

Original email from the U.S. Industry Internet Association

Submitted on Dec 03, 2009

Email: Chris.Frillici@usiia.org

Subject: On Net Neutrality

Message:

I am writing on behalf of U.S. Industry Internet Association and after following your posts on Net Neutrality, I feel compelled to share with you some important information.

We agree that an open Internet is highly desirable and something everyone should have access to, however we must first provide the infrastructure that will allow access. Building these broadband networks will create jobs all over the country - from large cities to rural areas. And, with unemployment jumping to 10.2% nationwide, the prospect of further jobs loss is staggering.

The ISP's that stand to lose in the immediate implementation of Net Neutrality employ over 500,000 individuals. The financial implications of Net Neutrality on these ISP's would result in sweeping lay-offs, pushing even more families onto unemployment.

This concern has brought together 72 House Democrats, such as Eddie Bernice Johnson, Gregory Meeks, Elijah Cummings and Sheila Jackson-Lee to call for FCC Chairman Genachowski's careful consideration of regulations surrounding Net Neutrality. Their attached letter supports the eventual pursuit of Net Neutrality, but defines broadband expansion and access as a priority.

Such a significant loss of jobs also holds political implications for many Democrats in Congress facing constituents who site the economy and joblessness as their top concerns. Unless the job market improves, Democrats will face consequences starting in 2010.

Included below are key quotes from a wide array of liberal groups, like NAACP chapters, The Southern Christian Leadership Coalition and The Latino Coalition supporting a compromised approach to Net Neutrality that reflects both the economic situation and the need for broadband expansion.

Please let me know if you need additional information or if I can answer any questions.

Thank you,
Chris Frillici
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Broadband Opportunities Coalition Asian American Justice Center, League of United Latin American Citizens, National Council of La Raza, National Urban League

"As we and many others expressed in the media diversity proceeding in 2007, the Commission should exercise the greatest care to ensure that every new proposed regulation - no matter how well intended - will not

widen the digital divide or push farther into the future the day when the divide is closed. In that spirit, the Network Neutrality NPRM ought to ask commenters to demonstrate, with granular empirical evidence, that each proposed new broadband regulation is addressing a problem that has been well-documented with data, and that each proposed broadband regulation will not retard the closing of the digital divide by shifting costs to the poor or by discouraging adoption by, and deployment to low income and other disadvantaged Americans."

Left of Center Coalition

National Disability Institute, National Puerto Rican Coalition, US Hispanic Leadership Institute, Labor Council on Latin American Advancement, Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics, Inc., League of United Latin American Citizens,

MANA: A National Latina Organization, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, National Association of Neighborhoods, National Coalition of Black Civic Participation, Black College Communications Association, Dominican American National Roundtable, Hispanic Institute, Hispanic Technology and Telecommunications Partnership, Japanese American Citizens League, Latinos in Information Sciences and Technology Association, 100 Black Men of America, Asian American Justice Center, Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies, ASPIRA

"The consequences for our communities under a system of net neutrality regulations would be far reaching. The core concept of an open Internet, operated transparently, is highly desirable and we support it wholeheartedly.

But the nation can't afford to get this wrong. Depending on how it is defined, interpreted and applied, it's conceivable that some of the elements of net neutrality may be particularly detrimental to groups that we represent... Therefore, the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking ought to include the framework and a request for comment that would produce a careful and empirical analysis of the impact that these regulations would have on people with disabilities, low-income, minority, multilingual, elderly and young Americans. The Commission needs to ensure that net neutrality would not delay bridging the digital divide by altering consumer prices and discouraging broadband adoption and deployment. We would hope that nothing in the NPRM reflects presumed conclusions until such an analysis is complete."

Black Elected Officials

National Conference of Black Mayors, National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women, National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials, National Association of Black County Officials, National Black Caucus of State Legislators

"Our goal must be to provide Americans with the best broadband opportunities possible to support health care, education, job training and employment prospects. At this critical point in our nation's history, we must ensure that proposed FCC rules do not spur job losses that result in the destruction of local economies, or have the unintended effects of increasing consumer costs and discouraging broadband deployment. Therefore, we encourage the FCC to ensure that any new rules proposed can be clearly shown to benefit all consumers

and not expand the digital divide facing disadvantaged populations. We likewise urge the Commission to evaluate the findings of the forthcoming NPRM not in the abstract, but comprehensively, in context of achieving the greater goal set forth by President Obama and Congress in directing the creation of the National Broadband Plan.”

