November 25, 2017

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW, Washington, DC 20554

RE: Comment on Docket 17-108, Restoring Internet Freedom

To the Chairman:

I am writing to comment on the proposed rule changes that would end net neutrality. I stand strongly opposed to this proposed rule change that would bring about an end to net neutrality. From what I understand, the proposed rule change would appear to give the right to telecoms to be able to charge additional for premium services or more bandwidth. I sense this would give telecoms the right to discriminate against websites that they either deem to be a threat, or to their philosophy—especially if it is an anti-corporate stance, by pricing them off the internet, or to a lower tier of service, where it would take too long for the average person to download their web page and thus their message. It appears to me that a telecom could go so far as to discriminate against any position espoused by anyone they don’t agree with, or that goes against the prevailing political philosophy. I see this as the beginnings of corporate censorship—and a direct affront to the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This proposed rule change subverts the First Amendment to the Constitution, and the Federal Government’s role in safeguarding our Constitutional protections that were memorialized when the Declaration of Independence was signed on July 4, 1776, to an extent heretofore unseen.

This country was based on the notion of free speech, and its stand against government oppression. This current rule being considered to end net neutrality is anything but “free internet;” indeed, it appears to give telecoms more power than they should be allowed to have, by changing the regulatory scheme to allow the telecoms the freedom to do whatever they choose to do, in the interest of maximizing profit, and—perhaps more importantly—enabling them to control speech by pricing out of reach of those individuals and businesses they so choose to. Ending the rules governing net neutrality would, I suspect, change the power dynamic to one where the corporation becomes the censor of anything they deem inappropriate. It goes counter to what the Founding Fathers laid out as the blueprint for this country, with regard to free speech—and I consider this proposed rule change does represent a real threat to free speech in this country. I am against the notion that free speech should belong to the highest bidder with respect to the Internet—or anywhere else, for that matter. Since the 1830s, the Courts have consistently ruled in favor of corporations and business; were it not for the legislative branch, the consumer would have no real protections in their dealings with business. I see this proposed rule change as a dangerous rollback to government oversight—and your agency’s oversight of the Internet. I predict that the Courts would allow the telecoms to do whatever they please, if this rule were to pass, and net neutrality were to end. This is one area where the FCC should regulate the Internet as a public utility, to allow individuals and companies to have an equal and free voice in which to express their ideas

Censorship, in any form, ought not to be allowed or tolerated by any government agency. It is one thing to limit “fighting words,” as the Supreme Court famously decided to do in Chaplinsky v. State of New Hampshire, 315 U.S. 568 (1942), and quite another to deregulate telecommunication companies, such that they can effectively control Internet content, by pricing certain companies or individuals out of the Internet. I note that over 22 million comments have been made on this proposal; 123,000 in the last month alone. This is a controversial proposal, and the number of comments should give the Commission time to reflect and pause before changing the current scheme concerning net neutrality.

I urge you in your official capacity as commissioner of the FCC to not change the current regulatory scheme concerning net neutrality.

Thank you.

Sincerely:

Mark Murphy

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