

STATEMENT  
OF  
THE HON. ROBERT M. MCDOWELL  
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**“WHY NET NEUTRALITY MATTERS: PROTECTING CONSUMERS AND COMPETITION  
THROUGH MEANINGFUL OPEN INTERNET RULES”**

BEFORE THE  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

SEPTEMBER 17, 2014

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## INTRODUCTION

Chairman Leahy, Ranking Member Grassley and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for having me testify before you today. My name is Robert McDowell. Until last year, I served as a Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for seven years. Last week, I joined the internationally recognized communications law firm of Wiley Rein, LLP as a partner. Nonetheless, I am not testifying today on behalf of any client of Wiley Rein, and the opinions I express today are strictly my own.

I have always supported policies that promote an open and freedom-enhancing Internet. That is what the American private sector built as the result of long-standing and bipartisan public policy that insulated the Net from unnecessary regulation.

During my tenure at the FCC, the issue of government regulation of Internet network management, or “net neutrality,” came before me several times in a variety of contexts. I am deeply familiar with the arguments for and against new regulations in this area. I voted against the Commission’s first two attempts to issue new rules for many reasons, and I oppose the FCC’s current attempt to regulate in this space, because:

- 1) Nothing is broken in the Internet access market that needs fixing;
- 2) The FCC has not conducted a *bona fide*, peer-reviewed market study to diagnose any alleged “illness” before issuing a “cure” in the form of new rules;
- 3) If a systemic market failure were to come to light, ample laws already exist to remedy the problem;
- 4) I do not believe that Congress has given the FCC the authority to issue the rules it has proposed;
- 5) If the FCC overreaches again, it will likely lose in court for a third time;

6) Fabricating a new and untested body of law, even using a “skinny” version of Title II, will create uncertainty and perverse unintended consequences that will spread beyond the ostensible regulatory target of network operators, like phone and cable companies, to the entirety of the Internet ecosystem, such as content, applications and content delivery networks (CDNs);

7) Expansion of the government’s reach into the operations of the Internet is only providing cover and encouragement to foreign governments, as well as multilateral and intergovernmental institutions, that want to have, as Vladimir Putin said, “international control of the Internet;”<sup>1</sup> and

8) Government regulation of Internet network management violates the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Over the years, I have had many other concerns too. For the Committee’s convenience and the sake of brevity, I have included as part of my testimony today previous statements, dissents, testimony and opinion-editorials I have written on this subject.

The appellate courts largely rejected most of the Commission’s two attempts to regulate by viewing the FCC’s actions as an overreach.<sup>2</sup> Recognizing the FCC’s lack of statutory authority to issue net neutrality rules, some Members of the 110th Congress tried, but failed, to pass legislation that would have granted the Commission the power to do so.<sup>3</sup>

Apparently undeterred by its two previous defeats in court, the Commission is trying yet again to expand its reach into the Internet’s affairs. As the Commission deliberates, two disturbing ideas are emerging. First, the Commission is again considering classifying—for the

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<sup>1</sup> Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, Working Day, *Prime Minister Vladimir Putin Meets with Secretary General of the International Telecommunications Union Hamadoun Touré*, GOV’T OF THE RUSSIAN FED’N (June 15, 2011), <http://premier.gov.ru/eng/events/news/15601/>.

<sup>2</sup> *Verizon v. FCC*, 740 F.3d 623 (D.C. Cir. 2014); *Comcast Corp. v. FCC*, 600 F.3d 642 (D.C. Cir. 2010).

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Internet Freedom Preservation Act of 2008, H.R. 5353, 110th Cong. (2008).

first time—broadband as a common carrier service under Title II of the Communications Act of 1934. This effort has been reported in the media as treating the Internet like a “utility.” The other troubling idea is to expand new network management rules to wireless broadband. Each is unnecessary and would be highly counterproductive.

**I. CLASSIFYING BROADBAND AS A “UTILITY” –STYLE COMMON CARRIER UNDER TITLE II OF THE COMMUNICATIONS ACT OF 1934 WOULD GENERATE UNCERTAINTY, CAUSE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES AND UNDERMINE GROWTH IN THE ENTIRE INTERNET ECOSYSTEM.**

First, the notion that retrofitting Title II, an antiquated—but powerful—80-year-old statute designed for the copper-based, analog, voice-only phone monopolies of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, would somehow be good for the dynamic and ever-evolving Internet ecosystem is just plain wrong. During my 24 year career in the telecommunications space I have become quite familiar with Title II. Proponents of regulating the Internet under Title II argue that doing so would prevent two-sided markets, usage-based pricing and “discrimination”<sup>4</sup> of Internet traffic. In fact, the exact opposite is true.

Not only does Title II allow usage-based pricing, that is exactly what it is designed to regulate.<sup>5</sup> Not only does it allow for the “reasonable” discrimination of traffic, it mandates that similarly situated producers of traffic can be charged similar rates if those rates are “just or

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<sup>4</sup> The term “discrimination” is often misused in the net neutrality debate. Discrimination can have many meanings. To a network engineer, discrimination is absolutely necessary and means having the ability to manage Internet Protocol networks. For instance, consumers downloading movies want those video bits to arrive on their screens quickly and without interference from other Internet traffic such as email or voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) communications. Similarly, a caller using VoIP in an emergency wants his/her call to 911 to take priority over Internet traffic carrying a cat video. Another example is Internet traffic carrying heart monitoring data from a patient to his/her doctor. During a medical crisis, the patient will want discrimination thus allowing life-saving data to reach the doctor as quickly as possible and ahead of other traffic. This is also known as “prioritization,” something net neutrality proponents oppose. Treating all Internet traffic “equally,” as many net neutrality proponents want, would undermine the beneficial aspects of allowing the freedom to innovate through the ability to discriminate in the engineering context. What should *not* be permitted, and is prohibited under existing antitrust and consumer protection laws, is discrimination that has an anticompetitive effect that harms consumers. Boiling the net neutrality debate down to the bumper sticker of “treat all Internet traffic equally” may have popular appeal, but it is a misleading slogan that will likely have dangerous implications if it is codified as public policy.

<sup>5</sup> 47 U.S.C. §§ 201-202.

reasonable.”<sup>6</sup> Title II would not prevent network operators from charging some content and application—or “edge”—providers to carry their Internet traffic. Indeed, Title II would allow for a “sending party pays”<sup>7</sup> construct that some American edge providers and network operators are battling against *together* in international regulatory arenas.

At the consumer level, industry analysts have concluded that new utility-like economic regulation of the Internet would likely “have the perverse effect of raising prices to all users” and some users would likely see the end of their service entirely.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, a Title II framework would lay a broad-based legal foundation for the Commission eventually to regulate the entire Internet ecosystem. Such is the goal of the influential godfather of the movement, the man who coined the term “net neutrality,” Columbia law professor, Timothy Wu. This is not merely theoretical. He testified to such alongside me at a House Judiciary Committee hearing on net neutrality this past June.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, Professor Wu has tremendous influence at the FCC having authored the first-ever net neutrality merger conditions during the Commission’s approval of the AT&T/BellSouth transaction in 2006.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Id.* § 202(a).

<sup>7</sup> *Revisions of the International Telecommunications Regulations – Proposals for High Level Principles to be Introduced in the ITRs*, ETNO, CWG-WCIT12 Contribution 109, at 2 (2012), <http://www.itu.int/md/T09-CWG.WCIT12-C-0109/en>.

<sup>8</sup> Howard Buskirk, *Investors, Analysts Uneasy About FCC Direction on Net Neutrality*, COMM. DAILY, Oct. 2, 2009, at 2; see also National Cable & Telecommunications Association Comments at 19 and Verizon and Verizon Wireless Reply Comments at 17–18 to *Preserving the Open Internet*, GN Docket No. 09-191; *Street Talk*, CableFAX, June 14, 2010 (“But while it’s business as usual now, capital investment will come down if Title II becomes a reality, said Credit Suisse telecom services director Jonathan Chaplin. He said the next place companies would look to capture some of the return is costs, which would mean jobs.”).

<sup>9</sup> See House Judiciary Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law, *Net Neutrality: Is Antitrust Law More Effective than Regulation in Protecting Consumers and Innovation?*, 113th Congress, 2nd sess., 2014 (testimony of Timothy Wu), at [http://judiciary.house.gov/\\_cache/files/bcecca84-4169-4a47-a202-5e90c83ae876/wu-testimony.pdf](http://judiciary.house.gov/_cache/files/bcecca84-4169-4a47-a202-5e90c83ae876/wu-testimony.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Spencer E. Ante, *Tim Wu, Freedom Fighter*, BUS. WK., Nov. 8, 2007, available at <http://www.businessweek.com/stories/2007-11-08/tim-wu-freedom-fighterbusinessweek-business-news-stock-market-and-financial-advice>; Robert M. McDowell, *This is Why the Government Should Never Control the Internet*, WASH. POST, July 14, 2014, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2014/07/14/this-is-why-the-government-should-never-control-the-internet/>.

In sum, it would be impossible to draw a principled line between broadband service providers and other entities that combine transmission with information processing or storage, such as the content delivery networks that give us Netflix movies or YouTube videos. As Robert Litan recently explained, “[t]here is a very slippery slope from having designated ISPs as being subject to common carriage regulation to having to include other forms of Internet transmissions as well because they arguably use ‘telecommunications services’, the legal hook in Title II for its application.”<sup>11</sup>

In other words, as part of providing their “information” services, many tech companies also provide transmission services. For example, many application and content providers, CDNs, and providers of services offered through connected devices, provide transmission service as a component of their information service. The same is true for search engines that connect an advertising network to a search request, and for email providers and social networks that enable chat or messaging sessions.

Also caught in the Title II dragnet would be tech companies that sell other services, such as e-reader services, but which buy wireless access on a wholesale basis to deliver their content. Such synergistic deals would be complicated—at best—under Title II because the e-reader service provider would be considered a reseller of telecommunications services under Commission precedent.

## **II. WIRELESS BROADBAND IS DIFFERENT FROM WIRELINE INTERNET SERVICES AND SHOULD NOT BE SUBJECT TO NET NEUTRALITY RULES.**

The FCC is also poised to impose new net neutrality regulations on the wireless industry. In the Commission’s 2010 net neutrality order, it was the bipartisan and unanimous consensus of

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<sup>11</sup> See Robert E. Litan, *Regulating Internet Access as a Public Utility: A Boomerang on Tech If It Happens*, Economic Studies at Brookings, at 2 (June 2, 2014).

the FCC that the heart of new net neutrality rules not be applied to wireless broadband services.<sup>12</sup>

The primary reason for treating wireless and wireline differently is that mobile broadband technologies use shared networks. Wireless consumers may not realize it, but they are sharing bandwidth with their neighbors. The sharing of wireless bandwidth creates a host of technical and operational challenges associated with the availability of capacity, the lack of predictability about consumer demand and the scarcity of spectrum. As such, the intricate art of network management of wireless networks is far different from that of fiber or coaxial-based networks.<sup>13</sup> Applying one-size-fits-all regulations to mobile broadband would tie the hands of engineers trying to maximize network efficiency for consumers as they are forced to live under new “Mother-may-I” government supervision. Innovation, investment and consumer well-being would be at risk as new rules would create uncertainty and spark a counterproductive regulation/litigation cycle.<sup>14</sup> Thankfully, in Title III, Congress wisely prohibited the FCC from regulating wireless services as a common carrier utility under Title II.<sup>15</sup>

The American wireless industry has been a crown jewel of the American economy for over 30 years. In fact, since its inception, the domestic wireless industry has invested nearly \$400 billion in infrastructure.<sup>16</sup> The White House Office of Science and Technology has noted

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<sup>12</sup> *Preserving the Open Internet*, GN Docket No. 09-191, WC Docket No. 07-52, Report and Order, 25 FCC Rcd 17905 at ¶¶ 80-92 (2010).

<sup>13</sup> For instance, according to CTIA, the Wireless Association, “a single fiber strand can carry 1,000 times more bits per second than a 10 GHz radio channel.” Reply Comments of CTIA—The Wireless Association, GN Docket Nos. 14-28, 10-127, at 3 (filed Sept. 15, 2014). Wireless technologies are, indeed, different and highly complex, and should not be burdened by new “one-size-fits-all” regulation.

<sup>14</sup> See Robert Litan and Hal Singer, *The Best Path Forward on Net Neutrality*, Progressive Policy Institute, at 8 (Sept. 4, 2014) (noting that “a heavy-handed Title II approach could risk substantial core investment without generating any offsetting incremental investment at the edge”).

<sup>15</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 332.

<sup>16</sup> CTIA—The Wireless Association, *CTIA’s Wireless Industry Summary Report: Year-End 2013 Results* (2014), available at [http://www.ctia.org/docs/default-source/Facts-Stats/ctia\\_survey\\_ye\\_2013\\_graphics-final.pdf?sfvrsn=2](http://www.ctia.org/docs/default-source/Facts-Stats/ctia_survey_ye_2013_graphics-final.pdf?sfvrsn=2).



that “[a]nnual investment in U.S. wireless networks grew more than 40% between 2009 and 2012, from \$21 billion to \$30 billion, and exceeds investment by the major oil and gas or auto companies.”<sup>17</sup> Additionally, mobile broadband is the fastest growing segment of the broadband market.<sup>18</sup>

Analysts’ projections estimate that between 2013 and 2017 wireless infrastructure investment will generate as much as \$1.2 trillion in economic growth and create (directly and indirectly) up to 1.2 million new jobs.<sup>19</sup> This will result in an estimated \$85 to \$87 billion of economic growth *each year* from 2013 through 2017, giving a 2.2% boost in GDP by 2017.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, unlicensed spectrum, like Wi-Fi, generates an estimated \$62 billion a year for the U.S. economy.<sup>21</sup>

Wireless carriers are investing in the world's best infrastructure because competition is fierce. According to the FCC, as of late 2012, 92 percent of the U.S. population had access to at least three mobile broadband providers, while “82 percent...lived in areas with coverage by at least four mobile broadband providers”<sup>22</sup> Robust competition is providing a check against anti-competitive behavior. Accordingly, the long-standing and bipartisan consensus regarding public policy in the wireless space has been to allow competition to obviate the need for command-and-

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<sup>17</sup> Federal Communications Commission, *Fact Sheet: Internet Growth and Development* (2014), available at [https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/attachmatch/DOC-325653A1.pdf](https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-325653A1.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> International Telecommunication Union, *Measuring the Information Society* (2013), available at [http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/publications/mis2013/MIS2013\\_without\\_Annex\\_4.pdf](http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/publications/mis2013/MIS2013_without_Annex_4.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> Alan Pearce, J. Richard Carlson & Michael Pagano, *Wireless Broadband Infrastructure: A Catalyst for GDP and Job Growth 2013-2017* (2013), available at [http://www.pcia.com/images/IAE\\_Infrastructure\\_and\\_Economy\\_Fall\\_2013.PDF](http://www.pcia.com/images/IAE_Infrastructure_and_Economy_Fall_2013.PDF).

<sup>20</sup> *Id.*

<sup>21</sup> See Consumer Electronics Association, *Unlicensed Spectrum and the American Economy: Quantifying the Market Size and Diversity of Unlicensed Devices* (2014), available at [http://www.ce.org/CorporateSite/media/gla/CEA\\_UnlicensedSpectrumWhitePaper-FINAL-052814.pdf](http://www.ce.org/CorporateSite/media/gla/CEA_UnlicensedSpectrumWhitePaper-FINAL-052814.pdf) (estimating the “unlicensed spectrum generates \$62 billion per year in incremental retail sales value”).

<sup>22</sup> *Implementation of Section 6002(b) of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993; Annual Report and Analysis of Competitive Mobile Conditions with Respect to Commercial Mobile Services*, Sixteenth Report, WT Docket No. 11-186, ¶ 48 (rel. Mar. 21, 2013).

control regulation and industrial policy. As the statistics reveal, this hands-off approach has produced a brilliant explosion of entrepreneurial brilliance which is benefiting consumers. Now is not the time to put our gains at risk by injecting unnecessary regulations into a thriving competitive market.

Furthermore, America is *leading the world* in 4G, or LTE. U.S. consumers account for nearly 50 percent of the world's LTE subscribers even though America is home to less than five percent of the world's population.<sup>23</sup> In addition, while only two percent of connections in the European Union (EU) were on LTE networks at the end of 2013, almost 30 percent of all U.S. connections were on LTE networks.<sup>24</sup>

Dominance in 4G penetration and adoption is giving America a decisive advantage in the highly competitive global marketplace. We didn't get here through government mandates, however. Investment in new wireless technologies, unfettered by unnecessary government regulation, is producing faster mobile data connection speeds with the U.S. being 75 percent faster than the EU average.<sup>25</sup> Best of all, that gap is expected to grow. As the "Internet of Everything" explodes to connect billions more devices to the Net through mobile technologies—from cars to health monitoring equipment to inventory control technologies—it will transform the global economy and America will have an advantage over our economic rivals.

But new government policies could inhibit investment and innovation and America could lose her competitive advantage in the mobile space if we extend new rules to the wireless industry. As I illustrate in the attachments to this testimony, consumers are more than

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<sup>23</sup> CTIA—The Wireless Association, *U.S. Investment in Wireless Leads the World* (2014), available at <http://www.ctia.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/031014-wireless-value-and-contributions.pdf>.

<sup>24</sup> *Id.*

<sup>25</sup> Erik Bohlin, Kevin W. Caves & Jeffrey A. Eisenach, *Mobile Wireless Performance in the EU & the US* (2013), available at [http://www.gsmamobilewirelessperformance.com/GSMA\\_Mobile\\_Wireless\\_Performance\\_May2013.pdf](http://www.gsmamobilewirelessperformance.com/GSMA_Mobile_Wireless_Performance_May2013.pdf).

adequately protected under existing laws. The Internet ecosphere is blossoming beautifully, resulting in the most positive and constructive transformation of the human condition in history. Let's learn from what has worked and not jeopardize the future with the uncertainty of a new regulatory regime.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I look forward to your questions.