Southern Christian Leadership Conference

“Network neutrality is simply not needed. There is no believable evidence of attempts to control Internet access by providers, and regulations put in place to address this nonexistent problem could do much more harm than good.

Excessive federal regulation of the Internet - a communications medium that owes much of its remarkable development to the lack of burdensome government control - would slow investment, diminish innovation and retard the future growth of this vital technology. Consumers would suffer under network neutrality, not benefit. Deployment and adoption are the real issues that need to be addressed. Although tremendous strides have been made, our ultimate goals of universal availability and connection have not yet been achieved. About 90 percent of the households in the U.S. now have access to broadband yet only 63 percent take advantage of it.”

National Black Caucus of State Legislators

“Before you take regulatory action, I hope you will carefully consider the potential impact that net neutrality regulations will have on our competitiveness, on investment in fast networks and importantly on the issue of access and adoption for all communities to this important technology and infrastructure.”

The National Black Chamber Commerce

“However, we are worried about the potential consequences that net neutrality regulations could have on small businesses and American consumers.

The Commission’s Notice of Proposed Rulemaking could have detrimental effects on broadband price, adoption, and deployment. We urge the Commission to take a close look at how these rules would affect small businesses before taking any preemptive actions.”

National Black Caucus of State Legislators

“Before you take regulatory action, I hope you will carefully consider the potential impact that net neutrality regulations will have on our competitiveness, on investment in fast networks and importantly on the issue of access and adoption for all communities to this important technology and infrastructure.”

National Foundation for Woman Legislators Inc.

If net neutrality principles are codified and adopted, we will be taking a step backward. It would limit the innovation in how broadband services are delivered and who pays for them. Net neutrality will force one model on everyone - one in which the consumer will pick up the tab. That will make the service even further out of reach financially for too many consumers.

National Hispanic Council on Aging

"As the Commission approaches their work on this rulemaking it's critical that a conclusion is not drawn before the process begins. This process for developing a National Broadband Plan has been comprehensive and collaborative and the Commission must ensure that same process for this rulemaking. This process must incorporate all stakeholder input so we can continue to develop a robust and innovative Internet."

American Academy of Nursing

"AAN believes that the National Broadband Plan must encourage extensive private investment in broadband networks, infrastructure and applications, to ensure that networks are robust and secure. Private networks with state of the art network management systems are needed to facilitate high levels of data traffic, particularly with confidential and sensitive information...For this reason, AAN urges the Commission to maintain the open and transparent dialogue with stakeholder communities as it pertains to the NPRM. Similar to the National Broadband Plan, if stakeholders are engaged in the process, and that the process is not being driven by a foregone conclusion, the outcome is more likely to have successful results across society."

American Association of People with Disabilities

"As a rulemaking process starts involving "net neutrality", it is important that the Commission bears in mind that the current platform has led to innovation and participation for people with disabilities and therefore it should proceed cautiously in any policy approaches that might change this direction. AAPD regards all policy in light of our overarching technology principle...Our concern is that some policy changes could lead to less accessibility and usability, and less affordability, might create unintended barriers, or might lead to discouraging innovation and participation for people with disabilities."

Asian Women In Business

"In the wake of the toughest economic setbacks in a generation, one industry has consistently demonstrated its ability to invest in the future and provide innovative new tools for all Americans - Internet service providers. Internet service providers create high-paying jobs and opportunities for entrepreneurs in the information science and technology fields to create applications that have become vital economic engines for our nation. But, now, this vibrant industry is being threatened by increased regulation - network neutrality."

