

Internet is Essential Avenue Free Speech

A level economic playing field for all those on the internet is essential to our freedoms. If internet communication is controlled by commercial enterprise, according to who can afford to spend the most money, we will no longer have the freedoms that have made the internet so successful. Why, specifically is the internet so successful? Because Net Neutrality provides a platform for free speech, equal opportunity and economic innovation in America. Since the FCC removed this basic protection in 2005, the top executives of phone and cable companies have stated their intention to become the Internet's gatekeepers and to discriminate against Web sites that don't pay their added tolls.

This fundamental change would end the open Internet as we know it. It would damage my ability to connect with others, share information and participate in our 21st century democracy and economy. The FCC must ensure that broadband providers do not block, interfere with or discriminate against any lawful Internet traffic based on its ownership, source or destination.

In my work, I use the internet to find resources based on evaluations, peer reviews, new innovations, commentary, and many other forms of communication that would be hampered, and probably eliminated, if the highest bidders and communication companies take control. I also use the internet to educate and inform others about health and wellness, and other topics, based on my training, expertise and 25 years of experience in my field. I do this as a public service, as do many other professionals in a myriad of fields. This open dialogue and opportunity for education is extremely important to our rights to free speech and to our rights as citizens to "meet" and learn from one another.

I also use the internet to introduce innovations and new products. Why should those who have a great deal of money be the only ones who have this opportunity? This is one of the main reasons the internet has experienced such success: wealth does not determine opportunity. This is one of the founding principles for our democracy: That we respect and protect the opportunity for ALL citizens to make a good life for themselves - the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This is good for the American economy, because it stimulates innovation and business growth.

Without free access to the internet, I will no longer be able to freely comb the resources there to find what I am looking for - I will have to choose from those who have the money to "advertise" - That is the very obstacle I want to avoid when I use the internet. I will also no longer be able to provide the resources I currently provide, nor inform people about my products and services. I am a sole proprietor, and I operate a very small business - but I am one of millions in this country who do so, and we make up the backbone of this country's economy. Do not stifle us for the sake of the small minority who hold the majority of the country's wealth - That is simply and clearly the wrong thing to do, for the country as a whole, our economy, and our individual rights as citizens of this great country.