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**APPENDIX A**

STATEMENT OF THE HON. ROBERT M. MCDOWELL BEFORE THE U.S. HOUSE COMMITTEE ON THE  
JUDICIARY SUBCOMMITTEE ON REGULATORY REFORM, COMMERCIAL AND ANTITRUST LAW,  
JUNE 20, 2014

**STATEMENT  
OF  
THE HON. ROBERT M. MCDOWELL  
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**“NET NEUTRALITY: IS ANTITRUST LAW MORE EFFECTIVE THAN REGULATION IN  
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UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**JUNE 20, 2014**

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## INTRODUCTION

Thank you, Chairman Goodlatte, Chairman Bachus and Ranking Members Conyers and Johnson for inviting me to join you today. It is an honor to be before your Committee again.

Currently, I serve as a Visiting Fellow at the Hudson Institute's Center for Economics of the Internet. The Hudson Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan policy research organization dedicated to innovative research and analysis that promotes global security, prosperity, and freedom. Having said that, the opinions I will put forth today are purely my own.

I would also like to thank Rep. Anna Eshoo who, although she does not serve on this Committee, graciously offered to reschedule an appearance she was to have made with me this morning at the Hudson Institute so I could testify today. I am grateful for her generosity.

At the outset, I should make clear my hope that the Internet remains open and freedom-enhancing, as it has since it was privatized in the mid 1990s. As the Net migrated further away from government control, it proliferated beautifully – growing from just under 90,000 users in the late 1980s, to approximately three billion globally today.<sup>1</sup> Its success as the fastest growing disruptive technology in human history was the direct result of the Clinton Administration's policy to keep the government's hands off of the Internet sector. In short, the Internet is the greatest deregulatory success story of all time. Policy makers should learn from this history to continue to keep the Net thriving.

Today's hearing is quite timely. Yesterday marked the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. This milestone is significant because many proponents of new Internet regulations would like to see the Communications Act of 1934, a law designed for the copper wire-based, circuit-switched, Ma Bell voice phone monopoly of yore, foisted on the

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<sup>1</sup> International Telecommunication Union, ICT Data for the World, located at: <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx>.

Internet under the harmless sounding moniker of “net neutrality.” Such a development, however, would be a devastating blow to the technology sector of the American economy and, more importantly, to American consumers.

For nearly a decade, I have been deeply involved with the complicated debates surrounding the regulation of Internet network management. During my seven years as a Commissioner of the FCC, the Commission conducted three proceedings and issued two orders regarding net neutrality.<sup>2</sup> In each case, I voted against the FCC’s orders for several legal, factual and policy reasons. For the Committee’s reference, I have enclosed a copy of my dissent from the FCC’s “Open Internet” order of 2010. See Exhibit A. Ultimately, both orders were largely overturned by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, as predicted.<sup>3</sup> Despite its poor performance in the appellate courts, the FCC is plowing ahead with yet another attempt to thread the eye of a tiny legal needle with a fat regulatory rope - all while ignoring the fact that a new body of regulations is not needed and may, in fact, cause harmful unintended consequences.

#### **NOTHING IS BROKEN IN THE INTERNET ACCESS MARKET THAT NEEDS FIXING**

At the outset, it is important to understand that nothing is broken that needs fixing. Even if Congress had given it the authority to do so to begin with – which it has not, the FCC is pursuing new rules without the benefit of an economic study indicating a market failure that requires a remedy through a new body of *ex ante* regulation. For years, I have argued that a bona fide and peer-reviewed economic study of the Internet access market, which should be put out for public comment, would be tremendously helpful to policymakers who could then determine

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<sup>2</sup> See *Preserving the Open Internet*, GN Docket No. 09-191, Report and Order, 25 FCC Rcd 17905 (2010); *Framework for Broadband Internet Service*, Notice of Inquiry, 25 FCC Rcd 7866 (2010); *Formal Compl. of Free Press & Public Knowledge Against Comcast Corp. for Secretly Degrading Peer-to-Peer Applications*, 23 FCC Rcd 13,028 (2008).

<sup>3</sup> *Verizon v. FCC*, 740 F. 3d 623 (D.C. Cir. 2014); *Comcast Corp. v. FCC*, 600 F.3d 642 (D.C. Cir. 2010).



whether anything was indeed wrong. Proponents of government regulation of Internet network management have opposed this idea, and one has to wonder why. If an illness really exists, wouldn't we want policymakers to have ample data to diagnose it properly before dispensing "medicine"? And are new rules "medicine" or something more toxic to the Internet economy?

Perhaps proponents of new Internet regulations are reluctant to study the broadband Internet access market empirically and transparently given the conclusions from the last time the government meaningfully did so. In 2007, the Federal Trade Commission, one of the premier antitrust authorities in government, examined the market and in a unanimous and bipartisan fashion found that there was *no market failure*.<sup>4</sup> The FTC not only concluded that the broadband market was competitive, but it also warned that regulators should be "wary" of network management rules because of the unknown "net effects ... on consumers."<sup>5</sup> Regulators should heed that bipartisan warning, and thoroughly examine the market before going further.

Instead, every few months, proponents of new mandates have painted a succession of new targets for their proposed regulations to the point where it is difficult to keep track of what it is they really want other than a massive regulatory regime drawn from 19<sup>th</sup> Century railroad regulations. Years ago, they first argued that Internet service providers (ISPs) had an economic incentive to act anti-competitively to thwart consumers' desires to access the content and applications of their choice. These doomsday market failure scenarios never materialized. In fact, most major ISPs long ago inserted clear language into their terms of service agreements with their customers pledging to protect Internet openness and freedom. It is important to

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<sup>4</sup> See FED. TRADE COMM'N STAFF, BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY COMPETITION POLICY (2007), available at <http://www.ftc.gov/reports/broadband/v070000report.pdf> (hereinafter "FTC STAFF REPORT")

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at 157.

remember for this debate that these agreements are contracts and are enforceable under an array of state and federal laws.

Later, Internet regulation proponents pivoted their arguments and focused on the retail prices of broadband Internet access, or economic regulation, of ISPs. More recently, the pro regulation movement has focused on not just “last mile” residential connections offered by ISPs, but so-called “middle mile” high-volume commercial or business-to-business connections - and now even the long-haul Internet backbone or “peering” sector.

Building on the theme of creating more regulation in the Internet space using almost any pretext, foreign governments and multilateral and treaty-based organizations, are watching American policy debates closely. They are busy finding ways to broaden the regulation of the entire Internet sector to include schemes where “sending parties,” especially many American content and application providers, would be required by international law to pay network operators (some owned by foreign governments) for the termination of data traffic on their networks. Domestically, some are arguing that websites should not be allowed to take down their content under a bizarre, chilling and patently unconstitutional forced speech construct growing out of the net neutrality feeding frenzy. Apart from content transmitted over broadcast television, the Commission has virtually no authority to regulate content provided online, or for that matter, through any other means of delivery. Perhaps most significant, the creation or attempted exercise of such authority would raise significant Constitutional concerns and would almost certainly result in less free, high-quality content available to consumers online.

In sum, the term “net neutrality” seems to morph almost daily, but ultimately all of the arguments for it translate into “please regulate my rival ... but not me!” in order for the politically-favored to gain a competitive advantage through regulatory arbitrage. Policymakers

should beware of such siren calls. History teaches us that such policies always result in everyone losing, especially consumers. For the Committee's reference, I have attached some research I conducted on this concept in the form of a speech I gave to the Italian Parliament in 2012. *See Exhibit B.*

**AMPLE LAWS ALREADY EXIST TO ADDRESS ANY MARKET FAILURE AND CONSUMER HARM**

Instead of creating a regulatory Leviathan that will only grow to insatiably consume the entire Internet sector, policymakers should use their quivers full of existing laws that already deter and cure any anticompetitive conduct that results in consumer harm, if it should ever arise. In other words, even if empirical data were to reveal that a systemic failure existed to the point where market power was being abused and consumers were being harmed as a result, ample laws already exist to fix the problem.

First and foremost, for purposes of today's hearing, are America's antitrust laws. Other complex sectors of the American economy operate under government supervision through the rules afforded by antitrust law without new extra layers of untested regulations and bureaucracies. Antitrust authorities are experienced in analyzing complex markets of the tech economy, such as software operating systems and Internet search. Not only do antitrust laws act as a deterrent against engaging in anticompetitive behavior, but they provide a "cure" for such behavior after-the-fact as well. These laws also apply to the broadband and Internet space because those are information services, not telecommunications services, thus avoiding the common carrier exemption.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See Maureen K. Ohlhausen, *Telecommunications & Electronic Media – Net Neutrality vs. Net Reality: Why an Evidence-Based Approach to Enforcement, and Not More Regulation, Could Protect Innovation on the Web*, 14 *Engage* 81, 83 (2013) (“[T]he FTC Act exempts “common carriers” from its jurisdiction.”).

Other laws that apply are Section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act,<sup>7</sup> which forbids “[u]nfair methods of competition in or affecting commerce, and unfair or deceptive acts or practices in or affecting commerce.” The FTC “has both authority and experience in the enforcement of competition and consumer protection law provisions pertinent to broadband Internet access.”<sup>8</sup> Additionally, there are the protections of state and federal common law such as breach of contract, tortious interference with contract, deceptive trade practices, fraud and more. For instance, if ISP’s were to breach their terms of service with their customers, the plaintiff’s bar would have a field day launching an uncountable number of class action lawsuits.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, the argument that antitrust or consumer protection actions take too long and would produce results only after it was “too late” are specious. Antitrust and consumer protection agencies, such as the Federal Trade Commission, can act at the same speed as the Federal Communications Commission.

#### **NEW RULES WILL ONLY SPUR INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO REGULATE THE INTERNET**

Having been part of official U.S. diplomatic delegations to negotiate treaties in the communications space, as well as recently being a member of a blue ribbon panel on Internet governance,<sup>10</sup> I can personally attest to the influence of the American net neutrality debate on international efforts to regulate all corners of the Internet. Vladimir Putin has stated plainly his goal to have “international control of the Internet” through the International Telecommunication Union. Given Russia’s recent expansion into the Crimea and Ukraine, it is now obvious that Putin’s threats should be taken seriously. And so should the explicit proposed treaty language of

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<sup>7</sup> 15 U.S.C. § 45.

<sup>8</sup> FTC STAFF REPORT, at 41.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., *Chin v. RCN Corp.*, No. 1:08-cv-07349 (2011).

<sup>10</sup> See Panel On Global Internet Cooperation and Governance Mechanisms, *available at* [www.internetgovernancepanel.org](http://www.internetgovernancepanel.org).

China, Saudi Arabia, Iran and their client states, some of which call for massive multilateral regulation of the Internet including networks, content and applications.

Furthermore, I have been told in official bilateral negotiations with foreign governments, as well as by global ministers of communications, regulators and international business executives in more informal settings, that the American effort to issue net neutrality rules has created a new frame of mind and has generated thinking throughout the world that more regulation in the Internet ecosystem should be the norm. Recent initiatives in Europe underscore this point.<sup>11</sup> Ironically, the Snowden/NSA matter has also fueled international efforts in this regard – as if the problem of government involvement in this area can be cured by even *more* government involvement.

In short, pressing ahead with new Internet regulations will provide cover to less freedom friendly international regimes that wish to subvert the private sector, non-profit and non-governmental multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance.

### **TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES WILL BECOME ENSNARED IN “TITLE II” NET NEUTRALITY**

Technology companies that are pushing for classification of Internet access as a telecommunications service under Title II of the Communications Act of 1934<sup>12</sup> should be careful what they wish for. Having practiced law in the Title II world for years, in addition to my seven years of service as a Commissioner of the FCC charged with interpreting and enforcing Title II, I am deeply familiar with its scope and reach. This section of the Communications Act is particularly powerful, prescriptive and far-reaching. Some estimate it has over 1,000 requirements.

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<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., Case C-131/12, *Google Inc. v. Agencia Española de Protección de Datos* (E.C.R. 2014) (European High Court’s ruling on the “right to be forgotten”); *European Single Market for Electronic Communications*, COM (2013) 0627 – C7-0267/2013 – 2013/0309(COD) A7-0190/2014 (European Union’s Net Neutrality proposal).

<sup>12</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 201 *et seq.*

As a threshold matter, Title II not only allows for, but *encourages*, the “two-sided” market that some content and app providers are seeking to avoid in order to shift their costs. Furthermore, tiered, or usage-based, pricing is not just contemplated in Title II, but is *called for*. Similarly, “discrimination” among users is allowed, provided all similarly-situated customers are treated the same.<sup>13</sup>

Practically speaking, as technologies, business strategies and consumer demand produce convergence in the Internet ecosystem, from an engineering standpoint it is becoming harder to distinguish a “tech” company from a “network operator.” Both can have thousands of miles of fiber connecting servers and routers all over the globe while providing voice, video and data services. It is naïve to think that, from a regulation’s or regulator’s perspective, “tech” companies and “network” companies won’t be swept up into the same or similar regimes, especially if the FCC reverses its longstanding and bipartisan precedent and classifies “information” services as “telecommunications” services.<sup>14</sup> The concept of traditional “telecommunications” services is quickly disappearing as technology evolves and the Internet ecosystem evolves to the next level: an all-Internet Protocol world. The old-fashioned distinction between “transmission” and “information” services no longer makes sense as a practical matter.<sup>15</sup>

Without belaboring the point, the stovepipe laws of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries written in the days of manual switchboards, copper wires, and vacuum tubes are woefully out-of-

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<sup>13</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 202(a).

<sup>14</sup> See, e.g., *Amendment of Section 64.702 of the Commission's Rules and Regulations*, 77 F.C.C.2d 384, 387 ¶¶ 5-7 (1980) (“*Second Computer Inquiry*”).

<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., *Inquiry Concerning High-Speed Access to the Internet Over Cable and Other Facilities*, Docket No. FCC-02-77, 17 FCC Rcd 4798, at ¶ 40 (2002) (“All information services require the use of telecommunications to connect customers to the computers or other processors that are capable of generating, storing, or manipulating information. Although the transmission of information to and from these computers may constitute ‘telecommunications,’ that transmission is not necessarily a separate ‘telecommunications service.’”); see also *Nat'l Cable & Telecomms. Ass'n v. Brand X Internet Servs.*, 545 U.S. 967 (2005).

date for dynamic 21<sup>st</sup> Century technologies. Antitrust and consumer protection laws are not, however, and are more comprehensive, nimble and better able to protect the public interest.

Furthermore, as discussed in Exhibit B, the flaw in the “Please Regulate My Rival, But Not Me” school is that regulations almost never stop where proponents want them to. Eventually, the same logic that provided a pretext for new rules to begin with is applied to the original proponent of the regulation, much to their chagrin. Internet companies supportive of net neutrality in the U.S. are discovering this sad fact in Europe where content and applications are falling under the purview of more and more regulations and court orders.<sup>16</sup> In short, Title II will only complicate the technology sector of our economy as “tech” companies become exposed to its powerful reach and are treated as regulated “utilities” as well.

### **CONCLUSION**

Creating new regulations, or foisting antiquated laws on new technologies, would be counterproductive, create uncertainty, hinder innovation and investment and expose the entire Internet ecosystem to the risks of unintended consequences. A better path would be to rely on time-tested antitrust and consumer protection laws, with their century-old precedent, that have helped make the American economy the strongest and most innovative in the world.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I look forward to answering your questions.

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<sup>16</sup> See sources cited *supra* at n.11.

## EXTENDED LEGAL ANALYSIS

### I. The Existing Regulatory Framework Is Adequate.

The Internet is thriving under *current law*. The Commission recently stated in its Notice of Proposed Rulemaking<sup>17</sup> that 87 percent of Americans now use the Internet, up from 14 percent in 1995;<sup>18</sup> the Internet supports an e-commerce marketplace that boasts U.S. revenues of \$263.3 billion;<sup>19</sup> and the app economy alone is responsible for almost 752,000 jobs in the United States.<sup>20</sup> Broadband companies, in particular, are pouring funding and effort into broadband deployment—to the tune of \$60 billion per year.<sup>21</sup>

As FCC Commissioner O’Rielly recently explained, it is the *current* legal framework that has provided the “climate of certainty and stability” necessary for broadband investment and Internet innovation generally.<sup>22</sup> Under current laws, competition and innovation drive growth: no one needs permission from the federal government to start up a website or app, to navigate the Internet freely, or, most importantly, to add his or her ideas into the Internet’s ecosystem in a way that changes it—at the structural layer or content level. Handing over control to the federal government to regulate each of these areas does not ensure a freedom-enhancing Internet. It

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<sup>17</sup> *In re: Protecting and Promoting the Open Internet*, GN Docket No. 14-28, 2014 WL 2001752 (May 15, 2014) (hereinafter “*Net Neutrality Notice*”).

<sup>18</sup> Pew Research Internet Project, *Internet Use Over Time*, available at <http://www.pewinternet.org/data-trend/internetuse/internet-use-over-time/>.

<sup>19</sup> See U.S. Census Bureau, *Quarterly Retail E-Commerce Sales*, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2013.

<sup>20</sup> See Michael Mandel, *752,000 App Economy Jobs on the 5th Anniversary of the App Store*, Progressive Policy Institute Blog (July 8, 2013), available at <http://www.progressivepolicy.org/2013/07/752000-app-economy-jobs-on-the-5thanniversary-of-the-app-store/>.

<sup>21</sup> Letter from Thomas R. Stanton, Chairman & CEO, ADTRAN, *et al.*, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, GN Docket No. 14-28 (May 13, 2014).

<sup>22</sup> Dissenting Statement of Commissioner Michael O’Rielly, *Net Neutrality Notice*, 2014 WL 2001752, at \*80 (hereinafter “O’Rielly Dissenting Statement”).



ensures an Internet regulated by five unelected bureaucrats at the Federal Communications Commission in Washington, D.C.

The Commission's proposal - and its vast implications - cause particular concern because they address a phantom problem. Network management "incidents" have been few and far between; *de minimis*, in fact. The *Net Neutrality Notice* explicitly admits this fact. Far from a pervasive problem, the FCC acknowledges that "the number of existing cases has been relatively few" because of policies "that the Commission has had ... in place during the period in question."<sup>23</sup>

Moreover, independent studies have repeatedly confirmed this. In the broadband industry, analyses have shown that competition is robust. For example, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has concluded that the broadband market is "competit[ive]."<sup>24</sup> Likewise, it has warned that regulators should be "wary" of network management rules because of the unknown "net effects ... on consumers."<sup>25</sup>

## **II. Current Laws Are Adequate To Resolve Any Issues.**

When network management problems have arisen, existing laws have been more than sufficient to address them. The Department of Justice (DOJ) and the FTC are well-equipped to address any market failures in the broadband industry. DOJ has at its disposal the full panoply of U.S. antitrust laws. In the broadband context specifically, the Sherman Act and the Clayton Act would prohibit: (1) "exclusive dealing," or vertical arrangements where, for example, a provider only permitted streaming video from a preferred partner site; (2) "refusals to deal," where, for example, a broadband provider only permitted a content delivery network to stream content to its

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<sup>23</sup> *Net Neutrality Notice*, 2014 WL 2001752, at \*11, ¶ 40.

