

WE CAN PASS NET NEUTRALITY IN THE HOUSE AND *SENATE*

This week, the House passed net neutrality legislation. It's a big step forward, and the result of years of hard work by Democrats. But a bill that can only pass one half of Congress isn't a real solution.

Critics have dismissed HR 1644 as a cynical “messaging bill.” I disagree. Democrats are fighting for what they think is best. But with a divided Congress, Democrats should allow changes that pro-net neutrality Republicans can support. If Democrats don't, we face at least two more years of gridlock that leaves consumers and small businesses vulnerable.

Having worked on net neutrality with the Obama White House and FCC, it's frustrating to see disagreement over the best way to protect net neutrality inadvertently hand anti-net neutrality Republicans another victory. It's also hard to see bipartisan proposals attacked as “caving in” when they're what President Obama proposed when Democrats controlled the House and Senate and his pick was running the FCC.

Congress can pass a net neutrality bill if local business leaders step in – but we need to start now.

**HERE'S A SUMMARY OF WHY THIS VOTE MATTERS
AND WHAT WE CAN DO TO WIN IN THE SENATE.**

WHY BROADBAND MATTERS



**of economic growth in
2016 was generated
by the digital economy**

Broadband also levels the playing field between fast-growing coastal innovation hubs and struggling smaller cities and rural areas in between.

A large blue arrow pointing to the right. Inside the arrow, the text "\$1.6T" is written in a large, bold, white font.

**network infrastructure
investment by broadband
providers since 1996**

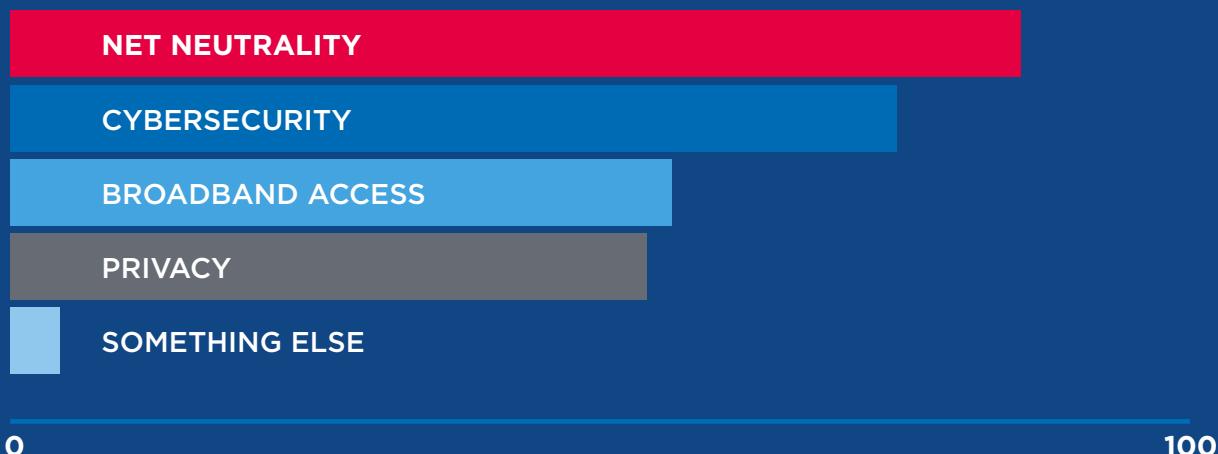
WHAT NET NEUTRALITY MEANS

Net neutrality ensures an open and vital internet by preventing network operators from favoring internet traffic from some sites over others, censoring viewpoints, or boosting their own offerings. Rules should be clear, enforceable, and permanent.

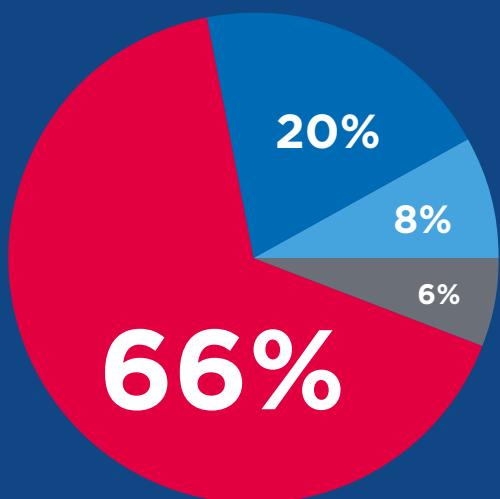
Without net neutrality, companies will invest less in new, data-intensive applications. We'll see less innovation in distance learning, telemedicine, and media streaming.

WHY SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS CARE

Our network is more concerned about net neutrality than cybersecurity, data privacy, and broadband access, because they believe a neutral internet is critical to their ability to reach customers, open new markets, and compete with larger companies.



By more than a 3 to 1 margin, our leaders support a bipartisan approach over utility-style regulation.



