I am writing in opposition to the proposal to eliminate net neutrality.

Doing so would be a profoundly undemocratic act. Internet is the primary news source for most Americans. Living in a small town the only access I have to comprehensive state, national, and international news is by internet. Allowing internet service providers to be gatekeepers for vital public information has the potential to skew the political viewpoints available to Americans. As such it violates the spirit and very possibly the letter of the First Amendment.

Increasingly Americans rely on the internet to access government services at all levels. Eliminating net neutrality has the potential to restrict citizen access to government services and even to do so selectively, so that citizens of differing classes, races, or political views are offered different speeds to access government services.

The fact that ISP’s have spent many millions lobbying to eliminate net neutrality means that they expect to earn greatly increased profits if they are successful. These profits will come from the pockets of individual citizens. Some, like me, will be able to pay; many with more limited resources will not. Thus, information availability and access will become even more skewed in favor of the rich than it already is.

Eliminating net neutrality is being advertised as eliminating burdensome regulation. In fact, if the FCC makes rules to prevent ISP’s from silencing certain viewpoints, enforcing those rules will be much more burdensome than the current rule. On the other hand, if the FCC allows the ISP’s to do whatever they want, lawsuits will tie up the FCC and the ISP’s for years to come.

Finally, ISP’s are monopolies or near monopolies in most places and should be regulated the same as any other private utility. If the FCC fails to do so, or does so in a way that is not in the public interest, I predict that many localities and states will revoke the charters of their local ISP’s and operate ISP’s themselves, driving for profit ISP’s out of business. My town has already seriously considered doing so and has begun to build infrastructure to that end.