Dominican American National Roundtable

"There is certainly a challenge in making widespread broadband coverage universal. But we believe there is an even bigger challenge the FCC and public policy should address. How does America increase the approximately 60 percent take rate of broadband services. We need to enable more Americans to have broadband access, though education and other assistance if necessary...These are matters of importance to our constituents - not changes in regulatory structure that will, in the belief of many, constrain the innovation that has served this market so well. If the government dictates only one business model, that of forcing the end-user consumer to foot the entire network bill, then we have lost the momentum that has produced overwhelming innovation. At the same time we would back ourselves into a financial model that would force broadband prices out of the reach of many consumers in middle and lower economic strata."

The National Grange

"Technology is simply moving too fast and critical service applications are simply too important to be encumbered by a burdensome regulatory process, while at the same time, the social and cultural barriers to wide spread adoption are naturally receding at an expanding pace in the face of dynamic competition among various internet technology applications and platforms... The National Grange believes that issuance of a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on net neutrality at a time when the Commission is making significant progress in gathering the factual information to develop a National Broadband Plan is grossly premature and demonstrates an insensitivity to the grassroots perspectives of Americans living in underserved rural, farming and tribal communities. The Commission could have easily used the process of an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking or a Notice of Intent, similar to the NOI released to develop a National Broadband Plan, to create a full and complete record of the demonstrated need, or lack of need, for "net neutrality" which we would define as a comprehensive regime to define the rights, privileges, responsibilities and obligations of various parties who utilize, manage or provide services via the internet."

Latino Coalition

"Given the critical importance of broadband to our constituency and the rest of America, we are alarmed at the prospect of any FCC rule-making that would mandate net neutrality. Net Neutrality is a false issue. The real and significant issues are deployment of broadband and, even more important, reducing the substantial number of Americans who have the option of broadband access but are not taking advantage of it...Net neutrality regulation would not support either of these priorities. It would set back the private investment that is essential to broadband growth and compromise the quality of service already available by denying broadband carriers the right to manage their own networks. Adoption of net neutrality regulation would create serious long-term problems for broadband in America."

Native American TV

"NATV urges the Commission to handle the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on net neutrality in a similar manner: transparently, collaboratively, based on data and evidence. The Commission should maintain an approach that seeks counsel before reaching conclusions, particularly as it relates to net neutrality policies that could deter investments needed to build and operate high-speed Internet in traditionally un-served and underserved communities."

National Hispanic Medical Association

"Providers must be able to manage their networks in order to yield the returns on investment to justify the devotion of further resources for building out broadband networks. Policies that restrict private networks or limit differentiated service therefore discourage the kinds of investment that would reach many of the populations which are a focus for the National Hispanic Medical Association. So while new provisions may intend to provide neutrality, in practice they could actually have the opposite effect and keep the playing field uneven for Hispanics."

National Foundation for Women Legislators

"If net neutrality principles are codified and adopted, we will be taking a step backward. It would limit the innovation in how broadband services are delivered and who pays for them. Net neutrality will force one model on everyone - one in which the consumer will pick up the tab. That will make the service even further out of reach financially for too many consumers."

Older Adults Technology Services

"This momentum and unity, however, is fragile. For example, a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) focused on net neutrality could fracture this consensus by pitting network owner against content provider and one user group against another. Moreover, OATS is uncertain of how a net neutrality proceeding would supplement the adoption efforts described above. While OATS supports a free and open Internet for all users, it remains to be seen what direct impact net neutrality or other such regulations would have on broadband adoption among under-adopting groups like seniors and people with disabilities. Given this uncertainty, OATS urges the FCC to weigh the likely negative impacts of such a rulemaking - ideological polarization fought via proxy by large, well-funded corporations - against the positive momentum it has forged around the issue of broadband adoption."

United States Distance Learning Association

"In closing, ensuring all Americans have access to educational opportunities through distance learning technologies is and will

continue to be a great equalizer in our society. USDLA supports the status quo of current net neutrality interpretation and expectations.

We believe it will encourage the Telecom industry to continue its pioneering and investment efforts in making distance learning opportunities available to everyone.