<sup>24</sup> FTC STAFF REPORT, at 157.

<sup>25</sup> *Id.*

customers if they paid more than the provider charged other content delivery networks; and (3) “raising rivals’ costs,” or achieving the same results using different techniques.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, under current law, the FTC may address problems under Section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act (FTCA), which forbids “[u]nfair methods of competition in or affecting commerce, and unfair or deceptive acts or practices in or affecting commerce.”<sup>27</sup> The FTC “has both authority and experience in the enforcement of competition and consumer protection law provisions pertinent to broadband Internet access.”<sup>28</sup> Moreover, “the FTC Act provisions regarding ‘[u]nfair methods of competition in or affecting commerce, and unfair or deceptive acts or practices in or affecting commerce,’” are especially suited to deal with harmful network management practices because they “are general and flexible in nature.”<sup>29</sup>

As FTC Commissioner Maureen K. Ohlhausen explained, this flexibility is critical to government intervention in the Internet ecosystem, which is characterized by “growth, innovation, pro-competitive efficiencies, significant consumer benefits, largely successful industry self-regulation, [and] few reported cases of abuse.”<sup>30</sup> The “flexible and fact-intensive approach to enforcement” permitted under the FTCA is better suited to targeting problems in this

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<sup>26</sup> Section 1 of the Sherman Act prohibits contracts “in restraint of trade,” 15 U.S.C. § 1; Section 2 of that Act prohibits “attempt[s] to monopolize” and monopolization,” *id.* § 2; and Section 3 of the Clayton Act prohibits exclusivity arrangements that may “substantially lessen competition” or tend to create a monopoly,” *id.* § 14.

<sup>27</sup> 15 U.S.C. § 45(1). “Congress has deliberately left these phrases undefined so that the parameters of the FTC’s powers and the scope of its administrative and judicial functions could be responsive to a wide variety of business practices.” ABA SECTION OF ANTITRUST LAW, ANTITRUST LAW DEVELOPMENTS 643 & n.4 (6th ed. 2007) (citing *FTC v. Sperry & Hutchinson Co.*, 405 U.S. 233, 239-44 (1972); *FTC v. R.F. Keppel & Bros.*, 291 U.S. 304, 310-12 (1934).

<sup>28</sup> FTC STAFF REPORT, at 41; *see, e.g., AOL & Time Warner, Inc.*, FTC Dkt. No. C-3989 (Dec. 17, 2000) (complaint), available at <http://www.ftc.gov/os/2000/12/aolcomplaint.pdf>; *Cablevision Sys. Corp.*, 125 F.T.C. 813 (1998) (consent order); *Summit Commc’ns Grp.*, 120 F.T.C. 846 (1995) (consent order).

<sup>29</sup> FTC STAFF REPORT, at 41.

<sup>30</sup> Ohlhausen, *supra* note 6, at 85.

dynamic environment than categorical treatment under Section 706 or Title II of the Communications Act.<sup>31</sup>

The FTC is already equipped to address the harmful practices targeted in the FCC's proposed rule. However, the FTCA empowers the FTC to act only so long as Internet access service is considered an "information service."<sup>32</sup> The Act specifically does not apply to "common carriers."<sup>33</sup> And while the FTC has advocated for changing this aspect of the Act,<sup>34</sup> Congress has not done so and a common carrier designation would remove the FTC from the enforcement picture entirely.

Multiple other laws exist that directly bear on network management practices in the broadband industry. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia recently upheld the FCC's "Disclosure Rule," which requires broadband providers to disclose their network management practices, performance, and the commercial terms of their services.<sup>35</sup> As the FCC has explained, this rule "ensures that end users can make informed choices regarding the purchase and use of broadband service, which promotes a more competitive market for broadband services and can thereby reduce broadband providers' incentives and ability to violate open Internet principles."<sup>36</sup> Transparency in and of itself can be an effective deterrent against harmful practices and is a meaningful pathway toward facilitating timely resolution, and alerting regulators if anti-competitive behavior is in the offing.

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<sup>31</sup> *Id.*

<sup>32</sup> See Robert E. Litan, *Regulating Internet Access as a Public Utility: A Boomerang on Tech If It Happens*, Economic Studies at Brookings, at 3 (June 2, 2014).

<sup>33</sup> *Id.*

<sup>34</sup> See FTC Jurisdiction over Broadband Internet Access Services: Hearing before S. Comm. on the Judiciary, 109th Cong. 9-11 (2006) (statement of William E. Kovacic, Comm'r, FTC), available at <http://www.ftc.gov/opa/2006/06/broadband.shtm>.

<sup>35</sup> *Verizon v. FCC*, 740 F. 3d 623, 659 (D.C. Cir. 2014).

<sup>36</sup> *Preserving the Open Internet*, 25 FCC Rcd 17905 (2010).

Finally, under current law, most major Internet Service Providers (ISPs) have long-standing published policies that prohibit paid prioritization. First, the FCC can take legal action against any company that violates its internal policies and has successfully done so in the past—both in the *Comcast* (discussed earlier) and *Madison River* decisions. In the latter case, for example, Madison River Communications blocked voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service provider Vonage over its DSL connections.<sup>37</sup> The FCC intervened and resolved the conflict through a consent decree, under which Madison River agreed to pay a fine and cease blocking access.<sup>38</sup> In addition, the full range of common law remedies is also available to consumers to enforce these internal policies including tortious interference with contract, fraud, and breach of posted terms and conditions.

Thus, the extensive existing legal framework and enforcement mechanisms provide ample protection from any anti-competitive behavior by broadband companies. Under these laws, any problems may be (and currently are) handled on a case-by-case basis. This practice keeps government involvement at a responsible minimum. It is worth noting that even the Antitrust Law Section of the American Bar Association has concluded that current laws are adequate to address competition problems in the broadband industry.<sup>39</sup>

### **III. A Comprehensive Market Study Must Precede Any Regulatory Action.**

In any event, before rushing into regulation of such a significant sector of the economy and fundamental aspect of American life, at the very least, the FCC should commission a *bona fide*, peer-reviewed market study—put out for public comment—to examine the structural and economic effects of regulating broadband providers as common carriers. Members of Congress

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<sup>37</sup> See *Madison River Commc'ns LLC and Affiliated Cos.*, 20 FCC Rcd 4295 (2005).

<sup>38</sup> *Id.*

<sup>39</sup> ABA Comment on Federal Trade Commission Workshop: Broadband Connectivity Competition Policy, 195 Project No. V070000 (2007).

have repeatedly called for the FCC to conduct such a cost-benefit analysis before imposing a new net neutrality rule. In an April 2014 letter, Representative Marsha Blackburn asked the Commission to conduct a cost benefit analysis of such a rule.<sup>40</sup> Also, Chairman Greg Walden has advocated in support of his draft legislation on Reforming FCC Process, that the agency should be required to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of a new net neutrality framework before enacting one. As Chairman Walden has explained, “[c]ost-benefit analyses are valuable because they require an agency to squarely address the cost of regulation, determine whether other methods may be less costly, and make a reasoned determination that the benefits outweigh the costs.”<sup>41</sup>

Commissioner Ajit Pai recently noted that historically, the FCC has “commissioned a series of economic studies in ... media-ownership proceedings.”<sup>42</sup> Commissioner O’Rielly similarly stated that “the Commission should have specific and verifiable evidence that there is a market failure,” before applying regulations that assume such a failure.<sup>43</sup>

In the past, the FCC has relied on market studies to inform complex regulatory decisions. For example, the FCC commissioned ten studies to provide it with a comprehensive review of the nature and structure of the broadcast sector *before* formulating any new ownership policies. These peer-reviewed studies, which were conducted by outside researchers and Commission staff, examined a range of issues including “diversity, competition, and localism,” within the

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<sup>40</sup> Letter from the Hon. Marsha Blackburn to the Hon. Tom Wheeler (Apr. 24, 2014), *available at* [http://blackburn.house.gov/uploadedfiles/blackburn\\_letter\\_to\\_chairman\\_wheeler.pdf](http://blackburn.house.gov/uploadedfiles/blackburn_letter_to_chairman_wheeler.pdf).

<sup>41</sup> *Reforming FCC Process*, 112th Cong. (2011) (statement of Rep. Walden, Chairman, H. Subcomm. on Communications and Technology).

<sup>42</sup> Dissenting Statement of Commissioner Ajit Pai, *Net Neutrality Notice*, 2014 WL 2001752, at \*78 (hereinafter “Pai Dissenting Statement”).

<sup>43</sup> O’Rielly Dissenting Statement, 2014 WL 2001752, at \*81.

industry, three of the FCC's important policy goals in the rulemaking.<sup>44</sup> They looked at everything from “How People Get News and Information” to “Television Station Ownership Structure and the Quantity and Quality of TV Programming” to “Vertical Integration and the Market for Broadcast and Cable Television Programming.”<sup>45</sup> In addition, the FCC sought public comment on these studies and incorporated this input into the broadcast rulemaking docket.

The net neutrality debate presents issues at least as significant and far-reaching as did the broadcast ownership rules and they should be approached through similar processes.

Commissioner Pai has proposed that the FCC “ask ten distinguished economists from across the country to study the impact of [the] proposed regulations and alternative approaches on the Internet ecosystem,” with “each Commissioner pick[ing] two authors.”<sup>46</sup> Each study would be peer-reviewed and “to ensure public oversight,” the Commission would hold “hearings where Commissioners could question the authors of the studies and the authors of those studies could discuss their differences.”<sup>47</sup> Such an approach would ensure that the FCC, at the very least, is examining real data before it makes its regulatory decision.

#### **IV. A New Body of Law in This Area Would Create Uncertainty, Raise Prices and Invite International Efforts To Regulate the Net.**

New regulatory mandates for network management—particularly those of the vague nature proposed by the FCC (*see infra* at 9)—guarantee uncertainty for all players involved in this dynamic and growing industry. First, new rules would have the effect of deterring market entrants and reducing competition in the broadband market overall. Existing and startup

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<sup>44</sup> *FCC Seeks Comment on Research Studies on Media Ownership*, MB Docket No. 06-121, FCC Rcd 14313 (2007).

<sup>45</sup> *See* FCC, 10 Research Studies on Media Ownership (2007), available at <http://go.usa.gov/8YSA>.

<sup>46</sup> Pai Dissenting Statement, 2014 WL 2001752, at \*78.

<sup>47</sup> *Id.*

companies would face greater difficulty in attracting the investment capital needed to build out their infrastructure.<sup>48</sup>

At the consumer level, a new regulatory regime would likely “have the perverse effect of raising prices to all users” and some users would likely see the end of their service entirely.<sup>49</sup> As Commissioner Pai has explained, “there are thousands of smaller Internet service providers—wireless ISPs (WISPs), small-town cable operators, electric cooperatives, and others—that don’t have the means or the margins to withstand a regulatory onslaught. If they go dark, consumers they serve ... will be thrown offline.”<sup>50</sup>

In addition, up until recently, the United States has presented a united front to strongly oppose regulation of the Internet by foreign governments. Subjecting broadband to a new domestic regulatory overlay would significantly undermine these efforts. For example, in Europe, providers have long sought to impose termination charges on U.S.-based content providers and app developers that would be forced to pay foreign ISPs to carry traffic to their customers. With the United States’ example of imposing more regulation in the Internet arena paving the way, European (and other) ISPs would have more leeway to demand the charges they have long sought to impose.

Finally, a new regulatory regime would be just the beginning, and not an endpoint, of greater regulation of the Internet by the federal government. In its *Net Neutrality Notice*, the Commission relies on vague terms that have no discernible meaning, such as the requirement to provide a “minimum level of access” or the prohibition of “commercially unreasonable”

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<sup>48</sup> FCC’s Capital Formation Workshop (Oct. 1, 2009).

<sup>49</sup> Howard Buskirk, *Investors, Analysts Uneasy About FCC Direction on Net Neutrality*, COMM. DAILY, Oct. 2, 2009, at 2; see also National Cable & Telecommunications Association Comments at 19 and Verizon and Verizon Wireless Reply Comments at 17–18 to *Preserving the Open Internet*, GN Docket No. 09-191.

<sup>50</sup> Pai Dissenting Statement, 2014 WL 2001752, at \*78.

practices. While the *Notice* suggests that companies could seek FCC “guidance” on what these terms mean, “it is very troubling when legitimate companies are put in the position of having to ask the government for its blessing every time they need to make a business decision in order to avoid costly enforcement or litigation.”<sup>51</sup> Nonetheless, many are already calling for new rules to be applied to the mobile sector.<sup>52</sup>

Likewise, some argue that websites should not be allowed to take down their content. Yet, here again, the market for the provision of content to consumers online is intensely competitive, and there is no market failure, or other sustainable basis, that would warrant FCC regulation of online content. Apart from content transmitted over broadcast television, the Commission has virtually no authority to regulate content provided online, or for that matter, through any other means of delivery. This wholly undesirable result could then cascade to hamper consumer demand for broadband and thus defeat, rather than promote, the ultimate objective of incentivizing investment in broadband deployment. Perhaps most notable, the creation or attempted exercise of such authority would raise significant Constitutional concerns and would almost certainly result in less free, high-quality content available to consumers online.

Finally, under a new, expanded regulatory regime, the Commission would be under ever-increasing pressure to further expand its power over the Internet. Each complaint filed would invite further regulation, as was demonstrated by the Comcast/BitTorrent case.<sup>53</sup> Regardless of

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<sup>51</sup> O’Rielly Dissenting Statement, 2014 WL 2001752, at \*81.

<sup>52</sup> See Alina Selyuky & Marina Loyes, *Mobile ‘net neutrality’ faces new day of reckoning at FCC*, Reuters UK, June 15, 2014 (“Both sides plan to lobby the FCC as the agency collects public comments on its proposed rules until Sept. 10. Scrutiny on the wireless space promises to be more intense than before. ‘It’ll be a topic that will have big resonance among the commissioners: why should wireless be treated differently than wireline in terms of net neutrality,’ said one senior FCC official, who spoke anonymously to discuss the ongoing review.”), available at <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/06/15/us-usa-netneutrality-wireless-idUKKBN0EQ0N520140615>.

<sup>53</sup> See *Formal Complaint of Free Press and Public Knowledge Against Comcast Corporation for Secretly Degrading Peer-to-Peer Applications*, File No. EB-08-IH-1518, Mem. Op. and Order, 23 FCC Rcd. 13,028 (2008); see also David Kirkpatrick, *Comcast-BitTorrent: The Net’s Finally Growing Up*, CNN.COM, Mar. 28, 2008, available at <http://money.cnn.com/2008/03/27/technology/comcast.fortune/index.htm>.



whether the Commission proceeds under Section 706 or Title II (discussed further below), net neutrality rules will empower the FCC to continue to expand its control over the Internet.

#### **V. Reclassification Under Title II Would Have Negative Collateral Consequences.**

In its *Net Neutrality Notice*, the FCC suggests that should Section 706 provide an insufficient legal underpinning for new rules, the agency could also classify broadband providers as “common carriers” under Title II of the Communications Act (for the first time in history, by the way). Title II provides the statutory basis for regulation of telecommunications monopolies as “common carriers.” It dates back to the 1930s and was designed to address circuit-switched, analog, copper-based voice telephone monopolies – creatures that look nothing like today’s Internet companies. Many Title II provisions are already completely obsolete and the FCC has admitted that it would have to seek forbearance from many of Title II’s myriad requirements if it applies that provision to the Internet.<sup>54</sup>

Proponents may not realize, however, the key problem with a Title II approach: It does *not* prohibit paid prioritization. Title II prohibits “unjust or unreasonable discrimination”<sup>55</sup> and the Commission has consistently interpreted this provision to *allow* carriers to charge different prices for different services.<sup>56</sup> Common carriers are “only bound to give the same terms to all

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<sup>54</sup> See *Net Neutrality Notice*, 2014 WL 2001752, at \*44, ¶¶ 153-155.

<sup>55</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 202(a).

<sup>56</sup> See, e.g., *Development of Operational, Technical and Spectrum Requirements for Meeting Federal, State and Local Public Safety Agency Communication Requirements Through the Year 2010; Establishment of Rules and Requirements for Priority Access Service*, WT Docket No. 96-86, Second Report & Order, 15 FCC Rcd 16720 (2000) (finding Priority Access Service, a wireless priority service for both governmental and non-government public safety personnel, “prima facie lawful” under section 202); *Access Charge Reform; Price Cap Performance Review for Local Exchange Carriers; Interexchange Carrier Purchases Of Switched Access Services Offered By Competitive Local Exchange Carriers; Petition of US West Communications, Inc. for Forbearance from Regulation as a Dominant Carrier in the Phoenix, Arizona MSA*, CC Docket Nos. 96-262, 94-1, 98-157, CCB/CPD File No. 98-63, 14 FCC Rcd 14221 (1999) (granting dominant carriers pricing flexibility or special access services, allowing both higher charges for faster connections as well as individualized pricing and customers discounts).

persons alike under the same conditions and circumstances,” and “any fact which produces an inequality of condition and a change of circumstances justifies an inequality of charge.”<sup>57</sup>

For example, two-sided markets are not only allowed under Title II, but *encouraged*. Tiered pricing is permitted as well; the statute simply requires carriers to treat similarly-situated customers the same. Thus, if one qualifies for a high volume discount, one receives one. As Commissioner Pai recently noted, there has not been a single case where the Commission has found it unlawfully discriminatory to offer a different service to customers at a different price.<sup>58</sup>

Reclassifying broadband service providers as common carriers under Title II would also have far-reaching effects on service providers, content-users, and end-users. It would impose significant burdens on the targeted companies and would inevitably cause fee increases for content providers and end-users. The regulatory burdens resulting from a Title II classification are substantial and include rate-regulation, non-discrimination requirements (again, which *allow* discrimination), entry and exit requirements, confidentiality requirements, audits, and customer proprietary network information privacy restrictions, among other mandates.<sup>59</sup> In a Title II universe, for instance, broadband providers would likely charge access fees to recover their

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<sup>57</sup> *Interstate Commerce Comm’n v. Baltimore & Ohio R.R. Co.*, 145 U.S. 263, 283–84 (1892).

