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The internet is often thought of as just a hub for pornography. While there is a seemingly incalculable amount of it online, the web is so much more than just a way to get off. It's a connection to the world, a global link between people from all over our planet Earth. People can voice an opinion no matter how illogical and misinformed, or perfectly thought out, and sometimes profound, it may be. It's now a widely accepted source of credible information whereas when I was in middle school, even up until I graduated high school, there were close to zero online sources I was allowed to use for research papers and homework. It's a way for people to save money on items for everyday use, plan vacations, keep in touch with old friends and family members, for businesses to start up, for abused animals to be rescued, for patients to find doctors, for musicians and artists to reach an audience, and a virtually limitless source of entertainment. The internet is a tool people can use to enrich their lives.

With the new proposed Internet rules, I understand all of those things will still be available, but at what cost? If large companies are able to pay more money to have more content available at faster speeds, then the cost of their services will undoubtedly increase, which will inevitably trickle down to the end user, the consumer.

Whats fantastic about the internet the way it is, is that regular people with an idea have a way to bring it to fruition. When the federal government gets their hands on this piece of technology and starts sending it out to the highest bidder, then a normal, middle class citizen is automatically forced to the end of line, struggling to break through to middle of the pack. I'm not saying he or she will never be able to get noticed, but how is one man or woman supposed to compete a company like Amazon?

My biggest concern with all of this, is that since individuals or corporations with big bank accounts will be able to pay for their share of the internet they provide and how its distributed, when will they decide to start censoring, banning and eliminating existing content and refusing new content? A television station can choose not to use a sponsor if they don't agree with the product or a stance the manufacturing company holds. A sports team or association can force its owner to leave for saying what was on his mind. Since Comcast and Verizon will be paying extra for premium services, whose to say that certain websites and content won't be available once these rules take effect? After that, when will the government start regulating the remaining content so we can only see what they want us to see? I'm positive that I'll be reassured countless times that it won't happen, or why it will be better for me as an individual or the nation as a whole, when something made by the people, for the people, gets too tightly controlled, it will start to fall apart and be near impossible to recover.

It breaks my heart to see this happening. It's clearly nothing more than a money grab and it's pathetic. The extra money the government makes on this isn't ever going to come back to the people who are forced to shell out the extra dollars, which is truly sad because they're the same people who really did make the Internet great. Every funny, silly, stupid, convenient, disgusting, heartwarming, vulgar, horrifying, innovative, mundane, annoying and simply wonderful thing on the Internet, is because of us. Nowadays a lot of us do take it for granted, but that's no reason to be punished and restricted to use something that we, with no help from the government, created together as a legitimate, one-of-a-kind, global community.