

AFL-CIO



MMTC
Minority Media &
Telecom Council



National
Urban League



June 18, 2010

Dear Chairman Rockefeller and Chairman Waxman:

As leaders of national civil rights, labor, and environmental organizations, we urge you to move forward quickly on narrowly targeted legislation that clarifies Federal Communications Commission authority to protect an Open Internet and to apply Universal Service funding to broadband.

The build-out of affordable high speed Internet to every American household, business, and community, along with programs to ensure that every American has the skills needed to participate fully in our digital society, remain critical tasks for our nation.

Fortunately, under the leadership of President Obama and FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski, we now have a National Broadband Plan that provides a blueprint to address these infrastructure challenges.

Yet the United States continues to lag behind the rest of the world in high-speed networks. Our nation has fallen to 15th in the world in broadband adoption. More than 100 million Americans do not have broadband at home. There is a persistent digital divide based on race, income, geography, and age. Further, most U.S. broadband networks cannot deliver the speeds necessary to run advanced applications and services that foster sustainable communities and enable cost-effective improvements in education, energy, health, entrepreneurship, and public services.

We are united in our support of those elements of the National Broadband Plan that spur building and upgrading our high-speed networks, providing affordable access and digital skills to every American and building high speed capacity to every community anchor institution.

Unfortunately, the recent *Comcast* court decision threatens to divert our attention from these critical national objectives. The court concluded that the FCC had not demonstrated that it has jurisdiction over broadband Internet access. As a result, some question whether the FCC has authority to enforce its 2005 Open Internet principles and to use the Universal Service Fund to support the build-out of advanced broadband networks.

We can avoid further delays in building out a world class network if Congress quickly moves to pass legislation that clarifies FCC authority to protect an Open Internet and to apply Universal Service funding to broadband. Such narrowly targeted legislation would:

- Make clear that federal Universal Service funding may be used to support broadband build out and programs to encourage broadband adoption and use by low-income households;
- Establish the FCC Open Internet principles as the law of the land, ensuring that broadband Internet service providers (ISPs) do not prevent users from sending and receiving the lawful Internet content of their choice; running lawful applications and services of their choice, subject to the needs of law enforcement; and connecting their choice of legal devices that do not harm the network, all subject to reasonable network management;
- Require broadband Internet access, service, application, and content providers to make available to consumers transparent and accurate information, in widely spoken languages, including Spanish, about the capabilities and network management practices of their offerings;

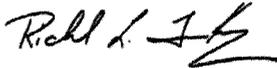
- Ensure that broadband ISPs do not engage in unreasonable discrimination against any lawful Internet content, application, or service that harms competition or consumers;
- Ensure that minority business and entrepreneurs are given meaningful opportunities to participate in the build out of high-speed networks.

Such a narrowly tailored bill will make clear that the FCC has authority to protect free speech on the Internet and to foster universal, affordable high-speed networks. Most important, it will allow us to move forward to make the job-creating investments necessary to implement the recommendations and meet the goals of the National Broadband Plan.

We must ensure that any action or inaction does not widen the digital divide. Instead, we must broaden opportunity for all consumers and communities, to increase diversity and ensure that all Americans can engage in the Internet Age. We don't want to go backward or push further into the future the time when the digital divide is finally closed. We urge you to proceed quickly with targeted legislation that firmly grounds FCC jurisdiction to protect an open Internet and to promote universal, affordable broadband. We cannot afford inaction which will slow the closing of the digital divide by shifting costs to the poor and discouraging deployment to low income and other disadvantaged Americans. Meanwhile, we recognize that there are important long-range issues that should be included in a more comprehensive update of the Communications Act.

In this way, we will make sure that all Americans, and most especially our children, have access to the unlimited information on the Internet, and that our nation will lead the world in advanced communications networks capable of supporting sustainable communities and spurring economic growth and job creation today and into the future.

Sincerely,



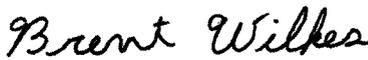
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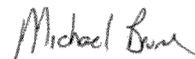
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 1, 2010

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STATEMENT OF THE MINORITY MEDIA AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COUNCIL ON THE FCC'S OPEN INTERNET PROPOSALS

MMTC has never been a fan of rigid net neutrality rules. However, given the FCC's desire to put rules in place, we think it has found a reasonable path forward. And it appears to have done that through a regulatory structure flexible enough to stimulate the investments and create the jobs that will ensure that the Internet is both open and ubiquitous.

One-third of Americans are not yet online, and today the FCC has responded to this issue. As it did in its magnificent National Broadband Plan this March, the FCC has made universal broadband access and adoption – and closing the digital divide – the nation's highest telecom policy priorities. This is appropriate and laudable.

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NEWS RELEASE

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**URBAN LEAGUE CEO PRAISES FCC ANNOUNCEMENT BUT CALLS FOR MEASURES TO ENSURE
MINORITY ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION**

NEW YORK (December 1, 2010) -- Today Marc Morial, President and CEO of the National Urban League, praised Federal Communications Chairman Julius Genachowski for his announcement of the December meeting agenda.

"This announcement is an important step toward protecting an open internet and providing the clarity needed by the broadband service providers," Morial said. "Our communities' ability to access the news, civic, employment, educational and financial information and services available on the internet is critical to achieving our mission of economic empowerment and equality.