<sup>58</sup> See Pai Dissenting Statement, 2014 WL 2001752, at \*76.

<sup>59</sup> As Commissioner O’Rielly recently explained in his Dissenting Statement:

Title II includes a host of arcane provisions on topics like interlocking directorates, valuation of carrier property, uniform system of accounts and depreciation charges, telephone operator services, telemessaging service, Bell Operating Company entry into interLATA services, manufacturing of telecommunications equipment and customer premises equipment, and electronic publishing. Even if the Commission granted forbearance from all of the provisions that it has eliminated for incumbent telephone companies—and then some—advocates are ignoring that broadband providers and services would still be subject to a host of unnecessary rules. The idea that the Commission can magically impose or sprinkle just the right amount of Title II on broadband providers is giving the Commission more credit than it ever deserves.

O’Rielly Dissenting Statement, 2014 WL 2001752, at \*80.

regulated costs.<sup>60</sup> In addition, Title II would impose its own price increases on broadband consumers. For one, the statute imposes universal service fees on all telecommunications carriers.<sup>61</sup> Under this provision, all telecommunications service providers must assess USF fees on their customers, which is currently at a rate of 15.7 percent.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, the FCC would be “taxing” Internet on-ramps.

Finally, a Title II framework would threaten a dramatic expansion of the Commission’s authority to regulate the Internet. It would be impossible to draw a principled line between broadband service providers and other entities that combine transmission with information processing or storage. As Robert Litan recently explained, “[t]here is a very slippery slope from having designated ISPs as being subject to common carriage regulation to having to include other forms of Internet transmissions as well because they arguably use ‘telecommunications services’, the legal hook in Title II for its application.”<sup>63</sup> Litan uses the examples of Google or Microsoft, which link to advertisers’ websites in their search engines, or Amazon’s Kindle, because Kindle owners download books from Amazon.<sup>64</sup>

The Commission has acknowledged this slippery slope problem. It admitted at oral argument in the *Comcast* case that under a Title II approach, “the Commission could someday subject [broadband] service to pervasive rate regulation to ensure that ... [a broadband] company provides the service at ‘reasonable charges.’”<sup>65</sup> Previously, it also admitted that if it “interpreted the statute as breaking down the distinction between information services and

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<sup>60</sup> See *Net Neutrality Notice*, 2014 WL 2001752, at \*43, ¶¶ 151–52.

<sup>61</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 254(d).

<sup>62</sup> See *Proposed Third Quarter 2014 Universal Service Contribution Factor*, CC Docket No. 96-45 (June 12, 2014).

<sup>63</sup> Litan, *supra* note 32, at 2.

<sup>64</sup> *Id.* at 2-3.

<sup>65</sup> *Comcast Corp. v. FCC*, 600 F.3d 642, 655 (D.C. Cir. 2010) (referring to Oral Arg. Tr. 58-59).

telecommunications services, so that some information services were classed as telecommunications services, it would be difficult to devise a sustainable rationale under which all, or essentially all, information services did not fall into the telecommunications service category.”<sup>66</sup>

As part of their “information” service, numerous entities provide transmission service as well. For example, many application and content providers, content delivery networks (CDNs), and providers of services over connected devices, like Amazon or General Motors, provide transmission service as a component of their information service. The same is true for search engines that connect an advertising network to a search request (like Google and Bing), and for email providers and social networks that enable chat or messaging sessions.

Also caught within the ambit would be companies that sell other services, such as e-reader services, but which buy wireless access on a wholesale basis to deliver their content. For example, in the past, Amazon Kindle has collaborated with Sprint to deliver its e-reader services via a wireless delivery system. Such synergistic deals would be prohibited under Title II because, with respect to its Kindle product, Amazon would be considered a reseller of telecommunications services under Commission precedent.

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<sup>66</sup> *Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service*, CC Docket No. 96-45, Report to Congress, 13 FCC Rcd 11501, 11529, ¶ 57 (1998) (“*Stevens Report*”).

**EXHIBIT A**

**DISSENTING STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER ROBERT M. McDOWELL**

Re: *Preserving the Open Internet*, GN Docket No. 09-191, *Broadband Industry Practices*,  
WC Docket No. 07-52

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for your solicitousness throughout this proceeding. In the spirit of the holidays, with good will toward all, I will present a condensed version of a more in-depth statement, the entirety of which I respectfully request be included in this Report and Order.

At the outset, I would like to thank the selfless and tireless work of all of the career public servants here at the Commission who have worked long hours on this project. Although I strongly disagree with this Order, all of us should recognize and appreciate that you have spent time away from your families as you have worked through weekends, the holidays of Thanksgiving and Chanukah, as well as deep into the Christmas season. Such hours take their toll on family life, and I thank you for the sacrifices made by you and your loved ones.

For those who might be tuning in to the FCC for the first time, please know that over 90 percent of our actions are not only bipartisan, but unanimous. I challenge anyone to find another policy making body in Washington with a more consistent record of consensus. We agree that the Internet is, and should remain, open and freedom enhancing. It is, and always has been so, under existing law. Beyond that, we disagree. The contrasts between our perspectives could not be sharper. My colleagues and I will deliver our statements and cast our votes. Then I am confident that we will move on to other issues where we can find common ground once again. I look forward to working on public policy that is more positive and constructive for American economic growth and consumer choice.

William Shakespeare taught us in *The Tempest*, “What’s past is prologue.” That time-tested axiom applies to today’s Commission action. In 2008, the FCC tried to reach beyond its legal authority to regulate the Internet, and it was slapped back by an appellate court only eight short months ago. Today, the Commission is choosing to ignore the recent past as it attempts the same act. In so doing, the FCC is not only defying a court, but it is circumventing the will of a large, bipartisan majority of Congress as well. More than 300 Members have warned the agency against exceeding its legal authority. The FCC is not Congress. We cannot make laws. Legislating is the sole domain of the directly *elected* representatives of the American people. Yet the majority is determined to ignore the growing chorus of voices emanating from Capitol Hill in what appears to some as an obsessive quest to regulate at all costs. Some are saying that, instead of acting as a “cop on the beat,” the FCC looks more like a regulatory vigilante. Moreover, the agency is further angering Congress by ignoring increasing calls for a cessation of its actions and choosing, instead, to move ahead just as Members leave town. As a result, the FCC has provocatively charted a collision course with the legislative branch.

Furthermore, on the night of Friday, December 10, just two business days before the public would be prohibited by law from communicating further with us about this proceeding, the Commission dumped nearly 2,000 pages of documents into the record. As if that weren’t enough, the FCC unloaded an additional 1,000 pages into the record less than 24 hours before the end of the public comment period. All of these extreme measures, defying the D.C. Circuit, Congress, and undermining the public comment process, have been deployed to deliver on a misguided campaign promise.

Not only is today the winter solstice, the darkest day of the year, but it marks one of the darkest days in recent FCC history. I am disappointed in these “ends-justify-the-means” tactics and the doubts they have created about this agency. The FCC is capable of better. Today is not its finest hour.

Using these new rules as a weapon, politically favored companies will be able to pressure three political appointees to regulate their rivals to gain competitive advantages. Litigation will supplant innovation. Instead of investing in tomorrow’s technologies, precious capital will be diverted to pay lawyers’ fees. The era of Internet regulatory arbitrage has dawned.

And to say that today’s rules don’t regulate the Internet is like saying that regulating highway on-ramps, off-ramps, and its pavement doesn’t equate to regulating the highways themselves.

What had been bottom-up, non-governmental, and grassroots based Internet governance will become politicized. Today, the United States is abandoning the long-standing bipartisan and international consensus to insulate the Internet from state meddling in favor of a preference for top-down control by unelected political appointees, three of whom will decide what constitutes “reasonable” behavior. Through its actions, the majority is inviting countries around the globe to do the same thing. “Reasonable” is a subjective term. Not only is it perhaps the most litigated word in American history, its definition varies radically from country to country. The precedent has now been set for the Internet to be subjected to state interpretations of “reasonable” by governments of all stripes. In fact, at the United Nations just last Wednesday, a renewed effort by representatives from countries such as China and Saudi Arabia is calling for what one press account says is, “an international body made up of Government representatives that would attempt to create global standards for policing the internet.”<sup>1</sup> By not just sanctioning, but *encouraging* more state intrusion into the Internet’s affairs, the majority is fueling a global Internet regulatory pandemic. Internet freedom will not be enhanced, it will suffer.

My dissent is based on four primary concerns:

- 1) Nothing is broken in the Internet access market that needs fixing;
- 2) The FCC does not have the legal authority to issue these rules;
- 3) The proposed rules are likely to cause irreparable harm; and
- 4) Existing law and Internet governance structures provide ample consumer protection in the event a systemic market failure occurs.

Before I go further, however, I apologize if my statement does not address some important issues raised by the Order, but we received the current draft at 11:42 p.m. last night and my team is still combing through it.

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<sup>1</sup> John Hilvert, *UN Mulls Internet Regulation Options*, ITNEWS, Dec. 17, 2010, [http://www.itnews.com.au/News/242051\\_un-mulls-internet-regulation-options.aspx](http://www.itnews.com.au/News/242051_un-mulls-internet-regulation-options.aspx).

## I. Nothing Is Broken in the Internet Access Market That Needs Fixing.

All levels of the Internet supply chain are thriving due to robust competition and low market entry barriers. The Internet has flourished because it was privatized in 1994.<sup>2</sup> Since then, it has migrated further away from government control. Its success was the result of bottom-up collaboration, not top-down regulation. No one needs permission to start a website or navigate the Web freely. To suggest otherwise is nothing short of fear mongering.

Myriad suppliers of Internet related devices, applications, online services and connectivity are driving productivity and job growth in our country. About eighty percent of Americans own a personal computer.<sup>3</sup> Most are connected to the Internet. In the meantime, the Internet is going mobile. By this time next year, consumers will see more smartphones in the U.S. market than feature phones.<sup>4</sup> In addition to countless applications used on PCs, growth in the number of mobile applications available to consumers has gone from nearly zero in 2007 to half a million just three years later.<sup>5</sup> Mobile app downloads are growing at an annual rate of 92 percent, with an estimated 50 billion applications expected to be downloaded in 2012.<sup>6</sup>

Fixed and mobile broadband Internet access is the fastest penetrating disruptive technology in history. In 2003, only 15 percent of Americans had access to broadband. Just seven years later, 95 percent do.<sup>7</sup> Eight announced national broadband providers are building out facilities in addition to the construction work of scores more local and regional providers. More competition is on the way as providers light up recently auctioned spectrum. Furthermore, the Commission's work to make unlicensed use of the television "white spaces" available to consumers will create even more competition and consumer choice.

In short, competition, investment, innovation, productivity, and job growth are healthy and dynamic in the Internet sector thanks to bipartisan, deregulatory policies that have spanned four decades. The Internet has blossomed under *current law*.

Policies that promote abundance and competition, rather than the rationing and unintended consequences that come with regulation, are the best antidotes to the potential

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<sup>2</sup> And at this juncture, I need to dispel a pervasive myth that broadband was once regulated like a phone company. The FCC's 2002 cable modem order did not move broadband from Title II. It formalized an effort to insulate broadband from antiquated regulations, like those adopted today, that started under then-FCC Chairman Bill Kennard. Furthermore, after the Supreme Court's *Brand X* decision, all of the FCC votes to classify broadband technologies as information services were bipartisan. A more thorough history is attached to this dissent as "Attachment A".

<sup>3</sup> See Aaron Smith, Pew Internet & American Life Project, *Americans and their gadgets* (Oct. 14, 2010) at 2, 5, 9 (76 percent of Americans own either a desktop or laptop computer; 4 percent of Americans have "tablet computers").

<sup>4</sup> Roger Entner, Nielsenwire, *Smartphones to Overtake Feature Phones in U.S. by 2011* (Mar. 26, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> See Distimo, GigaOm, Softpedia (links at: <http://www.distimo.com/appstores/stores/index/country:226>; <http://gigaom.com/2010/10/25/android-market-clears-100000-apps-milestone/>; and <http://news.softpedia.com/news/4-000-Apps-in-Windows-Phone-Marketplace-171764.shtml>).

<sup>6</sup> See Chetan Sharma, *Sizing Up the Global Mobile Apps Market* (2010) at 3, 9.

<sup>7</sup> Federal Communications Commission, *Connecting America: The National Broadband Plan* at 20 (rel. Mar. 16, 2010) (*National Broadband Plan*).



anticompetitive behavior feared by the rules' proponents. But don't take my word for it. Every time the government has examined the broadband market, its experts have concluded that no evidence of concentrations or abuses of market power exists. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), one of the premier antitrust authorities in government, not only concluded that the broadband market was competitive, but it also warned that regulators should be "wary" of network management rules because of the unknown "net effects ... on consumers."<sup>8</sup> The FTC rendered that unanimous and bipartisan conclusion in 2007. As I discussed earlier, the broadband market has become only more competitive since then.

More recently, the Department of Justice's Antitrust Division reached a similar conclusion when it filed comments with us earlier this year.<sup>9</sup> While it sounded optimistic regarding the prospects for broadband competition, it also warned against the temptation to regulate "to avoid stifling the infrastructure investments needed to expand broadband access."<sup>10</sup>

Disturbingly, the Commission is taking its radical step today without conducting even a rudimentary market analysis. Perhaps that is because a market study would not support the Order's predetermined conclusion.

## **II. The FCC Does Not Have the Legal Authority to Issue These Rules.**

Time does not allow me to refute all of the legal arguments in the Order used to justify its claim of authority to regulate the Internet. I have included a more thorough analysis in the supplemental section of this statement, however. Nonetheless, I will touch on a few of the legal arguments endorsed by the majority.

Overall, the Order is designed to circumvent the D.C. Circuit's *Comcast* decision,<sup>11</sup> but this new effort will fail in court as well. The Order makes a first-time claim that somehow, through the *deregulatory* bent of Section 706, in 1996 Congress gave the Commission *direct* authority to regulate the Internet. The Order admits that its rationale requires the Commission to reverse its longstanding interpretation that this section conveys no additional authority beyond what is already provided elsewhere in the Act.<sup>12</sup> This new conclusion, however, is suddenly convenient for the majority while it grasps for a foundation for its predetermined outcome. Instead of "*remov[ing]* barriers to infrastructure investment," as Section 706 encourages, the Order fashions a legal fiction to construct *additional* barriers. This move is arbitrary and capricious and is not supported by the evidence in the record or a change of law.<sup>13</sup> The

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<sup>8</sup> Federal Trade Commission, Internet Access Task Force, Broadband Connectivity Competition Policy FTC Staff Report (rel. June 27, 2007) at 157.

<sup>9</sup> See *Ex Parte* Submission of the U.S. Dept. of Justice, GN Docket No. 09-51 (dated Jan. 4, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* at 28.

<sup>11</sup> *Comcast Corp. v. FCC*, 600 F.3d 642 (D.C. Cir. 2010).

<sup>12</sup> Order, ¶ 118.

<sup>13</sup> While it is true that an agency may reverse its position, "the agency must show that there are good reasons." *FCC v. Fox Television Stations, Inc.*, 129 S. Ct. 1800, 1811 (2009). Moreover, while *Fox* held that "[t]he agency need not always provide a more detailed justification than what would suffice for a new policy created on a blank slate," the Court noted that "[s]ometimes it must – when, for example, its new policy rests upon factual findings that contradict those which underlay its prior policy; or when its prior

(continued....)

Commission's gamesmanship with Section 706 throughout the year is reminiscent of what was attempted with the contortions of the so-called "70/70 rule" three years ago. I objected to such factual and legal manipulations then, and I object to them now.

Furthermore, the Order desperately scours the Act to find a tether to moor its alleged Title I ancillary authority. As expected, the Order's legal analysis ignores the fundamental teaching of the *Comcast* case: Titles II, III, and VI of the Communications Act give the FCC the power to regulate specific, recognized classes of electronic communications services, which consist of common carriage telephony, broadcasting and other licensed wireless services, and multichannel video programming services.<sup>14</sup> Despite the desires of some, Congress has *not* established a new title of the Act to police Internet network management, not even implicitly. The absence of statutory authority is perhaps why Members of Congress introduced legislation to give the FCC such powers. In other words, if the Act already gave the Commission the legal tether it seeks, why was legislation needed in the first place? I'm afraid that this leaky ship of an Order is attempting to sail through a regulatory fog without the necessary ballast of factual or legal substance. The courts will easily sink it.

In another act of legal sleight of hand, the Order claims that it does not attempt to classify broadband services as Title II common carrier services. Yet functionally, that is precisely what the majority is attempting to do to Title I information services, Title III licensed wireless services, and Title VI video services by subjecting them to nondiscrimination obligations in the absence of a congressional mandate. What we have before us today is a Title II Order dressed in a threadbare Title I disguise. Thankfully, the courts have seen this bait-and-switch maneuver by the FCC before – and they have struck it down each time.<sup>15</sup>

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(...continued from previous page)

policy has engendered serious reliance interest that must be taken into account." *Id.* (internal citations omitted).

<sup>14</sup> The D.C. Circuit in *Comcast* set forth this framework in very plain English:

Through the Communications Act of 1934, ch. 652, 48 Stat. 1064, as amended over the decades, 47 U.S.C. § 151 *et seq.*, Congress has given the Commission express and expansive authority to regulate common carrier services, including landline telephony, *id.* § 201 *et seq.* (Title II of the Act); radio transmissions, including broadcast television, radio, and cellular telephony, *id.* § 301 *et seq.* (Title III); and "cable services," including cable television, *id.* § 521 *et seq.* (Title VI). In this case, the Commission does not claim that Congress has given it express authority to regulate Comcast's Internet service. Indeed, in its still-binding 2002 *Cable Modem Order*, the Commission ruled that cable Internet service is neither a "telecommunications service" covered by Title II of the Communications Act nor a "cable service" covered by Title VI. *In re High-Speed Access to the Internet Over Cable and Other Facilities*, 17 F.C.C.R. 4798, 4802, P 7 (2002), *aff'd Nat'l Cable & Telecomms. Ass'n v. Brand X Internet Servs.*, 545 U.S. 967, 125 S. Ct. 2688, 162 L. Ed. 2d 820 (2005).

