

My name is Ryan Jerue. I am an 18 year old student at Barrington High School in Barrington, Rhode Island. Next year I will be attending The University of Massachusetts Amherst and will major in computer science. I am writing to you to express my concerns about net neutrality laws in the United States. I do not expect that you receive many letters from teenagers regarding this issue, but it is very important to the future of my generation and hence the future of the country as a whole.

The whole idea of net neutrality is a double edged sword but at the heart of it all is freedom. The only question is for whom is the freedom for? The companies that serve as internet service providers or the consumers who subscribe to said services. Service providers declare that they have a right to control what and how traffic is used on their infrastructure whereas consumers believe that they should have the liberty to view whatever content they wish on the internet freely. Both are respectable arguments, but in the argument made by consumers is more beneficial to the country as a whole. In order for the United States to remain competitive, free, and open, we must impose net neutrality laws.

Think of how some of the greatest companies found their birth on the internet. Mark Zuckerberg started Facebook from a dorm at Harvard, Google was started from a garage, and Amazon was founded from an apartment. Each of these companies have transformed both the American economy and American society by changing the way we interact with one another, find information, and purchase things. The United States was able to produce these companies because we gave the entrepreneurs an environment where they could succeed, take risks, and change the world. The United States must encourage the creation of companies such as these and the development creative thinkers that dreamed them, however by forgoing net neutrality laws we will do no such thing.

Net neutrality laws ensure that the internet is a fair and open marketplace. Anyone no matter how big or small can have the opportunity to succeed. The internet is often coined as the "great equalizer" as both big companies and small companies can use its services in an equal capacity. Bigger companies of course have access to more resources, but the end result of a consumer typing an address into the search bar allow for any company to succeed. Not imposing net neutrality legislation that allows all data to flow freely over the internet poses a challenge to this as it will allow the larger companies that have more money to influence how data flows over the internet. This is in my opinion a form of collusion as it is an agreement between an internet service provider and a company to control a market. Take the recent agreement between Netflix and Comcast in which Netflix had to pay Comcast in order to use its services. Netflix is luckily a multi-billion dollar company, it can afford to pay these Comcast in order to use Comcast's networks. On the other hand, smaller companies do not have such luxury.

If I were to say to start a company that competed with Netflix it would most definitely be a challenge in the absence of net neutrality laws. I would not be able to pay Comcast to use its network in the same way that Netflix could. If I wanted to make a search engine to compete with Google and Google had a contract with Comcast; I would likely find it difficult to compete with Google as paying Comcast would serve as an insurmountable barrier to entry. Net neutrality laws would prevent this from occurring, they would allow for anyone to build their dream on the internet in the same way Larry Page, Mark Zuckerberg, and Jeff Bezos did. People of my generation need to have this opportunity so that the next Google, Facebook, or Amazon can remain right here in the United States of America. If we want to create a generation of creative thinkers and visionaries, the United States must give them an environment that they can compete in. Furthermore, internet service providers are thriving in the current economic situation and do not need to abandon net neutrality to remain competitive.

Internet service providers are very profitable companies. Comcast, the nation's largest, made over \$6.8 billion in profits last year. Verizon made \$23.5 billion, AT&T made over \$30 billion, TimeWarner made over \$3.6 Billion, and the list goes on and on. On top of that, last year the Open Technology Institute did a study where

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the pricing and speed of internet connection in cities around the world was measured. The United States fared horribly in having both slow and expensive internet speeds. The United States cannot remain competitive if we have one of the worst values in broadband around the world. Internet service providers have the capital to invest in faster networks, they do not need the extra money from consumers or businesses in order to make this happen. It bewilders me on why these internet service providers demand they need more money in order to function. The Federal Communications Commission even gives out hundreds of millions of dollars in subsidies to these very same internet service providers so that they may expand their networks to rural areas and charge consumers a high amount of money to access the internet. These consumers as well as many other subscribers, only have access to one or two service providers in their zip code making competition and consumer led activism nearly impossible. Internet service providers are crying wolf on the strain that consumers put on their networks while simultaneously profiting billions upon billions of dollars from the same consumers.

The United States needs to impose net neutrality laws in order to keep a competitive, free, and open internet. While it is recognized that internet service providers have the right to freedom in how they offer their services, it is the freedom of consumers that drives our economy and allows the creation of great businesses and ideas. Net neutrality laws can ensure that this continues to happen as they allow for a level playing field for all companies both big and small. Additionally with the presence of net neutrality laws, internet service providers will still be able to offer their services and make a very healthy profit. The United States needs to look past the salaries and lobbying efforts of the service provider oligarchy in order create a brighter future for the dreamers of my generations and generations to come.