My name is Emma. I am a US citizen and a resident of New York State. I want to urge the FCC to reconsider their plan to undo the Title II net neutrality rules.

I reviewed the FCC’s summary of the 17-108 “Restoring Internet Freedom” proceedings, and saw that it outlines four Internet Freedoms it seeks to preserve: “the freedom to access lawful content, the freedom to use applications, the freedom to attach personal devices to the network, and the freedom to obtain service plan information.” While Chairman Pai and Commissioners O’Rielly and Carr may believe that the deregulatory measures will serve these goals, undoing the Title II rules is not the way to restore or preserve a free internet.

As an independent content creator, I rely on free and open internet access to share my work with others. I want people to be able to view my content without ramming up against a paywall. Creators and audiences need an open internet in order to preserve innovation.

For republican democracy to function, we need an informed populace. We need citizens who know what’s going on in our country and our world. If internet service providers are allowed to regulate internet access, this has the potential to put one more obstacle between American citizens and an open circulation of information. Repealing Title II allows more leeway for subtle censorship. As FCC Commissioner Rosenworcel wrote in a recent op-ed for the Los Angeles Times, internet service providers would acquire “the power to choose which voices online to amplify and which to censor.” That power does not belong in their hands. Our mass media have enough gatekeepers.

One of the world’s greatest innovations is the public library. I have been visiting my local library since I was two years old, when I was just learning to read. The library system has bolstered my education and broadened my worldview. I came to the library with questions. I often left with even more questions—but I also left with stacks of books, and countless ideas. The information and resources of the public library system are invaluable to me.

I suspect—I hope—that the people reading this letter have similar stories. Libraries have the capacity for incredible public good. Their power is protected by the fact that librarians cannot charge extra for access to certain shelves. No “priority seating,” no accelerated checkout, no special hours for people willing to pay a surcharge. When you step into a library, it is your desire to learn—not your ability to pay—that governs your experience.

The internet, at its best, is like a library. It is a library at our fingertips, accessible through our computers and other internet-enabled devices. It ought to be treated as such, rather than as a commercial enterprise. The internet is not just a facet of American economy, but of American culture and dialogue. As the world’s ideas and conversations shift onto digital platforms, preserving open internet access becomes *more* important, not less.

Net neutrality protects our small businesses, our innovators, and ultimately, our democracy. We cannot afford to abandon those protections.

Emma C. Carpenter