600 F.3d at 645.

<sup>15</sup> *See, e.g., id.; FCC v. Midwest Video Corp*, 440 U.S. 689 (1979) (*Midwest II*).

The Order's expansive grasp for jurisdictional power here is likely to alarm any reviewing court because the effort appears to have no limiting principle.<sup>16</sup> If we were to accept the Order's argument, "it would virtually free the Commission from its congressional tether."<sup>17</sup> "As the [Supreme] Court explained in *Midwest Video II*, 'without reference to the provisions of the Act' expressly granting regulatory authority, 'the Commission's [ancillary] jurisdiction ... would be unbounded.'"<sup>18</sup> I am relieved, however, that in the Order, the Commission is explicitly refraining from regulating coffee shops.<sup>19</sup>

In short, if this Order stands, there is no end in sight to the Commission's powers.

I also have concerns regarding the constitutional implications of the Order, especially its trampling on the First and Fifth Amendments. But in the observance of time, those thoughts are contained in my extended written remarks.

### **III. The Commission's Rules Will Cause Irreparable Harm to Broadband Investment and Consumers.**

DOJ's cogent observation from last January regarding the competitive nature of the broadband market raises the important issue of the likely irreparable harm to be brought about by these new rules. In addition to government agencies, investors, investment analysts, and broadband companies themselves have told us that network management rules would create uncertainty to the point where crucial investment capital will become harder to find. This point was made over and over again at the FCC's Capital Formation Workshop on October 1, 2009. A diverse gathering of investors and analysts told us that even rules emanating from Title I would create uncertainty. Other evidence suggests that Internet management rules could not only make it difficult for companies to "predict their revenues and cash flow," but a new regime could "have the perverse effect of raising prices to all users" as well.<sup>20</sup>

Additionally, today's Order implies that the FCC has price regulation authority over broadband. In fact, the D.C. Circuit noted in its *Comcast* decision last spring that the Commission's attorneys openly asserted at January's oral argument that "the Commission could someday subject [broadband] service to pervasive rate regulation to ensure that ... [a broadband] company provides the service at 'reasonable charges.'"<sup>21</sup> Nothing indicates that the Commission has changed its mind since then. In fact, the Order appears to support both indirect and direct price regulation of broadband services.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> For example, in the *Comcast* case, FCC counsel conceded at oral argument that the ancillary jurisdiction argument there could even encompass rate regulation, if the Commission chose to pursue that path. *Id.* at 655 (referring to Oral Arg. Tr. 58-59).

<sup>17</sup> *Id.*

<sup>18</sup> *Id.* (quoting *Midwest Video II*, 440 U.S. at 706).

<sup>19</sup> Order, ¶ 52.

<sup>20</sup> Howard Buskirk, *Investors, Analysts Uneasy About FCC Direction on Net Neutrality*, COMM. DAILY, Oct. 2, 2009, at 2; see also National Cable & Telecommunications Association Comments at 19; Verizon and Verizon Wireless Reply Comments at 17-18.

<sup>21</sup> *Comcast*, 600 F.3d at 655 (referring to Oral Arg. Tr. 58-59).

<sup>22</sup> See, e.g., Order, ¶ 76.

Moreover, as lobbying groups accept this Order's invitation to file complaints asking the government to distort the market further the Commission will be under increasing pressure from political interest groups to expand its power and influence over the broadband Internet market. In fact, some of my colleagues today are complaining that the Order doesn't go far enough. Each complaint filed will create more uncertainty as the enforcement process becomes a *de facto* rulemaking circus, just as the Commission attempted in the ill-fated *Comcast/BitTorrent* case.<sup>23</sup> How does this framework create regulatory certainty?<sup>24</sup> Even the European Commission recognized the harm such rules could cause to the capital markets when it decided last month *not* to impose measures similar to these.<sup>25</sup>

Part of the argument in favor of new rules alleges that "giant corporations" will serve as hostile "gatekeepers" to the Internet. First, in the almost nine years since those fears were first sewn, net regulation lobbyists can point to fewer than a handful of cases of alleged misconduct, out of an infinite number of Internet communications. *All* of those cases were resolved in favor of consumers under *current* law.

More importantly, however, many broadband providers are not large companies. Many are small businesses. Take, for example, LARIAT, a fixed wireless Internet service provider serving rural communities in Wyoming. LARIAT has told the Commission that the imposition of network management rules will impede its ability to obtain investment capital and will limit the company's "ability to deploy new service to currently unserved and underserved areas."<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, LARIAT echoes the views of many others by asserting that, "[t]he imposition of regulations that would drive up costs or hamper innovation would further deter future outside investment in our company and others like it."<sup>27</sup> Additionally, "[t]o mandate overly [burdensome] network management policies would foster lower quality of service, raise operating costs (which in turn would raise prices for all subscribers), and/or create a large backlog of adjudicative proceedings at the Commission (in which it would be prohibitively expensive for *small and competitive ISPs* to participate)".<sup>28</sup> LARIAT also notes that the imposition of net neutrality rules would cause immediate harm such that "[d]ue to immediate deleterious impacts upon investment, these damaging effects would be likely to occur even if the Commission's Order was later invalidated, nullified, or effectively modified by a court challenge or

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<sup>23</sup> See *Formal Complaint of Free Press and Public Knowledge Against Comcast Corporation for Secretly Degrading Peer-to-Peer Applications*, File No. EB-08-IH-1518, Memorandum Opinion and Order, 23 FCC Rcd. 13,028 (2008) (*Comcast Order*). Comcast and BitTorrent settled their dispute, in the absence of net neutrality rules, four months before the Commission issued its legally flawed order. See, e.g., David Kirkpatrick, *Comcast-BitTorrent: The Net's Finally Growing Up*, CNN.COM, Mar. 28, 2008, at <http://money.cnn.com/2008/03/27/technology/comcast.fortune/index.htm>

<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, as Commissioner Baker has noted, with this Order the Commission is inviting parties to file petitions for declaratory rulings, which will likely result in competitors asking the government to regulate their rivals in advance of market action. I am hard pressed to find a better example of a "mother-may-I" paternalistic industrial policy making apparatus.

<sup>25</sup> Neelie Kroes, Vice President for the Digital Age, European Commission, Net Neutrality – The Way Forward: European Commission and European Parliament Summit on "The Open Internet and Net Neutrality in Europe" (Nov. 11, 2010).

<sup>26</sup> LARIAT Comments at 2-3.

<sup>27</sup> *Id.* at 3.

<sup>28</sup> *Id.* at 5 (emphasis added).

Congressional action.”<sup>29</sup> Other small businesses have echoed these concerns.<sup>30</sup>

Less investment. Less innovation. Increased business costs. Increased prices for consumers. Disadvantages to smaller ISPs. Jobs lost. And all of this is in the name of promoting the exact opposite? The evidence in the record simply does not support the majority’s outcome driven conclusions.

In short, the Commission’s action today runs directly counter to the laudable broadband deployment and adoption goals of the National Broadband Plan. No government has ever succeeded in mandating investment and innovation. And nothing has been holding back Internet investment and innovation, until now.

#### **IV. Existing Law Provides Ample Consumer Protection.**

To reiterate, the Order fails to put forth either a factual or legal basis for regulatory intervention. Repeated government economic analyses have reached the same conclusion: no concentrations or abuses of market power exist in the broadband space. If market failure were to occur, however, America’s antitrust and consumer protection laws stand at the ready. Both the Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission are well equipped to cure any market ills.<sup>31</sup> In fact, the Antitrust Law Section of the American Bar Association agrees.<sup>32</sup> Nowhere does the Order attempt to explain why these laws are insufficient in its quest for more regulation.

Moreover, for several years now, I have been advocating a potentially effective approach that won’t get overturned on appeal. In lieu of new rules, which will be tied up in court for years, the FCC could create a new role for itself by partnering with already established, non-governmental Internet governance groups, engineers, consumer groups, academics, economists,

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<sup>29</sup> Letter from Brett Glass, d/b/a LARIAT, to Julius Genachowski, Chairman, FCC, *et al.*, at 2 (Dec. 9, 2010) (LARIAT Dec. 9 Letter).

<sup>30</sup> *See, e.g.*, Letter from Paul Conlin, President, Blaze Broadband, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary (Dec. 14, 2010) (Blaze Broadband Dec. 14 Letter).

<sup>31</sup> Section 2 of the Sherman Act, 15 U.S.C. § 2, prohibits conduct that would lead to monopolization. In the event of abuse of market power, this is the main statute that enforcers would use. In the context of potential abuses by broadband Internet access service providers, this statute would forbid: (1) Exclusive dealing – for example, the only way a consumer could obtain streaming video is from a broadband provider’s preferred partner site; (2) Refusals to deal (the other side of the exclusive dealing coin) – *i.e.*, if a cable company were to assert that the only way a content delivery network could interconnect with it to stream unaffiliated video content to its customers would be to pay \$1 million/port/month, such action could constitute a “constructive” refusal to deal if any other content delivery network could deliver any other traffic for a \$1,000/port/month price; and (3) Raising rivals’ costs – achieving essentially the same results using different techniques.

Section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45, essentially accomplishes the same curative result, only through the FTC. It generally forbids “unfair competition.” This is an effective statute to empower FTC enforcement as long as Internet access service is considered an “information service.” The FTC Act explicitly does not apply to “common carriers.”

*See also*, 15 U.S.C. §13(a), *et seq.*

<sup>32</sup> ABA Comment on Federal Trade Commission Workshop: Broadband Connectivity Competition Policy, 195 Project No. V070000 (2007).

antitrust experts, consumer protection agencies, industry associations, and others to spotlight allegations of anticompetitive conduct in the broadband market, and work *together* to resolve them. Since it was privatized, Internet governance has always been based on a foundation of bottom-up collaboration and cooperation rather than top-down regulation. This truly “light touch” approach has created a near-perfect track record of resolving Internet management conflicts without government intervention.

Unfortunately, the majority has not even considered this idea for a moment. But once today’s Order is overturned in court, it is still my hope that the FCC will consider and adopt this constructive proposal.

In sum, what’s past is indeed prologue. Where we left the saga of the FCC’s last net neutrality order before was with a spectacular failure in the appellate courts. Today, the FCC seems determined to make the same mistake instead of learning from it. The only illness apparent from this Order is regulatory hubris. Fortunately, cures for this malady are obtainable in court. For all of the foregoing reasons, I respectfully dissent.

\* \* \*

***Extended Legal Analysis:***  
**The Commission Lacks Authority to Impose**  
**Network Management Mandates on Broadband Networks.**

The Order is designed to circumvent the effect of the D.C. Circuit’s *Comcast* decision,<sup>33</sup> but that effort will fail. Careful consideration of the Order shows that its legal analysis ignores the fundamental teaching of *Comcast*: Titles II, III, and VI of the Communications Act regulate specific, recognized classes of electronic communications services, which consist of common carriage telephony, broadcasting and other licensed wireless services, and multichannel video programming services.<sup>34</sup> Despite any policy desires to the contrary, Congress has not yet established a new title of the Act to govern some or all parts of the Internet – which includes the operation, or “management,” of the networks that support the Internet’s functioning as a new and highly complex communications platform for diverse and interactive data, voice, and video services. Until such time as lawmakers may act, the Commission has no power to regulate

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<sup>33</sup> *Comcast Corp. v. FCC*, 600 F.3d 642 (D.C. Cir. 2010).

<sup>34</sup> The D.C. Circuit in *Comcast* set forth this framework in very plain English:

Through the Communications Act of 1934, ch. 652, 48 Stat. 1064, as amended over the decades, 47 U.S.C. § 151 *et seq.*, Congress has given the Commission express and expansive authority to regulate common carrier services, including landline telephony, *id.* § 201 *et seq.* (Title II of the Act); radio transmissions, including broadcast television, radio, and cellular telephony, *id.* § 301 *et seq.* (Title III); and “cable services,” including cable television, *id.* § 521 *et seq.* (Title VI). In this case, the Commission does not claim that Congress has given it express authority to regulate Comcast’s Internet service. Indeed, in its still-binding 2002 *Cable Modem Order*, the Commission ruled that cable Internet service is neither a “telecommunications service” covered by Title II of the Communications Act nor a “cable service” covered by Title VI. *In re High-Speed Access to the Internet Over Cable and Other Facilities*, 17 F.C.C.R. 4798, 4802, P 7 (2002), *aff’d Nat’l Cable & Telecomms. Ass’n v. Brand X Internet Servs.*, 545 U.S. 967, 125 S. Ct. 2688, 162 L. Ed. 2d 820 (2005).

600 F.3d at 645.

Internet network management.

As detailed below, the provisions of existing law upon which the Order relies afford the Commission neither direct nor ancillary authority here. The tortured logic needed to support the Order's conclusion requires that the agency either reverse its own interpretation of its statutorily granted express powers or rely on sweeping pronouncements of ancillary authority that lack any "congressional tether" to specific provisions of the Act.<sup>35</sup> Either path will fail in court.

Instead, the judicial panel that ends up reviewing the inevitable challenges is highly likely to recognize this effort for what it is. While ostensibly eschewing reclassification of broadband networks as Title II platforms, the Order imposes the most basic of all common carriage mandates: nondiscrimination, albeit with a vague "we'll know it when we see it" caveat for "reasonable" network management. This may be only a pale version of common carriage (at least for now), but it is still quite discernible even to the untrained eye.

**A. Reversal of the Commission's Interpretation of Section 706 Cannot Provide Direct Authority for Network Management Rules.**

Less than one year ago, the Commission in attempting to defend its *Comcast/BitTorrent* decision at the D.C. Circuit "[a]cknowledged that it has no express statutory authority over [an Internet service provider's network management] practices."<sup>36</sup> The Commission was right then, and the Order is wrong now. Congress has never contemplated, much less enacted, a regulatory scheme for broadband network management, notwithstanding the significant revision of the Communications Act undertaken through the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (1996 Act).<sup>37</sup> It is an exercise in legal fiction to contend otherwise.

Any analysis of an arguable basis for the Commission's power to act in this area must begin with the recognition that broadband Internet access service remains an unregulated "information service" under Title I of the Communications Act.<sup>38</sup> Overtly, the Order does not purport to change this legal classification.<sup>39</sup> Yet a reviewing court will look beyond the Order's

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<sup>35</sup> *Id.* at 655.

<sup>36</sup> *Id.* at 644.

<sup>37</sup> The scattered references to the Internet and advanced services in a few provisions of the 1996 Act, *see, e.g.*, 47 U.S.C. §§ 230, 254, do not constitute a congressional effort to systemically regulate the management of the new medium. A better reading of the 1996 Act in this regard is that Congress recognized that the emergence of the Internet meant that something new, exciting, and yet still amorphous was coming. Rather than act prematurely by establishing a detailed new regulatory scheme for the Net, Congress chose to leave the Net unregulated at that time.

<sup>38</sup> *Inquiry Concerning High-Speed Access to the Internet Over Cable & Other Facilities; Internet Over Cable Declaratory Ruling; Appropriate Regulatory Treatment for Broadband Access to the Internet Over Cable Facilities*, GN Docket No. 00-185, CS Docket No. 02-52, Declaratory Ruling and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 17 FCC Rcd. 4,798 (2002) (*Cable Modem Declaratory Ruling*); *Appropriate Framework for Broadband Access to the Internet Over Wireline Facilities et al.*, CC Docket Nos. 02-33, 01-337, 95-20, 98-10, WC Docket Nos. 04-242, 05-271, Report and Order and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 20 FCC Rcd. 14,853 (2005) (*Wireline Broadband Order*); *Appropriate Regulatory Treatment for Broadband Access to the Internet Over Wireless Networks*, WT Docket No. 07-53, Declaratory Ruling, 22 FCC Rcd. 5,901 (2007) (*Wireless Broadband Order*).

<sup>39</sup> Order, ¶¶ 121-23.

characterization of the Commission's action to scrutinize what the new codified rules – and the directives and warnings set forth in the text – actually do.<sup>40</sup> Dispassionate analysis will lead to the conclusion that the Order attempts to relegate this type of information service to common carriage by effectively applying major Title II obligations to it. The Title I disguise will not be convincing.

The threadbare nature of the disguise becomes clear with scrutiny of the Order's claims for a legal basis for the new regulations. The Order's only serious effort to assert direct authority is based on Section 706.<sup>41</sup> The Order glosses over the key point that no language within Section 706 – or anywhere else in the Act, for that matter – bestows the FCC with explicit authority to regulate Internet network management. Rather, Section 706's explicit focus is on “deployment” and “availability” of broadband network facilities.<sup>42</sup> So what precisely is the nexus between Section 706's focus on broadband deployment and availability and the Order's focus on network management once the facilities *have been* deployed and the service *is* available? The Order seems to imply that Section 706 somehow provides the Commission with network management authority because if the government lacks such power, some American might have less access to the Internet. This rationale is contrary to the provision's language and illogical on its face. Imposing new regulations on network providers in the business of deploying broadband<sup>43</sup> will have the opposite effect of what Section 706 seeks to do. Instead, the imposition of network management rules will likely depress investment in deployment of broadband throughout our nation.<sup>44</sup> This outcome will prove true not simply for the large providers tracked by Wall Street analysts but for the small businesses that supply vital and competitive broadband options to

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<sup>40</sup> See, e.g., *Marsh v. Oregon Natural Res. Council*, 490 U.S. 360, 378 (1989) (“in the context of reviewing a decision ... courts should not automatically defer to the agency's express reliance on an interest in finality without carefully reviewing the record and satisfying themselves that the agency has made a reasoned decision based on its evaluation of the significance – or lack of significance – of the new information.”).

<sup>41</sup> To the degree that the Order suggests that other sections in the Act provide it with direct authority to impose new Internet network management rules, such arguments are not legally sustainable. For the reasons set forth in Section B of this extended legal analysis, *infra*, the claimed bases for extending even ancillary authority are unconvincing, which renders contentions about direct authority untenable.

<sup>42</sup> 47 U.S.C. §§ 1302 (a), (b).