"We also strongly urge the FCC to adopt strong, enforceable provisions to insure that minority and women owned businesses and workers are afforded meaningful opportunities to participate in the expansion, deployment and buildout of the broadband system in the United States. The National Urban League will advocate for such provisions in any final rule to be adopted by the FCC, and for long-overdue reform of the Universal Service Fund."



**The Union for the
Information Age**

Communications Workers of America

For release Dec. 1, 2010

Contact: Candice Johnson or Chuck Porcari, 202-434-1168, cjohnson@cwa-union.org and cporcari@cwa-union.org.

CWA: FCC Chairman's Initiative on Open Internet Will Jumpstart Broadband Buildout

Statement by CWA President Larry Cohen on the framework announced by Federal Communications Commission Chairman Julius Genachowski to ensure an open Internet:

Washington, D.C. – The Communications Workers of America supports Chairman Genachowski's initiative to sustain open Internet principles and create the stable conditions necessary for critical investment and quality job creation in broadband networks.

Building on the legislative framework proposed by Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), this proposal fully incorporates the FCC's open Internet principles that have won broad support.

The United States lags behind the rest of the world in development and expansion of this vital infrastructure. The Chairman's initiative will jumpstart the investment America needs.

CWA and other organizations in the progressive community, including national civil rights, environmental and labor groups, have called for action to implement the FCC's principles of net neutrality: free speech, no blocking, no unjust or unreasonable discrimination and transparency.

Chairman Genachowski's plan does that, and we urge the Commission to approve this framework.

The buildout of true 21st century broadband networks has been stalled over the net neutrality debate; it's critical that we end the gridlock and shift our focus to the investment that will allow the United States to catch up with the rest of the world.

The lack of high speed broadband has real implications for our country's economic growth, for residents in rural areas and urban communities who are encountering a widening digital divide and for communities who have no way to compete without high speed broadband.

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CWA represents 700,000 workers in communications, media, airlines, manufacturing, public service and health care.

PRESS RELEASES

LULAC Encouraged by Progress from the FCC on Net Neutrality

December 1, 2010

Contact: Lizette Jenness Olmos, (202) 365-4553 mobile

Chairman's Proposed Rules Preserve Internet Openness while Ensuring the Costs of Broadband Deployment are not Shifted onto Consumers

Washington, DC – Today, the League of United Latin American Citizens was encouraged by FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski's announcement of proposed rules that will preserve the open, vibrant Internet while ensuring that the costs of broadband deployment are not shifted onto the backs of consumers. The announcement should serve as a blueprint for compromise on Net Neutrality and allow the FCC to refocus attention on its National Broadband Plan which LULAC believes should be the agency's number one priority.

"Chairman Genachowski today indicated that the FCC is close to resolving this important debate and will issue a draft order that appears to be based on Chairman Waxman's legislation, which LULAC has already endorsed," said Margaret Moran, LULAC National President. "We find this to be a good compromise to the complex challenge of how to best regulate the internet through the preservation of important net neutrality principles, while securing an environment that encourages access, adoption and continued investment in our digital future."

As we have long maintained, Americans on the wrong side of the Digital Divide - as well as those who stretch their thin budgets to subscribe today - can ill afford to shoulder the \$350 billion price tag for deploying the next generation of high-speed pipes throughout the nation. LULAC had early expressed concern to the FCC that if net neutrality rules barred innovative partnerships between content providers and internet service providers, consumers would be left to pick up the entire tab of the broadband build out to the homes—a prospect that we find unacceptable.

President Obama has repeatedly stressed the importance of broadband Internet access for job creation, skills training and education. For Latinos, who make up a disproportionate amount of America's unemployed, the stakes could not be much higher. We're encouraged by the FCC's proposal and we anxiously await its details. In addition, we believe it is important for Congress to weigh in on this issue to ensure that the FCC is given clear authority to enforce these rules given recent court decisions that have cast doubt on the extent of the FCC's ability to regulate broadband.

"As seen in our 60 community technology centers, Hispanic Americans use broadband to connect to critically important tools and resources that dramatically improve the quality of their lives. A level-headed regulatory framework will ensure that members of the Latino community benefit from enhanced access to robust and reliable networks," stated Brent Wilkes, LULAC National Executive Director. "With only 24% of Spanish dominant households having broadband access in their homes, it is absolutely critical that the FCC conclude its work on net neutrality and return its focus to implementation of the National Broadband Plan which aims to provide 100% broadband access to all Americans."

The League of United Latin American Citizens, the largest and oldest Hispanic membership organization in the country, advances the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, housing, health and civil rights of Hispanic Americans through community-based programs operating through 880 LULAC councils nationwide.

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NAACP Statement:

As our nation's oldest and largest grassroots based civil rights organization, the NAACP is encouraged by FCC Chairman Genachowski's remarks concerning the proposal that reflect the FCC's desire to promote rules that safeguard the civil rights, free speech and economic opportunity for our nation's most vulnerable... We believe that the FCC's proposal will help foster equal access to affordable and sustainable broadband and stimulate job creation in all communities, including underserved, rural, low-income and, racial and ethnic minority communities.