

I am a teacher. I use the internet to do research, find materials for lessons, and otherwise aid my work as an educator. My students use the internet almost every day in my classroom. I and my students rely on an open, free, and unfettered internet to engage in the important business of learning and laying a foundation for the future of this country.

Without vital net neutrality protections, companies like Verizon and Comcast, which have a commercial incentive to limit the free use of the internet, can decide what I and my students will be able to see, say, and learn from online. These companies should not have the power to determine my fate on the internet.

I am passionate about the preservation of net neutrality because I understand what it means, not just for myself, but for my students and the future of the United States. The internet is our time's most important means of communication - of exercising free speech - and it is and will continue to be invaluable for my students and generations to come. If my students are not free to express themselves and learn from the expression of others on the internet, how can they use the internet to learn?

If corporations are allowed to dictate how and when the internet is used, and what content is available to which users, then those corporations will be determining what people know and learn, how they think, and what they can say to one another. In essence, for-profit corporations will be determining our culture and the education of our future leaders. I do not want my ability to access and create knowledge, or that of my students and future children, to be dependent on the profits of companies that have only their own interests at heart.

This is why open internet is essential to my life. I recognize that anything other than an open internet will be highly detrimental to myself, my students, and our future. Free speech cannot be restricted from a constitutional point of view, and should not be restricted from an ethical and human point of view. The founders of this country recognized the subtle yet supreme importance of guaranteed freedom of speech. Please do not allow their ideals for this country to be perverted.

The FCC must have the power to protect consumer access to the most important communications medium of our time. The FCC must stand with me and keep the internet in the hands of the people who use it every day. Please reclassify broadband as a "telecommunications service" and keep the internet open and free of corporate gatekeepers.

"Common" people, like myself, are not politically or economically powerful enough to protect our own freedom in this case. Therefore, the FCC, which is an extension of the government and therefore of the will of the people, must protect our freedoms for us.

My freedom is not a commodity to be bought and sold.

I understand that lobbyists can be very persuasive in legal and other matters, that it seems politically valuable to side with the big corporations mentioned above, and that you are under tremendous political and economic pressure to allow net neutrality to wither and die. However, the FCC was not created in order to retain its own political power or that of its members, or to help individual or corporate entities make money. It was created to protect the constitutional right to free speech through any communications medium. The internet is my means of exercising that right.

Allowing corporations to act as "gatekeepers" and demand a fee for unlimited access to the internet means allowing those corporations to deny me my constitutional rights. Corporations have a right to require payment for services rendered, but that does not mean that they have a right to restrict my freedom to use that service as I wish to. Such restrictions would be equivalent to selling a person a hamburger, but then charging them an extra fee to eat it. Or charging a person bus fare, and then dictating where and how that person can use the bus based on the color of her skin.

If free and open internet access is limited by entities with economic incentives, then the internet, and therefore freedom of speech, will be bent and twisted for profit. The precedent set here would be unthinkable: that constitutional rights can be perverted for the sake of money. I cannot even imagine all the ways such a precedent could be capitalized on in the future, but I do know that it would mean the slow but inexorable deterioration of civil liberty in this country.

Please protect my rights and those of my students and everyone else in this country, for we are not able to protect ourselves. Please reclassify broadband as a "telecommunications service," to keep the internet open and free for everyone.