is a single agency tasked with protecting consumers across a wide range of industries. It doesn’t have the focus of the FCC to narrow in on just internet providers. Nor does the FTC have the ability to proactively set tough rules. The FTC can only establish guidelines, which gives internet providers a lot more leeway to experiment with practices that work to their own advantage.

Ending these rules would dismantle net neutrality, and give the green light to our nation’s largest broadband providers to engage in anti-consumer practices, including blocking, slowing down traffic, and paid prioritization of online applications and services. It hands broadband providers the power to decide what voices to amplify, which sites we can visit, what connections we can make, and what communities we create. It throttles access, stalls opportunity, and censors content. Service providers would be able to discriminate against websites and apps. Gutting net neutrality will have a devastating effect on free speech online. Without it, gateway corporations like Comcast, Verizon, and AT&T will have too much power to mess with the free flow of information.

These rules are necessary to protect consumers from price gouging, and protect small companies from anti-competitive behavior. Paid fast lanes could allow wealthy companies to pay for better service, giving them an edge over upstarts (say, YouTube vs. a brand new streaming service). A lack of discrimination rules could let internet providers like Comcast and AT&T advantage their own content, like NBC and HBO, over the content of others, by making it stream faster or not count toward data caps. An absence of no blocking rules means that internet providers could stop apps that compete with their own from reaching consumers. This would not be fair.

My husband and I are already paying almost $200 a month for cable tv and

internet, and we can’t afford to pay more. Ending these rules gives internet providers too much power. Do not end the net neutrality rules!