

I support strong net neutrality and oppose the adoption of the proposed new rule or the redefining of broadband as an “information service.” I work at a feminist non-profit working to end gender-based violence. As part of my job, I work with incarcerated survivors of domestic violence. In order to do my job competently, I need to access research, information, and opinions from sources outside the mainstream media. I do not want my internet service provider to be able to limit my access to these smaller, independent voices, nor do I want traditional, corporatized entities to be able to smother the competition by buying up access. An open internet is key to building coalitions of like-minded people and to lifting up the voices and perspectives of populations who have been excluded from traditional, white, patriarchal systems. An end to net neutrality would severely limit our ability to use the internet as an activist tool to rally support and promote new ideas.

In addition, my husband runs a small business that is entirely internet-based; the product is a digital download. He is also an active member of an online community supporting and encouraging the growth and development of new online business start-ups. Enabling corporations to purchase preferential treatment would devastate companies like my husband’s and would quickly kill the entrepreneurial spirit of his online community.

It does not make sense to me to recategorize broadband from a “telecommunications service” into an “information service.” In my community there are only two internet service providers available, and neither is a perfect service. I am glad that all I must purchase from them is the “on-ramp” to the internet; I do not use those service providers for my cloud storage, my email, or other services. I like being able to weigh the merits of the many other service providers available via the internet, finding the cloud storage, email, etc. that best suits my needs. I shudder to think what the quality of services would be like if my ISP were able to coerce me into using their branded version of those services.