This position supports and helps fulfill the mission of USDLA for its many constituencies. More importantly however, this position is paramount for all lifelong learners of all ages in the United States of America"

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Kansas State NAACP

"The Kansas State NAACP Conference of Branches believes the FCC's position on Net Neutrality will deter broadband providers from investing the many billions of dollars in network infrastructure that are necessary to build the next generation of HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND networks where minorities reside, work and conduct business. In order for small and disadvantaged businesses to compete on equal footages, the next generation of high-speed networks must be available to them."

Alabama State NAACP

"In fact, during this year's session of the Alabama General Assembly we fought-and I personally testified to ensure a deregulation bill, sb 373, included a safety net by adding a Lifeline and Link-up program to help pay the basic service of low income Alabamians. This monthly financial assistance also applies to wireless phones. Therefore, any unnecessary regulations on wireless providers might slow down investment in infrastructure, innovation, and discourage investment by the private sector. The communications industry in Alabama is competitive. Most consumers have access to wireless, VoIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) and broadband. We need to encourage more broadband and high speed internet deployment."

Missouri State NAACP

"We believe the FCC's position on net neutrality will deter broadband providers from investing the billions of dollars in network infrastructure that are necessary to build next generation highspeed broadband networks where we live, work and conduct our businesses.

Small American businesses must have the next generation high-speed networks to compete."

Mar-Saline (Missouri) Branch of the NAACP

"In 1939, the Mar-Saline Branch of the NAACP received its charter. The branch has made positive impact on the quality of life for citizens of Saline County and surrounding counties. Net neutrality regulations could, negatively impact that progress and drive broadband prices up at a time when minority-owned small businesses and consumers need to see prices drop."

Lee County, Missouri, NAACP

"Network neutrality regulations are adverse to innovation, investment and job growth. This is true in wireless networks just as it is true in broadband policy. In each case, heavily regulating the operations of the Internet will damage the broadband progress in my state."

Claflin University

"Instituting new net neutrality regulations could seriously impact competition and retard future growth of the communications industry, regardless of whether wireless or wireline. If that occurs, our entire economy will be affected. I strongly urge you to consider growth and economic development when considering unprecedented regulation of broadband service."

Arkansas Legislative Black Caucus

"It is our concern that the proposed new rules may become cumbersome and discourage private businesses from investing in this infrastructure. We want to see the educational digital divide" lessened by the continuation of private enterprise investments in this area."

Missouri Legislative Black Caucus

"Our Caucus strongly supports President Obama's vision to create new jobs and we must create opportunities that will keep us on a positive trajectory for growth. Net neutrality regulation runs contrary to this agenda."

Texas Legislative Black Caucus

"We are fearful that any government action to regulate the Internet may very well lead to less growth, innovation and investment while increasing the cost to the consumer. Such actions may result in disproportionate impact on our constituencies and ultimately work to lessen or reverse the moderate gains we have achieved in addressing the digital divide."

California Black Chamber of Commerce

"We are concerned that recent comments you made at the Brookings Institution and the CTIA conference will become unnecessary regulations on broadband. Those regulations could curb the current growth coming from my constituents and grind innovation to a halt. Net neutrality restrictions threaten to reverse the positive trends occurring within the African-American community around Internet usage."

African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey

"We are concerned that the net neutrality rules being proposed would have an adverse effect on those who are otherwise thriving under the robust market we see today."

Fort Worth, TX Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce

"We wonder why the FCC is attempting to fix something that isn't broken. It is dangerous to insert government regulation into something that is helping pull our economy out of recession. We implore the FCC to think carefully before implementing such policies."

Silicon Valley Black Chamber of Commerce

"We would ask that the FCC answer the following questions before taking the historic step of proposing to regulate the Internet: Will Internet regulations lead to fewer jobs and less investment? Will Internet regulations lead to higher prices for consumers in the African American community? Are Internet regulations truly necessary?"

California Black Media

"We are troubled that enforcing net neutrality rules could greatly inhibit our community's great progress in broadband access and growth. We are not philosophically opposed to regulation, but we emphatically feel that in this case, the potential harm outweighs the benefits."

Black Economic Council

"That is why I took great interest in the FCC's consideration of net neutrality principles. We completely agree with President Obama's call to provide high-speed service to all but net neutrality could have a dampening effect on adoption by discouraging service providers from making further investments in underserved communities."