<sup>43</sup> The National Broadband Plan even noted that, “[d]ue in large part to private investment and market-driven innovation, broadband in America has improved considerably in the last decade.” Federal Communications Commission, *Connecting America: The National Broadband Plan* at 3 (rel. Mar. 16, 2010) (*National Broadband Plan*). Note that during this same time period of investment, no network management rules existed.

<sup>44</sup> The Commission has been warned about this consequence many times in the recent past. For example, during the Commission's October 2009 Capital Formation Workshop, several investment professionals raised red flags about a Title I approach to Internet regulation. Trade press accounts reported Chris King, an analyst at Stifel Nicolaus, as saying that “[w]hen you look at the telecom sector or cable sector, one of the things that scares them to death is net neutrality.... Any regulation that would limit severely [Verizon's and AT&T's] ability to control their own networks to manage traffic of their own networks could certainly have a negative role in their levels of investment going forward.” Howard Buskirk, *Investors, Analysts Uneasy About FCC Direction on Net Neutrality*, COMM. DAILY, Oct. 2, 2009, at 1. Similarly, Tom Aust, a senior analyst at GE Asset Management, stated that regulatory risk is “ultimately unknowable because it's so broad and it can be so quick. For a company it means that they can't predict their revenues and cash flows as well, near or long term.” *Id.* at 2.



consumers in many locales across the nation.<sup>45</sup>

A closer reading of the statutory text bears out this assessment. Turning specifically to the language of Section 706(a), the provision opens with a policy pronouncement that the Commission “shall encourage the deployment on a reasonable and timely basis of advanced telecommunications capability to all Americans.”<sup>46</sup> As *Comcast* already has pointed out, “under Supreme Court and D.C. Circuit case law statements of policy, by themselves, do not create ‘statutorily mandated responsibilities.’”<sup>47</sup> Rather, “[p]olicy statements are just that – statements of policy. They are not delegations of regulatory authority.”<sup>48</sup> The same holds true for congressional statements of policy, such as the opening of Section 706, as it does for any agency’s policy pronouncements.

The Order makes a strenuous effort to argue that Section 706 is not limited to deregulatory actions, a herculean task taken on because the Order rests nearly all of its heavy weight on this thin foundation.<sup>49</sup> Section 706 does refer to one specific regulatory provision –

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<sup>45</sup> Network management regulations will affect the investment outlook for transmission providers large and small. In the latter category, Brett Glass, the sole proprietor of LARIAT, a wireless Internet service provider in Wyoming, has filed comments expressing concern that the imposition of network management rules will impede his ability to obtain investment and will limit his “ability to deploy new service to currently unserved and underserved areas.” LARIAT Comments at 2–3. He stated that “[t]he imposition of regulations that would drive up costs or hamper innovation would further deter future outside investment in our company and others like it.” *Id.* at 3. Specifically, he argues that “[t]o mandate overly [burdensome] network management policies would foster lower quality of service, raise operating costs (which in turn would raise prices for all subscribers), and/or create a large backlog of adjudicative proceedings at the Commission (in which it would be prohibitively expensive for small and competitive ISPs to participate).” *Id.* at 5. “Due to immediate deleterious impacts upon investment, these damaging effects would be likely to occur even if the Commission’s Order was later invalidated, nullified, or effectively modified by a court challenge or Congressional action.” Letter from Brett Glass, d/b/a LARIAT, to Julius Genachowski, Chairman, FCC, *et al.*, at 2 (Dec. 9, 2010) (Glass Dec. 9 Letter). *See also* Letter from Paul Conlin, President, Blaze Broadband, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary (Dec. 14, 2010) (Blaze Broadband Dec. 14 Letter).

<sup>46</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 1302(a).

<sup>47</sup> *Comcast*, 600 F.3d at 644.

<sup>48</sup> *Id.* at 654.

<sup>49</sup> In support of its jurisdictional arguments, the Order cites to language in *Ad Hoc Telecomms. Users Comm. v. FCC*, 572 F.3d 903 (D.C. Cir. 2009). In that case, the D.C. Circuit does, in fact, state that “[t]he general and generous phrasing of § 706 means that the FCC possesses significant albeit not unfettered, authority and discretion to settle on the best regulatory or deregulatory approach to broadband – a statutory reality that assumes great importance when parties implore courts to overrule FCC decisions on this topic.” *Ad Hoc Telecomms.*, 572 F.3d at 906–07. But, there are several reasons why that statement in *Ad Hoc Telecomms.* cannot be used for the proposition that Section 706 provides the FCC with the authority to impose network management rules. First, it is notable that the petitioners in *Ad Hoc Telecomms.* were challenging one of the FCC’s forbearance decisions. As such, the FCC was not relying on Section 706 authority *alone* in that case, it was also relying on its forbearance authority which is specifically delegated to the FCC pursuant to Section 10. The D.C. Circuit made this point in *Comcast*, when it rejected the FCC’s use of *Ad Hoc Telecomms.* for its Section 706 authority arguments. *Comcast*, 600 F.3d at 659 (“In [*Ad Hoc Telecomms.*], however, we cited section 706 merely to support the Commission’s choice between regulatory approaches clearly within its *statutory authority under other sections of the Act.*”) (emphasis added). Second, the text of Section 706(a) actually lists “regulatory forbearance” as an example of one of the tools that the FCC may employ in order to “encourage the deployment on a reasonable and timely basis

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price cap regulation.<sup>50</sup> Readers should keep in mind, however, that at the time Section 706 was enacted, 1996, price cap regulation of incumbent local exchange carriers was considered to be *deregulatory* when compared to the legacy alternative: rate-of-return regulation. The provision’s remaining language is even more broad and deregulatory. For instance, the end of section 706(a) states that the FCC should explore “*other regulating methods that remove barriers to infrastructure investment.*”<sup>51</sup> Additionally, its counterpart subsection, Section 706(b), states that if the FCC’s annual inquiry determines that advanced telecommunications is not “being deployed to all Americans in a reasonable and timely fashion” the FCC shall take action to “*remove[e] barriers to infrastructure investment and ... promot[e] competition in the telecommunications market.*”<sup>52</sup> As discussed above, the Order’s actions will have the opposite effect.

Moreover, the Order’s new interpretation of Section 706(a) is self serving and outcome determinative. The Order admits that its rationale requires reversing the Commission’s longstanding interpretation of that subsection as conveying no authority beyond that already provided elsewhere in the Act.<sup>53</sup> This arbitrary and capricious move is not supported by evidence in the record or a change in law.<sup>54</sup> The Order offers the excuse that “[i]n the particular proceedings prior to *Comcast*, setting out the understanding of Section 706(a) that we articulate in this Order would not meaningfully have increased the authority that we understood the

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of advanced telecommunications capability to all Americans.” 47 U.S.C. § 1302(a). By contrast, network management regulations are not listed in Section 706 or anywhere else in the Act. Finally, as the D.C. Court reiterated in *Comcast*, 600 F.3d at 659, the central issue that it focused on in *Ad Hoc Telecomms.* was not jurisdictional; rather it was whether the FCC’s underlying forbearance decision had been arbitrary and capricious, specifically “when and how much” can the FCC forbear from Title II obligations. *Ad Hoc Telecomms.*, 572 F.3d at 904. Moreover, the court was very clear in noting that such authority was “not unfettered.” *Id.* at 907.

<sup>50</sup> On that note, the Order even highlights the fact that “706(a) expressly contemplates the use of “regulating methods” such as price regulation.” See Order, n. 381. This aside is an unsettling foreshadow of how these rules could be used to regulate broadband rates in the future, through either *ad hoc* enforcement cases or declaratory rulings.

<sup>51</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 1302(a) (emphasis added). This focus on infrastructure investment makes sense in light of Congress’ express concern that broadband facilities quickly reach “elementary and secondary schools and classrooms,” *id.*, which in 1996 may have lacked the economic appeal of business and residential districts as early targets for infrastructure upgrades.

<sup>52</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 1302(b).

<sup>53</sup> Order, ¶ 120.

<sup>54</sup> While it is true that an agency may reverse its position, “the agency must show that there are good reasons.” *FCC v. Fox Television Stations, Inc.*, 129 S. Ct. 1800, 1811 (2009). Moreover, while *Fox* held that “[t]he agency need not always provide a more detailed justification than what would suffice for a new policy created on a blank slate,” the Court noted that “[s]ometimes it must – when, for example, its new policy rests upon factual findings that contradict those which underlay its prior policy; or when its prior policy has engendered serious reliance interest that must be taken into account.” *Id.* (internal citations omitted). This warning is thrown into sharp focus by the billions of dollars invested in broadband infrastructure since the Commission first began enunciating its decisions against Title II classification of broadband Internet networks. See, e.g., AT&T Comments at 19; Verizon Comments at 22.

Commission already to possess.”<sup>55</sup> In other words, apparently, the agency’s confused understanding of the limits of its ancillary authority meant that the Commission then did not have to rest on Section 706(a) in order to overreach by “pursu[ing] a stand-alone policy objective” not moored to “a specifically delegated power.”<sup>56</sup>

The Order’s reliance on Section 706(b) as providing a statutory foundation for network management regulations is similarly flawed. That subsection requires that the FCC determine on an annual basis whether “advanced telecommunications capability is being deployed to all Americans in a reasonable and timely fashion.”<sup>57</sup> Congress then further directed the Commission, if the agency’s determination were negative, to “take immediate action to accelerate deployment of such capability by *removing barriers to infrastructure investment* and by promoting competition in the telecommunications market” (emphasis added).<sup>58</sup>

To justify its use of this trigger, the Order points to the fact that approximately six months ago, the Commission on a divided 3-2 vote issued a report finding – for the first time in history – that “broadband deployment to all Americans is not reasonable and timely.”<sup>59</sup> This determination, in conflict with all previous reports dating back to 1999, was both perplexing and unsettling. It ignored the impressive strides the nation has made in developing and deploying broadband infrastructure and services since issuance of the first 706 Report. Amazingly enough, the most recent 706 Report managed to find failure even while pointing to data (first made public in the National Broadband Plan) showing that “95% of the U.S. population lives in housing units with access to terrestrial, fixed broadband infrastructure capable of supporting actual download speeds of at least 4 Mbps.”<sup>60</sup> In fact, only 15 percent of Americans had access to residential broadband services in 2003.<sup>61</sup> Only seven years later, 95 percent enjoyed access, making broadband the fastest penetrating disruptive technology in history.<sup>62</sup> At the time that I dissented from the 706 Report, I expressed concern that its findings could be a pretext for justifying additional regulation, rather than “removing barriers to infrastructure investment.”<sup>63</sup> Unfortunately, this Order reveals that my fears were well founded.

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<sup>55</sup> See Order, ¶ 122; see also *Comcast Corp. v. FCC*, 600 F.3d 642, 658 (D.C. Cir. 2010) (noting that “[i]n an earlier, still binding order, however, the Commission ruled that section 706 ‘does not constitute an independent grant of authority.’” (quoting *Deployment of Wireline Servs. Offering Advanced Telecomms. Capability*, CC Docket No. 98-147, Memorandum Opinion and Order, 13 FCC Rcd. 24,012, 24,047 ¶ 77 (1988)).

<sup>56</sup> *Comcast*, 600 F.3d at 659.

<sup>57</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 1302(b).

<sup>58</sup> *Id.*

<sup>59</sup> *Inquiry Concerning the Deployment of Advanced Telecommunications Capability to All Americans in a Reasonable and Timely Fashion, and Possible Steps to Accelerate Such Deployment Pursuant to Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996*, GN Docket No. 09-137, Sixth Broadband Deployment Report, 25 FCC Rcd. 9,556, 9,558 ¶¶ 2–3 (2010). Commissioner Baker and I dissented from the July 2010 adoption of the latest Section 706 Report.

<sup>60</sup> *National Broadband Plan* at 20.

<sup>61</sup> See John Horrigan, Pew Internet and American Life Project, *Home Broadband Adoption 2009*, 11 (2009).

<sup>62</sup> *National Broadband Plan* at 20.

<sup>63</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 1302(b).

One is left to wonder where this assertion of power, if left unchecked, may lead next.<sup>64</sup> As for the Order itself, the short-term path is clear: It will be challenged in court. Once there, the Commission must struggle with the fact that the empirical evidence in this docket demonstrates “no relationship whatever” between the plain meaning of Section 706 and the network management rules being adopted.<sup>65</sup>

## **B. Efforts to Advance New Arguments for Exercising Ancillary Authority Will Not Survive Court Review.**

In spite of the D.C. Circuit’s decision in *Comcast*, the Order attempts to continue to assert ancillary authority as another basis for its imposition of network management rules. To bolster the Commission’s case this time, the Order points to some provisions of the Act that it failed to cite the first time around. Its arguments for new and putatively better bases for network management rules fall victim largely to the same weaknesses the court identified before.

Efforts to defend a valid exercise of the agency’s ancillary powers are subject to a two-part test – and the “central issue,” as the D.C. Circuit already has explained, is whether the Commission can satisfy the second prong of the test.<sup>66</sup> Under it, “[t]he Commission may exercise this ‘ancillary’ authority only if it demonstrates that its action ... is ‘reasonably ancillary to the ... effective performance of its statutorily mandated responsibilities.’”<sup>67</sup>

Those “statutorily mandated responsibilities” must be concrete and readily identifiable. As the Supreme Court instructed in *NARUC II* and the D.C. Circuit reiterated in *Comcast*, “the Commission’s ancillary authority ‘is really incidental to, and contingent upon, *specifically delegated powers under the Act.*’”<sup>68</sup> For the ancillary authority arguments to prevail here, the Order must identify specific subsections within Title II, III or VI that provide the ancillary hook, and then show how the Commission’s assertion of power will advance the regulated services directly subject to those particular provisions. Existing court precedent shows that sweeping generalizations are not sufficient.<sup>69</sup> Nor may the general framework of one title of the Act – such

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<sup>64</sup> If the Commission is successful with this assertion of authority, the agency could use Section 706 as an essentially unfettered mandate to impose not only new regulations but to pick winners and losers – all without any grant of authority from Congress to intervene in the marketplace in such a comprehensive manner. In fact, this Order has already done so. For example, it decides that these new network management rules will apply to broadband Internet service providers but not to edge providers. See Order, ¶ 50. The Order makes an interesting attempt to justify this line-drawing. It rationalizes, *inter alia*, that because the new regulatory scheme is putatively an outgrowth of the Commission’s *Internet Policy Statement*, which was not aimed at edge providers, the Order’s new mandates should not apply to those entities either. This argument is irrationally selective at best and arbitrary and capricious at worst. If the Commission’s *Internet Policy Statement* was the “template” for the rules, why isn’t the substance of the rules the same as the previous principles? In particular, why does the Order add nondiscrimination to the regulations when that concept was never part of the previous principles?

<sup>65</sup> *Comcast*, 600 F.3d at 654.

<sup>66</sup> *Id.* at 647.

<sup>67</sup> *Id.* at 644 (citing *Library Ass’n v. FCC*, 406 F.3d 689, 692 (D.C. Cir. 2005)).

<sup>68</sup> *Id.* at 653 (emphasis in original) (citing *Nat’l Ass’n of Regulatory Util. Comm’rs v. FCC*, 533 F.2d 601, 612 (D.C. Cir. 1976) (*NARUC II*)).

<sup>69</sup> Compare Order, ¶ 133 (opining that Open Internet rules for wireless services are supported by Title III of the Communications Act pursuant to the Commission’s authority “to protect the public interest through  
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as common carriage obligations – be grafted upon services subject to another title that does not include the same obligations.<sup>70</sup> And long descriptions of services delivered via broadband networks do not substitute for hard legal analysis.<sup>71</sup>

Moreover, arguments must be advanced on “a case-by-case basis” for each specific assertion of jurisdiction.<sup>72</sup> *Comcast* explains that the Commission must “independently justif[y]” any action resting on ancillary authority by demonstrating in each and every instance how the action at issue advances the services actually regulated by specific provisions of the Act.<sup>73</sup> The D.C. Circuit apparently was concerned about the Commission’s ability to grasp this point, for the opinion makes it repeatedly.<sup>74</sup> In doing so, the court directed the Commission to more closely

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spectrum licensing”) with *Comcast*, 600 F.3d at 651 (“each and every assertion of jurisdiction ... must be *independently justified* as reasonably ancillary to the Commission’s power”) (emphasis in original).

<sup>70</sup> See *Comcast*, 600 F.3d. at 653 (discussing how the *NARUC II* court “found it ‘difficult to see how any action which the Commission might take concerning *two-way cable* communications could have as its primary impact the furtherance of any *broadcast* purpose.’”) (emphasis added); *id* at 654 (discussing the *Midwest Video II* court’s recognition that the Communications Act bars common carrier regulation of broadcasting and therefore rejecting the imposition of public access obligations on cable because the rules would “relegate[ ] cable systems ... to common-carrier status.”).

<sup>71</sup> The fact that some regulated services may be mixed on the same transmission platform with unregulated traffic does not afford the Commission scope to impose legal obligations on all data streams being distributed via that system. For example, the D.C. Circuit also has rejected other past Commission efforts to extend its ancillary reach over all services offered via a transmission platform merely because the platform provider uses it to provide one type of regulated service along with other services not subject to the same regulatory framework. See *id.* at 653 (citing *NARUC II*, 533 F.2d at 615–16, that overturned a series of Commission orders that preempted state regulation of non-video uses of cable systems, including precursors to modern cable modem service); *NARUC II*, 533 F.2d at 616 (“[T]he point-to-point communications ... involve one computer talking to another....”). The Order appears to be silent on this issue.

<sup>72</sup> *Comcast*, 600 F.3d at 651. As the Comcast decision explained, although “the Commission’s ancillary authority may allow it to impose some kinds of obligations on cable Internet providers,” it does not follow that the agency may claim “plenary authority over such providers.” *Id.* at 650. To do so, would “run[ ] afoul” of the Supreme Court precedent set forth in *Southwestern Cable* and *Midwest Video I*.” *Id.* See also *id.* (“Nothing in *Midwest Video I* even hints that *Southwestern Cable*’s recognition of ancillary authority over one aspect of cable television meant that the Commission had plenary authority over all aspects of cable.”).

<sup>73</sup> *Id.* at 651. It follows that the potential for years of litigation over individual enforcement cases is high, thereby leading to a period of prolonged uncertainty that likely will discourage further investment in broadband infrastructure, contrary to the directives of Sec. 706.

