

President Barack Obama  
White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Tom Wheeler, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

May 8, 2014

Dear President Obama and Chairman Wheeler:

We are writing to express our support for a truly free and open Internet. We strongly urge the Federal Communications Commission to reconsider and abandon efforts to adopt rules that would harm — rather than preserve — Net Neutrality.

The open Internet is a forum for free speech, innovation, civic engagement and the exercise of our basic rights. The Internet achieved this status because it was created on a platform governed by the principle of nondiscrimination.

In 2010, the FCC attempted to incorporate this principle into its open Internet rules. Those rules were thrown out earlier this year, leaving Internet users in limbo while the FCC decided its next move.

Now, instead of restoring this important principle of nondiscrimination, the Commission's proposal would make things even worse. It would reportedly propose rules that would enable phone and cable Internet service providers (ISPs) to discriminate both technically and financially against fledgling online companies, independent media outlets, nonprofit organizations and anyone else with a website. These policies would create troubling incentives for ISPs to create “artificial scarcity” to extract new sources of revenue. The result will be a two-tiered Internet: a fast lane for those willing or able to pay for it, and a dirt road for the rest of us.

This is discrimination pure and simple. It is the opposite of a free and open Internet.

President Obama, in 2007 you told the world, “I am a strong supporter of Net Neutrality,” rightfully asserting “that one of the best things about the Internet ... is that there is this incredible equality there.”

And Chairman Wheeler, last fall you wrote that “[o]ne of the signal achievements of this latest great information revolution — our network revolution — is how the results of its diffused control and increased autonomy produce ‘innovation without permission.’”

We wholeheartedly agree with both statements. Internet service providers should not be in the business of picking winners and losers online. But the proposal the FCC is currently considering gives ISPs the power to do exactly that, which is why it must be abandoned. Instead, the Commission must propose and adopt legally sound rules that keep the Internet an open and nondiscriminatory platform for speech and innovation.

Sincerely,

Access

American Civil Liberties Union

Appalshop, Inc.

Art Beyond Sight

Center for Environmental Health

Center for Media Justice

Centre College

Citizens for Sanity

ColorOfChange

Common Cause

Consumers Union

Council on American-Islamic Relations

CR Consulting

CREDO Mobile

Daily Kos

Defending Dissent Foundation

Demand Progress

Democracy for America

Diversified Media Enterprises

Electronic Frontier Foundation

Engine Advocacy

Entertainment Consumers Association

Evanston Community Television

FAIR

Fight for the Future

Free Press

Free Software Foundation

Future of Music Coalition

Glocal

Greenlining Institute

Greenpeace USA

Hackers & Founders

Harry Potter Alliance

Institute for Local Self-Reliance

Just Foreign Policy

LAMP (Learning About Multimedia Project)

Latino Print Network

LatinoRebels.com

Louder

Media Alliance

The Media Consortium

Media Equity Collaborative

Media Literacy Project

Media Matters for America

Media Mobilizing Project

MoveOn.org Political Action

Museums and the Web

*The Nation*

National Alliance for Media Arts + Culture

National Association of Black Journalists

National Association of Hispanic Journalists

National Association of Latino Independent Producers

National Hispanic Media Coalition

National Organization for Women

Netroots Foundation

New America Foundation's Open Technology Institute

New Moon Girls

NTEN

Occupy Network

OpenMedia.org

Pacific University

Park Center for Independent Media, Ithaca College

Participatory Politics Foundation

PEN American Center

The People's Press Project

Personal Democracy Media

PopularResistance.org

Presente.org

Progressive Change Campaign Committee

Prometheus Radio Project

reddit

Reel Grrls

RootsAction.org

Savvy System Designs, Inc.

SOA Watch San Francisco

St. Paul Neighborhood Network

The Stonewall Chorale

Student Net Alliance

SumOfUs

Tarakali Education

TheUpTake.org

ThoughtWorks

Tin House

Tully Center for Free Speech at Syracuse University

United Church of Christ Office of Communication, Inc.

Upwell

Women In Media & News

Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press

Women's Media Center

Writers Guild of America East

X-Lab