Rob Atkinson of industry-funded front group ITIF told the FCC that while Net Neutrality advocates "bemoan the state of competition in the American broadband marketplace (often with little foundation) there is always at least one alternative to the local telephone or cable provider: non-participation." Network neutrality undermines only one thing: control over the free market by monopolistic providers. The option of non-participation is laughable at best: most people who don't have internet and a telephone cannot maintain employment, due to the inability for employers to contact them; and this in turn directly impacts the economy in lost productivity (as well as potentially causing homelessness). The result is that people cannot afford a lack of these services, which are basic to the culture and provide not only entertainment, but a vital link to new ideas and a lead-in to innovative thought as a result.

Network neutrality would create a world of innovators, as a lack of access to new ideas and information prevents innovation from occurring. Often, it's the simplest ideas which are overlooked by those who are very focused on problems, and it takes someone who is outside the issue to really focus in on things.

Rob Atkinson's statement that there is "little foundation" for the state of competition being lacking is a direct (and unfounded) refutation of the actual numbers: telephone companies which service the very poor (who are often the best innovators) are limited in number, and generally try to prevent any threat to their market share as a standard practice of business. This includes telecommunications infrastructure owners, who are supposed to share their infrastructure in a share-and-share-alike fashion, passing only the cost of operation to those who have no choice but to use the existing infrastructure. It is even more vital in such cases that traffic be offered neutral priority (rather than high or low) for the very reason that it promotes healthy competition within the marketplace.

Likewise, individual use of the telecommunications infrastructure means that choice in many areas is limited to a single carrier, who can choose to deprioritize anyone who chooses an outside carrier without network neutrality regulations. A neutral network is necessary for simple quality-of-service needs, and this practice means that non-participation is unnecessary because a healthy level of competition for market share can once again flourish.

Innovation itself is benefited by network neutrality, because the sole source of innovation is not big business or small business or even government: it's individual minds which conceive a clever solution to an ongoing problem. Where such a solution is not able to occur because no protections exist which allow equal standing for access, innovation is instead stifled. This is a difficult concept for many executives of larger companies to accept, but it is nonetheless a fact.

Network neutrality protects the competition in a marketplace and undermines only the control of market share by companies, so that a free market can actually occur. In preventing content or

access, it is a much simpler matter to control the market, and therefore only larger companies benefit. Consumer protection is a lost art, but without it the average consumer becomes a victim of the very system which is supposed to be in place to protect them.

I urge you to consider network neutrality as a vital part of the free market, and protective of the Constitutional interests of innovation (rather than a hindrance to it).