

In the recent news, an issue dictating the broadband internet speeds of consumers vs. corporations arose, calling many people to arms about the state of affairs in the country. Words like a "free and open marketplace" and "pay to play" were tossed around a room filled with Vermonters.

The internet is the most opportunity creating entity. And according to net neutrality advocates, fast lanes for the 1% (the few individuals that can afford it) reinforce the wealth disparity in this country. This hot button issue on the commodification of the internet has joined together liberals and conservatives alike, grassroots organizations and big business. It is not hard to see why so many people oppose it - benefits for a brief few and sacrifices for the majority. It rings reminiscent of the 18th century British tyranny that created the seedling of our now great nation in the first place.

And the issue at hand, some 3 centuries previous, has remained much the same even though hundreds of years bridge this divide: taxation without representation.

Remember the 2010 Supreme Court case that had every political scientist jabbering away on about the ultimate demise of our democratic society? Citizens United set a precedent of corporations acting with the power and prestige of political entities while still receiving the individual sovereignties unique to the Bill of Rights. And although the Supreme Court's decision received some heat, it had nowhere near the following of the present issue of net neutrality.

The facts in this case could be argued, although they would appear entirely one-sided: that the Internet opens up a world of possibility to the individual. That the Internet is one of few marketplaces in the world in which everyone currently has equal and open access. But the facts do not need to be argued. Anyone with half a brain could tell you that net neutrality is at the cornerstone of a democratic society.

Rather, the reality and consequence of a decision made four years ago must be addressed. Otherwise, this will not be the final battleground. Corporations have seeped into every hallmark of our society - where we spend our money, where we put our money, what health insurance we provide for our families - the list is seemingly endless.

These corporations, with limitless resources for lobbying and political chest pounding, pervert the very nature of our political system. With such a conflict of interest and a certain disconnect with the needs of the voter, corporations have no place in the realm of politics.

I return to the conundrum posed above about British colonial tyranny. We revolted in the first place because of a certain disconnect between the constituents and those that represented them. Be no fool - the Senators that sit in Congress do not represent you. Coca-Cola, McDonald's, P&G, these are your civil servants now. No taxation without just representation. And creating a fast-lane for these corporations is no just reality.