

February 14, 2018

Dear Member of Congress:

We, the undersigned 54 progressive organizations, urge you to cosponsor, discharge, and then vote for the Markey-Doyle “resolution of disapproval” that would overturn the Federal Communications Commission’s recent rollback of Net Neutrality protections. Despite the talk of other legislation emanating from cable and phone company lobbyists, and also curiously coming from Members of Congress that have long opposed Net Neutrality, no other legislation currently introduced or likely to be introduced can restore the rights the FCC’s rollback wrongly took away.

Under the Congressional Review Act, Congress can pass a resolution of disapproval to nullify FCC Chairman Pai’s repeal of Net Neutrality protections -- the so-called “Restoring Internet Freedom” Order. Doing so would leave us with the strong Net Neutrality protections adopted in 2015, which were based on the firm and successful legal grounding of Title II of the Communications Act.

Internet freedom activists, grassroots organizers, social justice advocates, labor unions, and progressive organizations like ours oppose Pai’s assault on our ability to communicate and connect. The internet has been a transformative tool for free speech and for organizing in furtherance of civil rights and social and economic justice. A free and open internet enables political dissidents and marginalized communities to make their voices heard on their own terms -- without being stifled or warped by corporate gatekeepers such as broadband internet service providers (ISPs).

Strong Net Neutrality rules have overwhelming bipartisan support from the American people. Since the late 1990s, under Republican and Democratic leadership alike, the FCC sought to enforce at least some basic principles preventing ISPs from picking winners and losers on the internet by blocking or discriminating against certain kinds of content or applications. If Congress allows Pai’s plan to take effect, Net Neutrality rules and principles long upheld by both parties would be repealed in their entirety without a replacement -- leaving activists, consumers, and businesses without defense against ISP interference.

A resolution of disapproval avoids the pitfalls and present impossibility of negotiating a new Net Neutrality bill. We oppose other current legislative proposals like Rep. Blackburn’s wholly inadequate bill, and Republican leadership has made it abundantly clear that it will not allow a vote on legislation that affords the same protections the FCC previously enforced. Meanwhile, a resolution of disapproval would restore those protections.

Even attempting to negotiate new Net Neutrality legislation in this Congress would be risky, because such a bill invariably would be watered down by ISP lobbying. In the end, any such supposed compromise would fail to safeguard both the openness principles enshrined in the 2015 rules and the other communications rights current law commands the FCC to uphold. Passing a resolution of

disapproval instead would be like hitting the “undo” button, restoring the Net Neutrality rules and the legal framework for these nondiscrimination rights.

We urge you and your colleagues to protect the free and open internet and the benefits it provides by cosponsoring, discharging, and then voting for the resolution of disapproval and by opposing other purported Net Neutrality legislation in this Congress that does not and cannot restore internet users rights.

Sincerely,

18MillionRising.org
350.org
Action Together Network
Alliance for Quality Education
American Civil Liberties Union
American Family Voices
Center for Media Justice
Center for Popular Democracy
Climate Hawks Vote
Color Of Change
Common Cause
Courage Campaign
Coworker.org
Daily Kos
Demand Progress
Democracy for America
Demos
Fight for the Future
Free Press Action Fund
Friends of the Earth
Future of Music Coalition
Generation Justice
Indivisible
#LoveArmy
Media Alliance
Media Mobilizing Project
MomsRising
MoveOn.org
MPower Change
National Hispanic Media Coalition
Native Public Media
NextGen America
Oakland Privacy
OpenMedia
Our Revolution
Pantsuit Nation

People For the American Way
PopularResistance.org
Presente Action
Progressive Change Campaign Committee
Progressive Congress Action Fund
Protect Our Internet
Public Citizen
Revolving Door Project
RootsAction.org
SumOfUs
The Dream Corps
The Nation
Win Without War
Women In Media & News
Working Families Party
Working Narratives
Writers Guild of America, East
Writers Guild of America, West