



INTERNET FREEDOM  
BUSINESS ALLIANCE

February 25, 2015

The Honorable John Thune  
Chairman  
Senate Commerce Committee

The Honorable Bill Nelson  
Ranking Member  
Senate Commerce Committee

Dear Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson,

As a coalition of startups, small businesses and venture investors, we are writing to ask for your support of an open Internet – the principle that all traffic over the Internet be treated equally.

Federal Communications Commission Chairman Tom Wheeler has released a proposal outlining the path forward for open Internet access. We think this is a tremendous step in the right direction toward establishing clearly defined, legally sustainable rules that provide the certainty that businesses need to attract investment, acquire talent, and develop and market our products and services.

Our companies – and startups and small businesses across the country – depend on an Internet that fosters innovation, competition and open markets. It's important that the Internet remains open so the next generation of businesses can flourish. Unfortunately, broadband providers are spending tens of millions of dollars on a lobbying campaign to seize control of the Internet, which will only result in monopolistic behavior. Comcast, Verizon and AT&T would be allowed to arbitrarily dictate the products, services, and applications their customers can reach online, choking off innovation and investment that does not serve their own commercial interest.

Keeping the Internet open is vital to America's economic well being and should transcend partisan politics. While outwardly the issue appears dense and technical, in reality it is simple and one that Republicans and Democrats can support. The open Internet fosters innovation, entrepreneurship, and competition – all of which are necessary for the success of our individual firms and overall economic growth. Without strong, legally sustainable rules that protect all legal web traffic from harm and discrimination, both realized and yet unimagined, the qualities that make the Internet an unparalleled engine of economic growth, innovation, and free expression will be crippled.

While there are a number of myths percolating around efforts to safeguard access to the open Internet, the facts are clear. First, action to protect the open Internet will not lead to new state and local taxes; new taxes and fees on broadband services are prohibited under the recently reauthorized Internet Tax Freedom Act. Second, straightforward, sensible rules of the road that promote innovation are not "ObamaCare for the Internet," as some have called it. It is those who oppose an open Internet that would impede the free market and limit equal opportunities for all, from Main Street small businesses to major corporations, both online and in our communities.

We urge you to support protecting the open Internet, as it benefits every American, from local family businesses looking to attract new customers, to college students conducting research to complete their degrees, to senior citizens communicating with friends and family across the country. The Internet has been a tremendous driver of innovation and growth, and we hope Congress agrees it should remain that way.

Sincerely,

Automattic  
Cogent  
Distinc.tt  
Etsy  
General Assembly  
Imgur  
Kickstarter  
OpenCurriculum  
Opera Software  
Tumblr  
Vimeo



INTERNET FREEDOM  
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February 25, 2015

The Honorable Fred Upton  
Chairman  
House Energy and Commerce Committee

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
Ranking Member  
House Energy and Commerce Committee

Dear Chairman Upton and Ranking Member Pallone,

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