



To: Internet Freedom Business Alliance
From: Vox Populi Polling
Date: January 21, 2015
Re: Results of Nationwide Open Internet Survey

Vox Populi conducted a nationwide survey of 868 active voters on January 13 and 14. The margin of error for the survey was +/-3.3%. Of the completed surveys, 599 were conducted using automated telephone technology and 269 were conducted using mobile based survey technology.

OVERALL TAKEAWAY

When it comes to new rules surrounding the Internet and concern over Internet service providers, Republican and conservative voters behave much like the nation as a whole. It is clear that voters view these issues through a consumer's lens rather than looking at them ideologically. Concerns about monopoly control and content restrictions are their greatest worry. In instances where we did see a significant ideological divide, conservative voters show greater concern about government prioritizing the cable providers' interests, or the government and cable providers affecting the content and information consumers can access today.

Our research demonstrates that American voters are concerned about the possibility of the open Internet coming to an end, and that these concerns are shared by liberals and conservatives alike. Republicans and Democrats agreed by a wide margin that it is critical to maintain an Internet that is open and free from discrimination and private influence. Voters showed that they are wary of Internet service providers, and expressed concern about ISPs influencing the content they are able to access over the Internet and influencing the government for special treatment. The data also suggest that the desire for consumer protections in the Internet service market extends to Republicans as well as Democrats.

KEY FINDINGS

1. **Republicans show strong support for a free and open Internet.** 81 percent of voters nationwide agreed that "it is critical to maintain" an Internet where service providers cannot block, discriminate against, slow down, or charge content providers. **Support was the same among Republican respondents, as with voters over all, with 81 percent agreeing that the Internet should remain open.**
2. FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler's statement that he plans "to propose rules that say that no blocking (is allowed), no throttling, no paid prioritization" was met with wide support by voters. **Republicans showed broad agreement with Chairman Wheeler's statement, with 80 percent of GOP voters either somewhat or strongly agreeing.**

3. **The most conservative voters are very concerned about the possibility of Internet service providers having the power to “influence content.”** Of voters who identified as “very conservative,” 82 percent were either somewhat or very concerned about this possibility, with 59 percent indicating that they were very concerned. Only 18 percent reported being unconcerned.
4. **Conservative voters think that consumers need protections from large Internet service providers such as Comcast, Verizon, AT&T, and Time Warner Cable to ensure that they deliver the Internet fairly and without monopolization.** Republicans felt that consumers need protections from ISPs by a margin of 59 to 22 percent. Even among “very conservative” voters 47 percent said that protections are necessary, while 36 percent said they are not -- an 11-point margin.
5. Similarly, **81 percent of those who identified as very conservative said they were either somewhat or very concerned about ISPs influencing the government in their favor.** Among those who are very liberal, 71 percent said that they were very concerned.
6. **Republican voters do not have a highly favorable view of Internet service providers.** When asked to rank their favorability of ISPs on a scale of 1 to 9, only 39 percent gave a ranking of 6 or greater, while 61 percent of voters gave a ranking of five or below. The most conservative voters were even more negative, with 65 percent giving ISPs a favorability ranking of 5 or below, and a full 18 percent of “very conservative” voters giving the lowest possible ranking.
7. The potential merger between Comcast and Time Warner Cable is another area of agreement for voters. **Asked whether they expected the merger to be beneficial or harmful to consumers, 62 percent of voters said they expect it to be harmful, while only 15 percent expect consumers to benefit.** Conservative voters feel the same, with 60 percent saying that they expect the merger to be harmful to consumers and only 19 percent expecting consumers to benefit.

CONCLUSION

Our research suggests that **Americans, across traditional political divides, are opposed to giving Internet service providers greater authority to discriminate against certain content providers.** The most conservative voters, for instance, gave the lowest favorability rankings to Internet service providers and showed the greatest concern about ISPs influencing the government in their favor.

Additionally, **conservative voters showed a willingness to accept government oversight** in the realm of Internet service. Conservative voters agreed with FCC Chairman Wheeler’s recent statements on proposed Internet rules by a wide margin. They also favored **consumer protections from large Internet service providers** in order to prevent monopolization and protect consumer choice.

In sum, the results of this survey show that **liberals and conservatives alike are concerned about providing additional ability for Internet service providers to discriminate against content providers and want the Internet to remain an ecosystem of open access.**