

# Online “Digital Democracy” at Risk: Trump’s FCC Chairman Threatens “Net Neutrality”

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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*With major media featuring fake news, Net Neutrality is key to keeping the Internet free and open, letting users access all content without restrictions, limitations, or discrimination, an online level playing field for everyone.*

First Amendment rights depend on it. Without Net Neutrality, consumer choice will be lost, stolen by corporate predators, making the Internet look like cable TV, letting communication giants decide what web sites, content and applications are available at what cost.

Net Neutrality is essential to assure no content is favored over others. Electronic Frontier Foundation’s (EFF) legal director Corynne McSherry expressed concern about Trump’s new FCC director Ajit Pai “taking steps to undermine Net Neutrality protections,” adding:

“If so, we, and millions of Internet users, will do what is necessary to defend a free and open Internet.” Separately, EFF raised concerns about FCC opposition to encryption under Pai, urging tech companies to defend and preserve it along with Net Neutrality and privacy rights.

FreePress.net said “everything (it) fought for at the FCC is in jeopardy” under Pai. Previously he was a corporate lawyer for Verizon Communications, involved in regulatory and broadband issues, among others.

At the FCC, he held several positions in its Office of General Counsel, most prominently as deputy general counsel. He also practiced law at Washington-based Jenner & Block, specializing in communications practice.

In 2011, Obama named him an FCC commissioner. He strongly opposes regulations, prioritizes their removal. In 2015, he opposed the FCC’s Open Internet Order. Last December, he said Net Neutrality’s days are “numbered.”

In January, Free Press CEO Craig Aaron blasted Pai, saying he’s “been on the wrong side of just about every major issue that has come before the FCC during his tenure.”

He’s never met a mega-merger he didn’t like or a public safeguard he didn’t try to undermine. He’s been an inveterate opponent of Net Neutrality, expanded broadband access for low-income families, broadband privacy, prison-phone justice, media diversity and more.

He “looks out for corporate interests” exclusively. Their lobbyists are “thrilled” about his appointment.

Millions of Americans from across the political spectrum have looked to the FCC to protect their rights to connect and communicate and cheered decisions like the historic Net Neutrality ruling, and Pai threatens to undo all of that important work.

Digital democracy is at risk with him as FCC chairman. Net Neutrality is a defining issue, preserving it vital.

It's the last frontier of free and open communication space.

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*His new book as editor and contributor is titled “Flashpoint in Ukraine: How the US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III.”*

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