

Net Neutrality Foregone? FCC Votes to Kill Digital Democracy. Towards a Corporate Swamp of Media Disinformation?

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That's what Net Neutrality is all about – the principle that ISPs must treat online content equally, the essence of a free and open Internet, the last frontier of digital democracy.

Without equal access online, ISP giants Comcast, Charter, AT&T, Verizon, Cox and others can establish toll roads or premium lanes, charge extra for speed and free and easy access, control content, as well as stifle dissent and independent thought.

They can make Internet access unaffordable for low income households, control what's available online, block content diverging from the official narrative at their discretion.

They can transform the Internet into another corporate-controlled swamp of disinformation and fake news, matching the rubbish major media provide, a deplorable prospect.

The FCC ruling bans states from imposing their own Net Neutrality rules, forbidding them from overriding federal regulations.

It reverses Title II classification of ISPs, classifying them as common carriers, restricting their actions, preventing them from halting, slowing, or otherwise tampering with online communications.

An "information service" classification replaces the current status, weakening consumer protections.

Net Neutrality means speech and media freedom. Without it, they're gravely jeopardized.

On Thursday, an important battle was lost. The fight to preserve a free and open Internet continues – ahead in Congress and the courts.

It remains a major challenge with Republicans controlling the House and Senate, along with a corporatist president hostile to consumer rights.

The Congressional Review Act lets lawmakers reverse regulatory actions within 60 legislative days of their enactment. It's crucial for Americans to press their House and Senate representatives, demanding reversal of the FCC order.

[Free Press.net](#) said the following in response to Thursday's ruling:

It "abdicat(ed) FCC authority over internet service providers...clearing the way for blocking, throttling and discrimination by the nation's largest phone and cable companies."

"Free Press will take the FCC to court to challenge its reversal on the proper definition of broadband, the accuracy of its contentious justifications for tossing out the rules, and the many process fouls that have plagued the FCC proceeding since it began earlier this year."

New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman intends suing against what he called an "illegal" ruling. Other states intend to sue, the ACLU, Electronic Frontier Foundation, and other consumer groups likely to follow suit or file amicus briefs supporting litigation against the FCC ruling.

[Free Press.net](#):

"We'll have plenty to say in court about the legal mistakes littered throughout this decision. It's willfully gullible and downright deceptive to suggest that nondiscrimination rules are no longer needed - despite the massive power of the cable and phone companies that control broadband access in this country."



Jessica Rosenworcel

[FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel](#) opposed the majority FCC ruling, saying in part:

"Net neutrality is internet freedom. I support that freedom. I dissent from this rash decision to roll back net neutrality rules."

"I dissent from the corrupt process that has brought us to this point. And I dissent from the contempt this agency has shown our citizens in pursuing this

path today.”

“This decision puts the Federal Communications Commission on the wrong side of history, the wrong side of the law, and the wrong side of the American public.”

“The future of the internet is the future of everything. That is because there is nothing in our commercial, social, and civic lives that has been untouched by its influence or unmoved by its power.”

“I believe it is essential that we sustain this foundation of openness – and that is why I support net neutrality.”

“(O)ur...net neutrality policies have passed court muster. They are wildly popular. But today we wipe away this work, destroy this progress, and burn down time-tested values...”

“As a result of today’s misguided action, our broadband providers will get extraordinary new power from this agency.”

“They will have the power to block websites, throttle services, and censor online content. They will have the right to discriminate and favor the internet traffic of those companies with whom they have pay-for-play arrangements and the right to consign all others to a slow and bumpy road.”

“...I worry that this decision and the process that brought us to this point is ugly.”

“It’s ugly in the cavalier disregard this agency has demonstrated to the public, the contempt it has shown for citizens who speak up, and the disdain it has for popular opinion.”

“Unlike its predecessors, this FCC has not held a single public hearing on net neutrality. There is no shortage of people who believe Washington is not listening to their concerns, their fears, and their desires.”

“If the arc of history is long, we are going to bend this toward a more just outcome. In the courts. In Congress. Wherever we need to go to ensure that net neutrality stays the law of the land.”

“Because if you are conservative or progressive, you benefit from internet openness. If you come from a small town or big city, you benefit from internet openness.”

“If you are a company or non- profit, you benefit from internet openness. If you are a start-up or an established business, you benefit from internet openness.”

“If you are a consumer or a creator, you benefit from internet openness. If you believe in democracy, you benefit from internet openness.”

“So let’s persist. Let’s fight. Let’s not stop here or now. It’s too important. The future depends on it.”

Powerful words from a rare voice of the people in Washington, sadly way outnumbered by powerful dark forces, representing privileged interests exclusively.

The battle to save a free and open Internet goes on – in Congress, the courts, and on streets across America.

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My newest book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: How the US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

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