

To Whom It May Concern:

Net neutrality is the one and only protection most internet users have to ensure their voices are heard. No, say, small independent blogger will ever be able to pay a company for improved access to their websites. Corporations currently hold more power than any institution in America, and this will just be handing them more.

Companies have claimed net neutrality infringes their right to free speech. However, by its very nature it protects free speech, as limiting access to a website is no different than limiting that website owner's ability to speak freely. The decision as to whose voice will be heard the loudest, the clearest, and the soonest, should not be left to a company that cares more about its financial bottom line than any public good. This would be tantamount to requiring someone to purchase a permit to speak freely. No business entity should have the right to control how one may exercise this right, just as they cannot tell me I'm only allowed to freely speak in public from inside a sealed, soundproof box. To regulate one's ability to practice free speech in such a way is tantamount to denying this right.

Cable, telephone, electricity, natural gas; all these utilities are regulated by the government to ensure such essential services are available to all citizens honestly, fairly, and equally. This will even cripple the ability for a new website to reach popularity. If Facebook were to come out in a climate without net neutrality, they likely could never have paid to make their site easily accessible. Even multi-billion dollar corporations pouring money into the U.S. economy might not have been able to start without net neutrality.

Frank La Rue, UN Special Rapporteur on protection and promotion of freedom of expression through the internet, all but declared the internet a fundamental human right in his May 2011 report. I find the following point from his report particularly relevant: 85. Given that the Internet has become an indispensable tool for realizing a range of human rights, combating inequality, and accelerating development and human progress, ensuring universal access to the Internet should be a priority for all States. Each State should thus develop a concrete and effective policy, in consultation with individuals from all sections of society, including the private sector and relevant Government ministries, to make the Internet widely available, accessible and affordable to all segments of population." Cable companies currently petition you to limit the availability, accessibility, and affordability of the internet to any segment of the population or any entity not backed by seven to ten figure incomes.

Ladies and gentlemen of the FCC, I urge you to take a stand against monied corporate interests and rather support the rights of the average American. In the last several years, it seems the government has given more and more consideration to larger corporations and sources of wealth, rather than the common man that is the backbone of America. This is an opportunity to begin correcting this continuing discrimination against the rights of an individual compared with the rights of a corporation.

The public begs of you that you take a stand for us, when it seems no other government body will.

Thank you for your consideration,

Seth M. Tatom