

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

September 15, 2014

Dear Chairman Wheeler and Commissioners Clyburn, Rosenworcel, Pai, and O'Reilly:

We write to urge you to create strong rules to ensure a free and open internet where all ideas enjoy the same speeds. Our organizations are diverse and varied in focus and approach, but we are united in (1) our shared mission to improve the lives of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) Americans, and (2) our shared support for open Internet rules, as the Internet is necessary to ensure the successful continuation of our work on behalf of the LGBT community.

The value that the open Internet has had and continues to have for the LGBT community cannot be overstated. Studies have demonstrated what our organizations have known for years: when you encounter stories and images of LGBT individuals, you are much more likely to have positive views about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. The Internet has allowed us to share our stories with unprecedented reach and has amplified the voices of many who are unrepresented in traditional media. Though there has been encouraging progress for LGBT Americans, many parts of the nation continue to struggle with acceptance. Young LGBT Americans who live in rural communities often feel isolated and many endure bullying and harassment; for them the open Internet is a lifeline to support, information, community and resources.

The open Internet has been an incredibly empowering tool for LGBT Americans, and we are deeply concerned that the FCC's proposed rule threatens the neutrality that has allowed our stories and networks to flourish. Many of our organizations lack the resources to secure priority or "fast-lane" services for our content, though our content matters for many in the communities we serve. We also cannot ignore the threat of censorship by unsupportive ISPs who under the proposed rules could slow down websites to the point that they are unusable, and who may receive pressure to do so from unsupportive organizations in the ISPs' communities. The "commercial reasonableness" standard and promise of a minimum speed do not assuage our concerns. They provide us little certainty and the promise of being in a slow lane.

We urge the FCC to abandon its current proposal and to adopt a rule banning discrimination based on application or content and banning new tolls. To do so, the FCC must classify Internet Service Providers as common carriers under Title II of the Communications Act to protect the open Internet and promote net neutrality, which we depend on in our work on behalf of LGBT Americans.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Gill, Chairman Gill Foundation

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Trans\*H4CK

Code for Progress

Get//Out

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Forum for Equality