<sup>74</sup> See, e.g., *id.* at 651, 653. For example, the court untangled the Commission’s arguments about the implications of language in *Brand X* for the agency’s assertion of authority over Internet network management by explaining that:

[n]othing in *Brand X*, however, suggests that the Court was abandoning the fundamental approach to ancillary authority set forth in *Southwestern Cable*, *Midwest Video I*, and *Midwest Video II*. Accordingly, the Commission cannot justify regulating the network management practices of cable Internet providers simply by citing *Brand X*’s recognition that it may have ancillary authority to require such providers to unbundle the components of their services. These are altogether different regulatory requirements. *Brand X* no more dictates the result of this case than *Southwestern Cable* dictated the results of

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study the agency's failures in *NARUC II* and *Midwest Video II* to comprehend the limits of its ancillary reach.<sup>75</sup>

The Order's claim of ancillary jurisdiction is not convincing with respect to Title II because, *inter alia*, it invokes only Section 201 in support of its nondiscrimination mandate.<sup>76</sup> Yet in a glaring omission, Section 201 does not reference nondiscrimination – that concept is under the purview of Section 202, which appears not to be invoked in the Order.<sup>77</sup> (By this omission, it appears that the Order may be attempting an end run around the most explicit Title II mandates because of other considerations.) Nor are the arguments successful with respect to the Title III and VI provisions cited in the Order because those statutory mandates address services that are not subject to common carriage-style nondiscrimination obligations absent explicit application of statutory directives.<sup>78</sup>

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*Midwest Video I*, *NARUC II*, and *Midwest Video II*. The Commission's exercise of ancillary authority over Comcast's network management practices must, *to repeat*, "be independently justified." (emphasis added) (internal citation omitted).

<sup>75</sup> *Id.* at 653–54.

<sup>76</sup> It is curious that in reciting several provisions of Title II as potential bases for ancillary jurisdiction, the Order avoids the most obvious one: Section 202(a), which explicitly authorizes the nondiscrimination mandate imposed on Title II common carriers. This oversight is especially curious given the Order's reliance on the statutory canon of "the specific trumps the general" in revising the agency's interpretation of Section 706. See Order, ¶¶ 117-23 (distinguishing *Deployment of Wireline Services Offering Advanced Telecommunications Capability*, CC Docket No. 98-147, Memorandum Opinion and Order and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 13 FCC Rcd. 24,012 (1998) (*Advanced Services Order*) as limited only to the determination that the general provisions of Section 706 did not control the specific forbearance provisions of Section 10). That canon would seem to apply here as well, given that Section 202(a) certainly is more specific about nondiscrimination than is Section 706. Perhaps reliance on Section 202(a) as a basis for ancillary authority was omitted here in order to avoid reopening divisions over potential Title II reclassification? Of course, any effort to classify broadband Internet access as a common carrier service would confront a different set of serious legal and policy problems, see, e.g., *Cable Modem Declaratory Ruling*, GN Docket No. 00-185, CS Docket No. 02-52, Declaratory Ruling and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 17 FCC Rcd. 4,798 (2002); *Wireline Broadband Order*, CC Docket Nos. 02-33, 01-337, 95-20, 98-10, WC Docket Nos. 04-242, 05-271, Report and Order and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 20 FCC Rcd. 14,853 (2005); *Wireless Broadband Order*, WT Docket No. 07-53, Declaratory Ruling, 22 FCC Rcd. 5,901 (2007), but violation of this basic canon of statutory construction would not be among them.

<sup>77</sup> Section 202(a)'s prohibition against "unjust or unreasonable discrimination" carries with it decades of agency and court interpretation which is much different from the Order's "nondiscrimination" mandate. For instance, the Order questions the reasonableness of tiered pricing and paid prioritization. Under the case history of Section 202, tiered pricing and concepts similar to paid prioritization are not presumed to constitute "unjust or unreasonable discrimination." See, e.g., *Nat'l Ass'n of Regulatory Util. Comm'rs v. FCC*, 737 F.2d 1095, 1133 (D.C. Cir. 1984) ("But when there is a neutral, rational basis underlying apparently disparate charges, the rates need not be unlawful. For instance, when charges are grounded in relative use, a single rate can produce a wide variety of charges for a single service, depending on the amount of the service used. Yet there is no discrimination among customers, since each pays equally according to the volume of service used."); *Competitive Telecomm. Ass'n v. FCC*, 998 F.2d 1058, 1064 (D.C. Cir. 1993) ("By its nature, § 202(a) is not concerned with the price differentials between qualitatively different services or service packages. In other words, so far as 'unreasonable discrimination' is concerned, an apple does not have to be priced the same as an orange.").

<sup>78</sup> See, e.g., 47 U.S.C. § 153(11); *FCC v. Midwest Video Corp*, 440 U.S. 689, 705 (1979) (*Midwest II*)

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In addition, the Order’s expansive grasp for jurisdictional power here is likely to alarm any reviewing court because the effort appears to have no limiting principle.<sup>79</sup> The D.C. Circuit’s warning in *Comcast* against one form of overreaching – the misreading of policy statements as blanket extensions of power – applies here as well:

Not only is this argument flatly inconsistent with *Southwestern Cable*, *Midwest Video I*, *Midwest Video II*, and *NARUC II*, but if accepted it would virtually free the Commission from its congressional tether. As the Court explained in *Midwest Video II*, “without reference to the provisions of the Act” expressly granting regulatory authority, “the Commission’s [ancillary] jurisdiction ... would be unbounded.” Indeed, Commission counsel told us at oral argument that just as the Order seeks to make Comcast’s Internet service more “rapid” and “efficient,” the Commission could someday subject Comcast’s Internet service to pervasive rate regulation to ensure that the company provides the service at “reasonable charges.” *Were we to accept that theory of ancillary authority, we see no reason why the Commission would have to stop there, for we can think of few examples of regulations that apply to Title II common carrier services, Title III broadcast services, or Title VI cable services that the Commission, relying on the broad policies articulated in section 230(b) and section 1, would be unable to impose upon Internet service providers. If in Midwest Video I the Commission “strain[ed] the outer limits of even the open-ended and pervasive jurisdiction that has evolved by decisions of the Commission and the courts,” and if in NARUC II and Midwest Video II it exceeded those limits, then here it seeks to shatter them entirely.*<sup>80</sup>

Some of the Order’s most noteworthy flaws are addressed below.

**1. The Order’s patchwork citation of Title II provisions does not provide the necessary support for extending common carriage obligations to broadband Internet access providers.**

*Comcast* instructs the Commission that the invocation of any Title II citation as a basis for ancillary jurisdiction must be shown to be “integral to telephone communication.”<sup>81</sup> The

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(construing the statute to prohibit treating broadcasters – and, by extension, cable operators – as common carriers). *See also infra* pp. 21-25. With respect to those Title III services that are subject to some common carriage regulation, mobile voice service providers bear obligations pursuant to explicit provisions of Title II of the Act, including but not limited to the provision of automatic voice roaming (Sections 201 and 202); maintenance of privacy of customer information, including call location information explicitly (Section 222); interconnection directly or indirectly with the facilities and equipment of other telecommunications carriers (Section 251); contribution to universal service subsidies (Section 254); and obligation to ensure that service is accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities (Section 255).

<sup>79</sup> For example, in the *Comcast* case, the FCC counsel conceded at oral argument that the ancillary jurisdiction argument there could even encompass rate regulation, if the Commission chose to pursue that path. *Comcast*, 600 F.3d at 655.

<sup>80</sup> *Id.* at 655 (emphasis added).

<sup>81</sup> *Id.* at 657–58 (discussing *Nat’l Ass’n of Regulatory Util. Comm’rs v. FCC*, 880 F.2d 422, 425 (D.C. Cir. 1989) (*NARUC III*) and noting that “the Commission had emphasized that ‘[o]ur prior preemption decisions have generally been limited to activities that are closely related to the provision of services and

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Order's efforts to meet this legal requirement are thin and unconvincing – and in some instances downright perplexing. For example, it points to Section 201 in arguing that it provides the Commission with “express and expansive authority”<sup>82</sup> to ensure that the “charges [and] practices in connection with”<sup>83</sup> telecommunications services are “just and reasonable.”<sup>84</sup> The Order contends that the use of interconnected VoIP services via broadband is becoming a substitute service for traditional telephone service and therefore certain broadband service providers might have an incentive to block VoIP calls originating on competitors’ networks. The Order then stretches Section 201’s language concerning “charges” and “practices” to try to bolster the claim that it provides a sufficient nexus for ancillary jurisdiction over potential behavior by nonregulated service providers that conceptually would best be characterized as “discrimination.”<sup>85</sup> There are at least two obvious weaknesses in this rationale. First, the Order ignores the D.C. Circuit’s instruction that the Commission has “expansive authority” only when it is “regulating common carrier services, including landline telephony.”<sup>86</sup> Yet broadband Internet access providers are not common carriers and the Order purposely avoids declaring them to be so. Second, the Order seems to pretend that the plain meaning of Section 201’s text is synonymous with that of Section 202, which does address “discrimination” but is not directly invoked here.

The Order’s reliance on Section 251(a)(1) is flawed for similar reasons. That provision imposes a duty on telecommunications carriers “to interconnect directly or indirectly with the facilities of other telecommunications carriers.”<sup>87</sup> The Order notes that an increasing number of customers use VoIP services and posits that if a broadband Internet service provider were to block certain calls via VoIP, it would ultimately harm users of the public switched telephone network. All policy aspirations aside, this jurisdictional argument fails as a legal matter. As the Order admits, VoIP services have never been classified as “telecommunications services,” *i.e.*, common carriage services, under Title II of the Act.<sup>88</sup> Therefore, as a corollary matter, broadband

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which affect the provision of interstate services.’ The term ‘services’ referred to ‘common carrier communication services’ within the scope of the Commission’s Title II jurisdiction. ‘In short,’ the Commission explained, ‘the interstate telephone network will not function as efficiently as possible without the preemptive detariffing of inside wiring installation and maintenance.’ The Commission’s pre-emption of state regulation of inside wiring was thus ancillary to its regulation of interstate phone service, precisely the kind of link to express delegated authority that is absent in this case.” (quoting *Detariffing the Installation and Maintenance of Inside Wiring*, CC Docket No. 79-105, Memorandum Opinion and Order, 1 FCC Rcd. 1,190, 1,192, ¶ 17 (1986)).

<sup>82</sup> Order, ¶ 125 (quoting *Comcast*, 600 F.3d at 645).

<sup>83</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 201(b).

<sup>84</sup> *Id.*

<sup>85</sup> The term “discrimination” in the context of communications networks is not a synonym for “anticompetitive behavior.” While the word “discriminate” has carried negative connotations, network engineers consider it “network management” – because in the real world the Internet is able to function only if engineers may discriminate among different types of traffic. For example, in order to ensure a consumer can view online video without distortion or interruption, certain bits need to be given priority over other bits, such as individual emails. This type of activity is not necessarily anticompetitive.

<sup>86</sup> *Comcast*, 600 F.3d at 645 (citing to Section 201).

<sup>87</sup> 47 U.S.C. 251(a)(1).

<sup>88</sup> See *Vonage Holdings Corporation Petition for Declaratory Ruling Concerning an Order of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission*, WC Docket No. 03-211, Memorandum Opinion and Order, 27

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Internet service providers are not “telecommunications carriers” – or at least the Commission has never declared them to be so. The effect of the Order is to do indirectly what the Commission is reluctant to do explicitly.

**2. The language of Title III and VI provisions cannot be wrenched out of context to impose common carriage obligations on non-common carriage services.**

The Order makes a rather breathtaking attempt to find a basis for ancillary authority to impose nondiscrimination and other common carriage mandates in statutory schemes that since their inception have been distinguished from common carriage. This effort, too, will fail in court, for it flouts Supreme Court precedent on valid exercises of ancillary authority, as reviewed in detail in *Comcast*. If the “derivative nature of ancillary jurisdiction”<sup>89</sup> has any objectively discernible boundaries, it must bar the Commission from taking obligations explicitly set forth in one statutory scheme established in the Act – such as the nondiscrimination mandates of Title II – and grafting them into different statutory schemes set forth in other sections of Act, such as Title III and Title VI, that either directly or indirectly *eschew* such obligations. Here, the Act itself explicitly distinguishes between broadcasting and common carriage.<sup>90</sup> And the Supreme Court long ago drew the line between Title VI video services and Title II-style mandates by forbidding the Commission to “relegate[] cable systems ... to common-carrier status”.<sup>91</sup>

The Order’s effort to search high and low through provisions of the Communications Act to find hooks for ancillary jurisdiction may be at its most risible in the broadcasting context. The attempt here seems hardly serious, given that the legal discussion is limited to a one-paragraph discussion that cites to no specific section within Title III.<sup>92</sup> Rather, it stands its ground on the observation that TV and radio broadcasters now distribute content through their own websites – coupled with the hypothetical contention that some possible future “self-interested” act by broadband providers could potentially have a negative effect on the emerging business models that may provide important support for the broadcast of local news and other programming.<sup>93</sup>

This is far from the kind of tight ancillary nexus that the Supreme Court upheld in

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FCC Rcd. 22,404 ¶¶ 14, 20–22 (2004).

<sup>89</sup> See *Comcast*, 600 F.3d at 654.

<sup>90</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 153(11).

<sup>91</sup> See *Comcast*, 600 F.3d at 654 (citing *Midwest Video II*, 440 U.S. 689, 700–01) (Commission could not “relegate[] cable systems ... to common-carrier status”). Although the *Midwest Video II* case predated congressional enactment of cable regulation, none of the statutory amendments of the Communications Act since that time – the 1984 Cable Act, the Cable Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992, and the Telecommunications Act of 1996 – have imposed any form of Title II-style nondiscrimination mandates on the multichannel video services regulated pursuant to Title VI. To the contrary, the court has recognized that by its nature MVPD service involves a degree of editorial discretion that places it outside the Title II orbit. See, e.g., *Denver Area Educ. Telecomm. Consortium, Inc., v. FCC*, 518 U.S. 727 (1996) (*DAETC*) (upholding § 10(a) of the 1992 Cable Act, which permitted cable operators to restrict indecency on leased access channels).

<sup>92</sup> Order, ¶ 128.

<sup>93</sup> *Id.*

*Southwestern Cable* and *Midwest Video I*,<sup>94</sup> and it is even more attenuated than the jurisdictional stretch that the Court rejected in *Midwest Video II*.<sup>95</sup> One wonders how far this new theory for an ancillary reach could possibly extend. Many broadcasters for years have benefitted through the sales of tapes and DVDs of their programming marketed through paper catalogs. Does the rationale here mean that the Commission has power to regulate the management of that communications platform, too?

The equally generalized Title III arguments based on “spectrum licensing” apparently are intended to support jurisdiction over the many point-to-point wireless services that are not point-to-multipoint broadcasting. They, too, appear off-point.<sup>96</sup> For example, the Order’s recitation of a long array of Title III provisions (e.g., maintenance of control over radio transmissions in the U.S., imposition of conditions on the use of spectrum) seems misplaced. If this overview is intended to serve as analysis, it contains a logical flaw: Most of the rules adopted today are not being applied – yet – to mobile broadband Internet access service.<sup>97</sup> Certainly the Commission need not depend on the full sweep of Title III authority to impose the “transparency” rule; it need only act in our pending “Truth-in-Billing” docket.<sup>98</sup> Similarly, with regard to the “no blocking” rule, the Order need only rest on the provisions of Title III discussed in the *700 MHz Second Report and Order*, where this rule was originally adopted.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> *United States v. Southwestern Cable*, 392 U.S. 157 (1968) (upholding a limit on cable operators’ importation of out-of-market broadcast signals); *United States v. Midwest Video Corp.*, 406 U.S. 649 (1972) (*Midwest Video I*) (plurality opinion upholding FCC rule requiring cable provision of local origination programming); *id.* at 676 (Burger, C.J., concurring) (“Candor requires acknowledgment, for me, at least, that the Commission’s position strains the outer limits of even the open-ended and pervasive jurisdiction that has evolved by decisions of the Commission and the courts.”). With respect to the local origination programming mandate at issue in *Midwest Video I*, the Commission reportedly “stepped back from its position during the course of the ... litigation” by “suspend[ing] the ... rule and never reinstat[ing] it.” T. BARRON CARTER, JULIET L. DEE & HARVEY L. ZUCKMAN, *MASS COMMUNICATIONS LAW* 522–23 (West Group 2000).

<sup>95</sup> *Midwest Video II*, 440 U.S. at 694–95 (rejecting rules mandating cable provision of public access channels, which the FCC claimed were justified by “longstanding communications regulatory objectives” to “increas[e] outlets for local self-expression and augment[ ] the public’s choice of programs”).

<sup>96</sup> One therefore must wonder whether by this argument the Order seeks to pave the way for future regulation of mobile broadband Internet services. The Order has taken great pains to explain that today’s treatment of mobile broadband Internet access service providers is in consumers’ best interest. History suggests that the Order may merely be postponing the inevitable. In fact, the new rule (Section 8.7) need only be amended by omitting one word: “fixed.” The Commission will be poised to do just that when it reviews the new regulations in two years.

<sup>97</sup> Taking the Order at its apparent word that it is not (yet) applying all new mandates on wireless broadband Internet service providers, it must be that the Order invokes the Commission’s Title III licensing authority to impose the rules on fixed broadband Internet access service providers – that is, cable service providers, common carriers, or both. If so, this is curious on its face because these services are regulated under Titles VI and II, respectively, and as a legal matter the Commission does not “license” either cable service providers or common carriers.

<sup>98</sup> See *Truth-in-Billing and Billing Format*, CC Docket No. 98-170, Notice of Inquiry, 24 FCC Rcd. 11,380 (rel Aug. 28, 2009) (*Aug. 2009 Truth-in-Billing NOI*).

<sup>99</sup> See *Service Rules for the 698-746, 747-762 and 777-792 MHz Bands*, WT Docket No. 06-150, Report & Order, 22 FCC Rcd 15289 (2007).