- Congress should pass bipartisan legislation that prevents broadband providers from blocking, throttling, or unfairly prioritizing internet traffic.
- Congress should pass laws that ensure broadband providers are heavily regulated like public utilities.
- I don't think we need regulation or laws protecting net neutrality
- Congress should leave the net neutrality issue to the FCC

“ Any swing of the pendulum that is too broad will hurt innovation. It is best for Congress to work with strong private sector services to foster a protected yet innovative Internet environment.

- ASTRID KOWLESSAR
MIAMI, FL

“ I'm encouraged to see the House debating a bill on net neutrality, an idea whose time is long overdue. But without a bipartisan approach, I worry Congress will end up once again kicking the can down the road, leaving small business owners like me without the net neutrality protections we need.

- JOE REDDIX
HANOVER, MD

“ Net neutrality was the fundamental principle that allowed the internet to grow into the economic engine it is today. Without the competitive pressures that net neutrality promotes, the free market system cannot operate as intended.

- TOM PIPAL
PARKER, CO

“ Leaders of both parties need to compromise around middle-ground solutions to strike a balance between effective rules and encouraging innovation and investment.

- L.B. KING
CLAIRTON, PA

More than 1,000 of our leaders recently called on Congress to take a bipartisan approach to net neutrality and data privacy.

To the U.S. Congress:

We write to encourage you to adopt a bipartisan approach to protecting net neutrality and data privacy. We understand these reforms are contentious in Congress, but they enjoy broad public support across the country.

Net neutrality is critical to keeping the internet open, free, and competitive, and it is particularly important to small businesses and start-ups. Business leaders in our network are more concerned about net neutrality than cyber security, data privacy, or broadband access – and two thirds of them support a bipartisan solution.

The FCC cannot effectively enforce net neutrality without statutory authority from Congress, but Congress has debated for 15 years without passing a bill. Today, a majority favors net neutrality, but they are split over which of two Obama-era proposals to support. His administration's first proposal ("Plan A" in 2010) treated broadband as "information service." His second proposal ("Plan B," in 2015) was a workaround. It treated broadband as a utility, which Republicans oppose. If net neutrality supporters in Congress cannot get behind Obama's "Plan A," we face at least two more years without net neutrality protections in place.

Meaningful privacy reforms face similar gridlock, but progress is being made. The middle ground in Congress now favors consumer rights like access, correction, and deletion, which were deal breakers a few years ago. It's about time. Nine in 10 business leaders in our network support a comprehensive, national privacy standard.

A patchwork of 50 state laws won't work for the Internet. We support a national approach, provided the protections are strong and enforceable.

Businesses rely on the internet every day. We can't afford to leave these issues unaddressed. We ask you to work across party lines to adopt these much-needed protections for net neutrality and consumer privacy

Sincerely,
Small Business Owner

IF YOU'D LIKE TO JOIN THEM, CLICK HERE

TODAY'S GRIDLOCK

Four successive FCC chairs, serving two Presidents, issued net neutrality principles, policies or rules. But federal courts or subsequent FCC orders struck down each of them, largely because the FCC cannot act without clear authority from Congress.
Only Congress can create net neutrality rights.

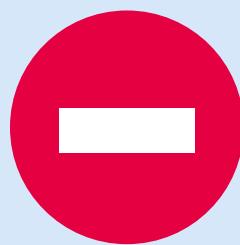
NET NEUTRALITY SUPPORTERS TEND TO CALL FOR “GOING BACK TO OBAMA’S RULES” - BUT WHICH RULES?



OBAMA'S 2010 “PLAN A”
(ENJOYS BIPARTISAN SUPPORT)



OBAMA'S 2015 “PLAN B”
(FAR-LEFT “UTILITY” RULES)



NO NET NEUTRALITY RULES
(DEFAULT IF NOTHING PASSES)

Julius Genachowski, President Obama's first FCC Chair, issued formal regulations against blocking, throttling, and other discrimination “Plan A”, but they were overturned because he lacked authority from Congress.

Facing a Republican-controlled, anti-net neutrality Congress, Tom Wheeler, Obama's second FCC chair, proposed a workaround (“Plan B”) that reclassified broadband as a Title II “telecommunications service” – a distinction that gave the FCC greater authority to regulate. But reclassifying broadband opened the door for the FCC to set broadband prices or demand broadband companies share their transmission lines with competitors.

Republicans strongly oppose these utility rules, and Ajit Pai, Donald Trump's FCC chair, overturned them – leaving consumers and small businesses with no net neutrality rules.

Today, Obama's Plan A could attract enough Republican votes to pass the Senate. Plan B would trigger a filibuster from Republicans and a likely veto from Trump. In other words, if Democrats and pro-net neutrality Republicans work together, anti-net neutrality extremists lose. But if we insist on utility rules, we'll end up with nothing.

JOIN US: SPEAK OUT FOR NET NEUTRALITY