I am writing to comment on this ill-conceived notion of allowing internet service providers to offer preferential treatment to large companies who can afford higher to pay extra for hi internet speed, allowing companies like Amazon to drive the few remaining small competitors out of business.

Also, in rural states like Maine, the ISPs are also the cable companies which charge exorbitant rates for poor service and selection. Ending net neutrality will only encourage to impose this method of operation on their Internet service as well, putting this increasingly essential utility out of reach of yet more low income Mainers.

As someone who recently completed a job search, the Internet was not merely a source of entertainment, like cable TV (which I abandoned because of the high cost and lack of real choice). It was essential for the job hut. There’s not just the online job sites like Monster, Indeed, Glassdoor, etc. More and more states like Maine are closing career centers, or making them less accessible. There are two career centers in southern Maine, neither of which are easily accessible to major population centers. This forces most of those on unemployment to rely on the Internet to file claims and log job searches. They are also required to open an account on the Unemployment Bureau’s Internet Job Bank.

The Internet also provides job seekers with valuable tools like O-Net and online tutorials up both learn and update software skills essential in the current job market. There’s also programs like Google Docs, which can be used to write resumes and cover letters.

As I stated earlier, the Internet is already unaffordable for many Mainers. They have to use their local libraries to search for jobs, check email, pay bills, etc using the patron dedicated computers. Many low income students also rely on libraries to complete online assignments. Libraries also provide free access to a variety of online research tools like Mango Language Tutorials, the Marvel Database, free resume writing tools, etc. Many of which will have to be cut back due to the additional charges they’ll be forced to pay for high speed Internet under the new guidelines.

All in all the new Internet guidelines will only serve to widen the digital divide here in rural America.