

The proposed abandonment by the FCC of net neutrality regulations is a BAD idea and benefits only ISPs (Internet Service Providers such as Comcast, etc). Abandoning net neutrality will give the ISPs the power to inhibit free speech and to pick internet commerce winners and losers. In addition, abandoning net neutrality will have a chilling effect on innovation (including both commercial innovation and democratic/political innovation). Rather than abandon net neutrality, the internet should be redefined as a public utility, and all internet access, including but not limited to internet access through broadband or any ISP, should be redefined as access to a public utility, i.e., the so-called Title II authority. This would mean much tighter oversight over broadband than is currently possible under Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. In addition, it is ridiculous that the rules are different for ISPs offering different technologies to access the same public utility, i.e., to access the internet. The same rules should apply to all ISPs, whether that access goes under the name of broadband, dial up, DSL, satellite or otherwise. SUPPORT FOR MY BELIEFS: I believe the internet is critical to our democracy through its open dissemination of information. No private entity (such as any ISP like Comcast or Verizon, of which I am a shareholder) should be able to determine who has access to what information on the internet. Giving any ISP that much power enables that ISP to inhibit the free speech fundamental to democracy. I do not want my ISP to be able to tell me what online news sources I can access on the internet. I do not want my ISP limiting where I can shop on the internet. That empowers the ISPs to pick my news sources and where I shop (and arguably what I am able to shop for). The cumulative impact of any ISP making those decisions for so many consumers is that the ISP will be able to pick both internet news and e-commerce winners and losers. I do not want any corporation to have that much power. In the extreme it brings us back to the old days when the local shop keeper needed to pay the local thug protection money to stay in business! I do not want my ISP chopping up the free internet into subscription packages. I do not want the internet, my internet that I use every day, to be carved up that way! Every internet content consumer, regardless of which ISP or technology is used to access the internet (DSL, cable, or otherwise) should have access to the same content on the internet as everyone else, as we do now under net neutrality. In other words, every content consumer regardless of ISP used should have equal access to everything on the internet. If a content provider (for example the Wall Street Journal or Netflix) wishes to charge a subscription fee for access, that is fine, but ISPs such as Comcast etc should not be able to block or slow down my access to any content provider. That inhibits the free speech fundamental to democracy. That profound and fundamental power should only be entrusted to a transparent governmental authority, and then only with the appropriate checks and balances. I do not object to an ISP charging the content CONSUMER for different speed levels (such as high speed modem rental verses regular speed modem). However, for the reasons noted above and below, I do object to the ISPs applying fast lane/slow lane/different charges for content PROVIDERS (such as Netflix or Amazon or your local startup.com or ANY content provider, no matter how big or small). Having different charges for content providers (some getting the fast lane, some not; some getting their sites effectively blocked, some not) is detrimental in that it hurts free competition. New market innovators with less money will not be able to pay for high speed fast lane service like the established Amazons and Netflix. Would the next Amazon or Netflix be able to start and successfully compete and survive under those high priced conditions? Similarly, would a start-up or independent political party or movement (such as the 99% or the Tea Party) be able to compete for access with well-funded established parties like the Democrats and Republicans? I do not think so, so the proposed rules have a chilling effect on BOTH commercial innovation and political/democratic innovation. Abandoning net neutrality empowers the Comcasts of the world to pick the e-commerce and political and news source winners and losers, which is far too much power for a private entity. Again, that profound and fundamental power should only be entrusted to a transparent governmental authority, and then only with the appropriate checks and balances. Which brings me to my last point, the need for checks and balances in government generally and in the FCC specifically. Based on the various news sources I read and hear, it appears that the FCC is staffed with many powerful staffers who have coincidentally (?) recently worked for the very ISPs that stand to benefit tremendously from the defeat of net neutrality. For example, I heard that FCC chairman Tom Wheeler is a former cable

industry lobbyist. I also read that as soon as Wheeler came into office, he announced the hiring of former Ambassador Philip Verveer as his senior counselor. A reported records request revealed that Verveer also worked for Comcast in the last year and was retained by two industry groups that have worked to block net neutrality, the Wireless Association (CTIA) and the National Cable and Telecommunications Association. Similarly, I read that in February, Matthew DeNero was brought into the FCC to work specifically on net neutrality. DeNero has previously worked as an attorney for TDS Telecom, an Internet service provider that has lobbied on net neutrality, according to filings. Just as a judge hearing a court case needs to recuse himself when there is even the appearance of possible bias, all these FCC people with extensive ISP histories should recuse themselves. For such an important issue to be fully and fairly resolved and satisfy this citizen's litmus test for fairness and thoughtfulness, there needs to be an informed, TRULY independent body determining these things. These decisions regarding net neutrality and the internet are critical to our democracy and free markets. There should be no gaming the system, or even the possibility or appearance of gaming the system (or favoritism), in this vital decision that impacts all Americans. Therefore, the proposed abandonment by the FCC of net neutrality regulations is a BAD idea and benefits only ISPs. Abandoning net neutrality will give the ISPs the power to inhibit free speech and to pick internet commerce winners and losers. In addition, abandoning net neutrality will have a chilling effect on innovation (including both commercial innovation and democratic/political innovation). Rather than abandon net neutrality, the internet should be redefined as a public utility, and all internet access, including but not limited to internet access through broadband or any ISP, should be redefined as access to a public utility, i.e., the so-called Title II authority. This would mean much tighter oversight over broadband than is currently possible under Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. In addition, it is ridiculous that the rules are different for ISPs offering different technologies to access the same public utility, i.e., the internet. The same rules should apply to all ISPs, whether that access goes under the name of broadband, dial up, DSL, satellite or otherwise. For such an important issue to be fully and fairly resolved and satisfy this citizen's litmus test for fairness and thoughtfulness, there needs to be an informed, TRULY independent body determining these things. These decisions regarding net neutrality and the internet are critical to our democracy and free markets. There should be no gaming of the system, or even the possibility or appearance of gaming the system (or favoritism) in this vital decision that impacts all Americans.