

Good Afternoon –

I would like to examine a section of Chairman Pai's bio page at <https://www.fcc.gov/about/leadership/ajit-pai>. This quote reveals several pieces of truth about the Chairman's proposal to dismantle net neutrality – that the proposal represents a potentially catastrophic mistake, that the proposal stands opposed to the philosophical viewpoint the Chairman claims to have, and that the proposal is a patently bad idea not only for consumers and businesses, but for the economic system of America, and the wellbeing of the world at large.

“Especially when it comes to innovation, the Internet has leveled the playing field. It's created a phenomenon that Chairman Pai calls the “democratization of entrepreneurship.” With a good idea and a broadband connection, entrepreneurs anywhere can compete in ways unthinkable a generation ago. “

Chairman Pai seems to clearly understand the value of net neutrality to people wishing to start businesses. The internet has indeed served thus far as a great equalizer, providing people with the ability to take their good ideas to the internet, and compete with the likes of major established companies. Chairman Pai's proposal changes this scenario significantly, and not for the better. Under the proposed regulatory changes, there would be a third ingredient required for economic viability beyond the “good idea and a broadband connection” that Chairman Pai's bio mentions: the money to pay ISPs not to throttle traffic to your site in a way that cripples your service and eliminates you from the competition.

Obviously, this is bad for people attempting to start new businesses. Perhaps less obvious is how it works to the detriment of the consumer. Essentially, the problem is that the raised barrier of entry creates a push in the favor of larger corporations and established companies which will lead closer and closer to a monopoly. This will eliminate competition, thus removing the incentive for the larger companies that already have control of the market to innovate and improve their products or to keep their prices competitive. Without these pressures, technological innovation and economic growth will stagnate, and prices will become higher and higher. It's easy to see why this is bad for the consumer, for the economics of our nation, and for anyone in the world with an interest in having answers found to their questions. It's important to remember that what technology companies are in the business of doing is creating tools for other people to use – this isn't just about the type of businesses you normally think about being associated with the internet. The inability for new good ideas to spread quickly, gain momentum and find success will work against the progress of every industry, every social cause, and every individual who has something meaningful to contribute to the human experiment.

- Ethan Swartzentruber