

The AT&T T Mobil merger threatens our ability to stay connected as I have stated before in an earlier filing to this docket containing an article from the SaveTheInternet.com blog.

The Open Internet enables users to organize online in social media campaigns for political, social and economic change. It could be further threatened by the AT&T T Mobil merger. A petition on Change.org against Bank of America's proposed \$5 debit fees got so many signatures it got national media attention and President Obama spoke out against the fees along with some members of Congress including Senator Dick Durbin responsible for the debit card interchange swipe fee reform amendment to Wall Street Reform. The petition as I mention below was a success but could not have been without an open internet. Bank of America at first tried to downplay the frustrations of consumers and the petition but to try and save its reputation caved in as did all big banks in dropping the fee. Still some consumers have rightly started moving their money out of big banks by participating in Move Our Money campaigns to re-invest in local and community banks. Another petition recently launched telling TARGET retail stores to not make employees work on Thanksgiving Day has started getting media attention which hopefully too may end up being successful. Without an Open Internet social media campaigns would be more difficult to launch and it would be harder for them to succeed.

Ongoing petitions online against Bank of America continue telling B of A (BAC) to end their job killing layoffs, to stop investing in dirty coal and stop transferring risky financial derivatives and other investments used for gambling (mostly from Merrill Lynch which B of A now owns) to FDIC insured banks. However, without an open internet such petitions may not succeed or it may be a lot harder for them to succeed if corporate censorship online and discrimination is possible. When the Internet's gatekeepers consolidate too much power though they gain the ability to effectively discriminate. Saying we would never discriminate because customers would defect is one of their arguments against Network Neutrality but if there's limited competition and the big providers are all colluding to discriminate users can't leave one ISP and go to another to avoid ISP discrimination.

This is why competition mandates are so important with Title II reclassification of broadband. Rural and remote areas of the country are presently un-served with broadband if not under-served. At the same time partisan and ugly attacks on the US Postal Service which delivers a universal service no private mail carrier would offer are now occurring. Some want privatization of the USPS which would be a disaster. So would allowing AT&T T Mobil though or not having any competition mandates or Network Neutrality rules to keep the Internet participatory and open to all who want access.