With respect to the asserted Title VI bases for ancillary jurisdiction, the Order actually does point to three specific provisions, but none provides a firm foundation for extending the Commission's authority to encompass Internet network management. The Order first cites Section 628, which is designed to promote competition among the multichannel video programming distributors (MVPDs) regulated under Title VI, such as cable operators and satellite TV providers. The best-known elements of this provision authorize our program access rules, but the Commission recently has strayed – over my dissent – beyond the plain meaning of the statutory language to read away explicit constraints on our power in this area.<sup>100</sup> Apparently the Commission is about to make a bad habit of doing this.

Of course, Section 628 does not explicitly refer to the Internet, much less the management of its operation. The Congressional framers of the Cable Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992, of which Section 628 was a part, were concerned about, and specifically referenced, video services regulated under Title VI.<sup>101</sup> Yet the Order employs a general statutory reference to “unfair methods of competition or unfair or deceptive acts or practices” as a hook for a broad exercise of ancillary jurisdiction over an unregulated network of networks.<sup>102</sup> This time the theory rests largely on the contention that, absent network management regulation, network providers might improperly interfere with the delivery of “over the top” (OTT) video programming that may compete for viewer attention with the platform providers' own MVPD services.<sup>103</sup> The Order cites to no actual instances of such behavior, however, nor does it grapple with the implications of the market forces that are driving MVPDs in the opposite direction – to add Internet connectivity to their multichannel video offerings.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> See *Review of the Commission's Program Access Rules and Examination of Programming Tying Arrangements*, MB Docket No. 07-198, First Report and Order, 25 FCC Rcd. 746 (2010) (*Terrestrial Loophole Order*); *id.* at 822 (McDowell, Comm'r dissenting) (“Section 628 refers to ‘satellite’-delivered programming 36 times throughout the length of the provision, including 14 references in the subsections most at issue here. The plain language of Section 628 bars the FCC from establishing rules governing disputes involving terrestrially delivered programming, whether we like that outcome or not.”). This FCC decision currently is under challenge before the D.C. Circuit. See *Cablevision Systems Corporation v. FCC*, No. 10-1062 (D.C. Cir. filed March 15, 2010).

<sup>101</sup> See 47 U.S.C. § 522(13) (defining “multichannel video programming distributor”). Some of the transmission systems used by such distributors, such as satellites, also are regulated under Title III.

<sup>102</sup> Order, ¶ 130 (citing 47 U.S.C. § 548(b)).

<sup>103</sup> The D.C. Circuit has upheld the Commission's reliance on Section 628(b) to help drive the provision of competitive Title VI multichannel video programming services into apartment buildings and similar “multi-dwelling unit” developments, see *Nat'l Cable & Telcoms. Ass'n v. FCC*, 567 F.3d 659 (D.C. Cir. 2009), but the policy thrust of that case unquestionably concerned Title VI video services. As the Order acknowledges, it is an open question as to whether OTT video providers might someday be made subject to Title VI, with all of the attendant legal rights and obligations that come with that classification. Order at n. 417. But it is misleading in suggesting that the regulatory classification of OTT video providers has been pending only since 2007. *Id.* On the contrary, it has been pending before the Commission since at least 2004 in the IP Enabled Services docket, WCB Docket 04-36, and the agency has consistently avoided answering the question ever since. While I do not prejudice the outcome of that issue, I question the selective invocation of sections of Title VI here as a basis for ancillary jurisdiction. Such overreaching seems to operate as a way of prolonging our avoidance of an increasingly important, albeit complex, matter.

<sup>104</sup> See, e.g., Letter from William M. Wiltshire, Counsel for DIRECTV, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, at 1 (Oct. 1, 2010) (DIRECTV Oct. 1 *Ex Parte* Letter) (outlining the wealth of innovative devices

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The second Title VI provision upon which the Order stakes a claim for ancillary jurisdiction is Section 616, which regulates the terms of program carriage agreements.<sup>105</sup> The specific text and statutory design of this provision make plain that it addresses independently produced content carried by contract as part of a transmission platform provider's Title VI MVPD service, and not a situation in which there is no privity of contract and the service is Internet access. The Order attempts to make much of Section 616's rather broad definition "video programming vendor" without grappling with the incongruities created when one tries to shove the provision's explicit directives about carriage contract terms into the Internet context.<sup>106</sup> In fact, the application of Section 616 here is only comprehensible if one conceives of it as a new flavor of common carriage, with all the key contract terms supplied by statute.<sup>107</sup> Such a reading, however, would be in considerable conflict with the rationale of *Midwest Video II*,<sup>108</sup> as the D.C. Circuit in *Comcast* already has noted.<sup>109</sup>

In short, the Order's efforts to find a solid grounding for exercising ancillary power here – and thereby imposing sweeping new common carriage-style obligations on an unregulated service – strain credulity. Policy concerns cannot overcome the limits of the agency's current statutory authority. The Commission should heed the closing admonition of *Comcast*:

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currently available in the market, including AppleTV, Boxee, and Roku); Adam Satariano & Andy Fixmer, *ESPN to Web Simulcast, Make Pay TV Online Gatekeeper*, BLOOMBERG, Oct. 15, 2010, at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-10-15/espn-to-stream-channels-to-time-warner-cable-users-to-combat-web-rivals.html> (explaining ESPN's plan to begin streaming its sports channels online to Time Warner Cable Inc. customers as part of the pay-TV industry's strategy to fend off Internet competitors); Walter S. Mossberg, *Google TV: No Need To Tune In Just Yet*, WALL ST. J., Nov. 18, 2010, at D1 (comparing Google TV technology to its rivals Apple TV and Roku); Louis Trager, *Netflix Plans Rapid World Spread of Streaming Service*, COMM. DAILY, Nov. 19, 2010, at 7 (examining Netflix's plans to offer a streaming-only service in competition with Hulu Plus, as well as its plans for expansion worldwide).

<sup>105</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 536.

<sup>106</sup> For example, Section 616(a)(1) bars cable operators from linking carriage to the acquisition of a financial interest in the independent programmers' channel – a restraint borrowed from antitrust principles that is readily understandable in the context of a traditional cable system with a limited amount of so-called "linear channel" space. The construct does not conform easily to the Internet setting, which is characterized by a considerably more flexible network architecture that allows end users to make the content choices – and which affords them access to literally millions of choices that do not resemble "video programming" as it is defined in Title VI, *see* 47 U.S.C. §522(20), including but not limited to simple, text-heavy websites, video shorts and all manner of personalized exchanges of data.

<sup>107</sup> The federal government first involved itself in setting basic rates, terms, and conditions in the context of service agreements between railroads and their customers, but at least one historian (and former FCC commissioner) traced the "ancient law" of common carriers" back to the development of stage coaches and canal boats. *See* GLEN O. ROBINSON, "THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS ACT: AN ESSAY ON ORIGINS AND REGULATORY PURPOSE," IN A LEGISLATIVE HISTORY OF THE COMMUNICATIONS ACT OF 1934, 26 (Max D. Paglin, ed. 1989) (noting that a 19th Century Supreme Court case identified the concept emerging as far back as the reign of William and Mary).

<sup>108</sup> In *Midwest Video II*, the Supreme Court invalidated FCC rules that would have required cable operators to provide public access channels. The Court reasoned that, in the absence of explicit statutory authority for such mandates, the public access rules amounted to an indirect effort to impose Title II common carriage obligations – and that, in turn, conflicted with the Title III basis for the agency's ancillary jurisdiction claim. *See* 440 U.S. at 699-02.

<sup>109</sup> *Comcast*, 600 F.3d at 654.

[N]otwithstanding the “difficult regulatory problem of rapid technological change” posed by the communications industry, “the allowance of wide latitude in the exercise of delegated powers is not the equivalent of untrammelled freedom to regulate activities over which the statute fails to confer ... Commission authority.” Because the Commission has failed to tie its assertion of ancillary authority over Comcast’s Internet service to any “statutorily mandated responsibility,” we ... vacate the Order.<sup>110</sup>

The same fate awaits this new rulemaking decision.

### C. The Order Will Face Serious Constitutional Challenges.

It is reasonable to assume that broadband Internet service providers will challenge the FCC ruling on constitutional grounds as well.<sup>111</sup> Contrary to the Order’s thinly supported assertions, broadband ISPs are speakers for First Amendment purposes – and therefore challenges on that basis should not be so lightly dismissed. There are several reasons for being concerned about legal infirmities here.

First, the Order is too quick to rely on simplistic service labels of the past in brushing off First Amendment arguments. For example, while it ostensibly avoids classifying broadband providers as Title II common carriers, it still indirectly alludes to old case law concerning the

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<sup>110</sup> *Comcast*, 600 F.3d at 661 (internal citations omitted).

<sup>111</sup> The Order incorrectly asserts that the new network management rules raise no serious questions about a Fifth Amendment taking of an Internet transmission platform provider’s property. At the outset, the Order too quickly dismisses the possibility that these rules may constitute a *per se* permanent occupation of broadband networks. Under *Loretto v. Teleprompter Manhattan CATV Corp.*, a taking occurs when the government authorizes a “permanent physical occupation” of property “even if they occupy only relatively insubstantial amounts of space and do not seriously interfere with the [owner’s] use of the rest of his [property].” 458 U.S. 419, 430 (1982). Here, the new regulatory regime effectively authorizes third-party occupation of some portion of a broadband ISP’s transmission facilities by constraining the facility owner’s ability to decide how to best manage the traffic running over the broadband platform. The new strictures have parallels to the Commission’s decision to grant competitive access providers the right to the exclusive use of a portion of local telephone company’s central office facilities – an action which the D.C. Circuit held constituted a physical taking. *Bell Atlantic Tel. Cos. v. FCC*, 24 F.3d 1441, 1445 (D.C. Cir. 1994).

But even assuming *arguendo* that the regulations may not constitute a physical taking, they still trigger serious “regulatory takings” concerns. Today’s situation differs from the one at issue in *Cablevision Systems Corp. v. FCC*, where the court held that Cablevision had failed “to show that the regulation had an economic impact that interfered with ‘distinct investment backed expectations.’” 570 F.3d 83, 98–99 (2d Cir. 2009). Here, many obvious investment-backed expectations are at stake: Network operators have raised, borrowed, and spent billions of dollars to build, maintain, and modernize their broadband plant – based at least in part on the expectation that they would recoup their investment over future years under the deregulatory approach to broadband that the Commission first adopted for cable in 2002 and quickly extended to other types of facilities. Moreover, today’s action could result in significant economic hardships for platform providers even if they have no debt load to pay off. For example, the Order announces the government’s “expectation” that platform providers will build-out additional capacity for Internet access service before or in tandem with expanding capacity to accommodate specialized services. Order, ¶ 114. Although property owners may not be able to expect existing legal requirements regarding their property to remain *entirely* unchanged, today’s vague “expectation” places a notable burden on platform providers – heavy enough, given their legitimate investment-backed expectations since 2002, to amount to a regulatory taking under *Penn Central Transp. Co. v. City of New York*, 438 U.S. 104 (1978).

speech rights of common carriers by dismissing broadband ISPs as mere “conduits for speech” undeserving of First Amendment consideration.<sup>112</sup> There is good reason today to call into question well-worn conventional wisdom dating from the era of government-sanctioned monopolies about common carriers’ freedom of speech, particularly in the context of a competitive marketplace.<sup>113</sup> Indeed, at least two sitting Justices have signaled a willingness to wrestle with the implications of the issue of common carriers’ First Amendment protections.<sup>114</sup>

Similarly, the Order offhandedly rejects the analogies drawn to First Amendment precedent concerning cable operators and broadcasters, based only on the unremarkable observation that cable operators and broadcasters exercise a noteworthy degree of editorial control over the content they transmit via their legacy services.<sup>115</sup> In so doing, the Order disregards the fact that at least two federal district courts have concluded that broadband providers, whether they originated as telephone companies or cable companies, have speech rights.<sup>116</sup> Although the Order acknowledges the cases in today’s Order, it makes no effort to

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<sup>112</sup> Order, ¶ 144 (citing CWA Reply at 13-14, which cites to *Turner Broadcasting System, Inc. v. FCC*, 512 U.S. 622 (1994) and *Time Warner Entertainment, L.P. v. FCC*, 93 F.3d 957 (D.C. Cir. 1996)).

<sup>113</sup> The Supreme Court has never directly addressed the First Amendment issues that would be associated with a government compulsion to serve as a common carrier in a marketplace that offers consumers alternatives to a monopoly provider. This is not surprising, for the courts have had no opportunity to pass on the issue; the FCC in the modern era has found that it served the public interest to waive common carrier status on numerous occasions. *See, e.g., In re Australia-Japan Cable (Guam) Limited*, 15 FCC Rcd. 24,057 (2000) (finding that the public interest would be served by allowing a submarine cable operator to offer services on a non-common carrier basis because AJC Guam was unable to exercise market power in light of ample alternative facilities); *In re Tycom Networks Inc., et al.*, 15 FCC Rcd. 24,078 (2000) (examining the public interest prong of the *NARUC I* test, and determining that TyCom US and TyCom Pacific lacked sufficient market power given the abundant alternative facilities present). In fact, in the more than 85 reported cases in which the FCC has addressed common carrier waivers in the past 30 years, it has only imposed common carriage on an unwilling carrier once – and in that instance the agency later reversed course and granted the requested non-common carrier status upon receiving the required information that the applicant previously omitted. *In re Applications of Martin Marietta Communications Systems, Inc.; For Authority to Construct, Launch and Operate Space Stations in the Domestic Fixed-Satellite Service*, 60 Rad. Reg. 2d (P & F) 779 (1986).

<sup>114</sup> The Order is flatly wrong in asserting that “no court has ever *suggested* that regulation of common carriage arrangements triggers First Amendment scrutiny.” Order, ¶ 144 (emphasis added). In *Midwest Video II*, the Court stated that the question of whether the imposition of common carriage would violate the First Amendment rights of cable operators was “not frivolous.” 440 U.S. 689 (1979), 709 n.19. In *DAETC*, 518 U.S. 727 (1996), the plurality opinion appeared split on, among other things, the constitutional validity of mandated leased access channels. Justice Kennedy reasoned that mandating common carriage would be “functional[ly] equivalent[t]” to designating a public forum and that both government acts therefore should be subject to the same level of First Amendment scrutiny. *Id.* at 798 (Kennedy, J., concurring in part, concurring in the judgment in part, and dissenting in part). Justice Thomas’ analysis went even further in questioning the old [dicta] about common carriers’ speech rights. *See id.* at 824–26 (Thomas, J., concurring in the judgment in part and dissenting in part) (stating that “Common carriers are private entities and may, consistent with the First Amendment, exercise editorial discretion in the absence of a specific statutory prohibition”).

<sup>115</sup> Order, ¶ 140 (citing, *e.g., Turner Broadcast Systems, Inc v. FCC*, 512 U.S. 622, 636 (1994) (*Turner I*)).

<sup>116</sup> *Illinois Bell Telephone Co. v. Village of Itasca*, 503 F. Supp. 2d 928 (N.D. Ill. 2007) (analogizing broadband network providers to cable and DBS providers); *Comcast Cablevision of Broward County, Inc. v. Broward County*, 124 F. Supp. 2d 685 (S.D. Fla. 2000) (relying on Supreme Court precedent in *Ex parte Jackson*, 96 U.S. 727, 733 (1878) and *Lovell v. Griffin*, 303 U.S. 444, 452 (1938), the court concluded that

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distinguish or challenge them. Instead, the Order simply “disagree[s] with the reasoning of those decisions.”<sup>117</sup>

Second, I question the Order’s breezy assertion that broadband ISPs perform no editorial function worthy of constitutional recognition. The Order rests the weight of its argument here on the fact that broadband ISPs voluntarily devote the vast majority of their capacity to uses by independent speakers with very little editorial invention by the platform provider beyond “network management practices designed to protect their Internet services against spam and malicious content.”<sup>118</sup> But what are acts such as providing quality of service (QoS) management and content filters if not editorial functions?<sup>119</sup>

And the mere act of opening one’s platform to a large multiplicity of independent voices does not divest the platform owner of its First Amendment rights.<sup>120</sup> The Order cites no legal precedent for determining how much “editorial discretion” must be exercised before a speaker can merit First Amendment protection. Newspapers provide other speakers access to their print “platforms” in the form of classified and display advertising, letters to the editor, and, more recently, reader comments posted in response to online news stories. Advertising historically has filled 60 percent or more of the space in daily newspapers,<sup>121</sup> and publishers rarely turn away ads in these difficult economic times<sup>122</sup> – though they still may exercise some minor degree of “editorial discretion” to screen out “malicious” content deemed inappropriate for family consumption. Under the Order’s rationale, would newspaper publishers therefore be deemed to have relinquished rights to free speech protection?

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the message, as well as the messenger, receives constitutional protection because the transmission function provided by broadband services could not be separated from the content of the speech being transmitted).

<sup>117</sup> Order, n. 458.

<sup>118</sup> Order, ¶ 143.

<sup>119</sup> In addition, the Order’s citation to a Copyright Act provision, U.S.C. § 230(c)(1), to support the proposition that broadband providers serve no editorial function, see Order, ¶ 142, ignores the fact that broadband ISPs engage in editorial discretion – as permitted under another provision of the Copyright Act, 17 U.S.C. § 230(c)(2) – to block malicious content and to restrict pornography. See *Batzel v. Smith*, 333 F.3d 1018, 1030 n.14 (9th Cir. 2003) (noting that § 230(c)(2) “encourages good Samaritans by protecting service providers and users from liability for claims arising out of the removal of potentially ‘objectionable’ material from their services.... This provision insulates service providers from claims premised on the taking down of a customer’s posting such as breach of contract or unfair business practices.”).

<sup>120</sup> Nor does the availability of alternative venues for speech undercut the platform owner’s First Amendment rights to be able to effectively use its own regulated platform for the speech it wishes to disseminate. See, e.g., *Nat’l Cable Television Ass’n v. FCC*, 33 F.3d 66 (D.C. Cir. 1994).

<sup>121</sup> See, e.g., McInnis & Associates, “The Basics of Selling Newspaper Advertising,” Newspaper Print and Online ad Sales Training, at [http://www.ads-on-line.com/samples/Your\\_Publication/chapterone2.html](http://www.ads-on-line.com/samples/Your_Publication/chapterone2.html) (visited 12/7/10). This ratio has remained relatively constant for decades. See Robert L. Jones & Roy E. Carter Jr., “Some Procedures for Estimating ‘News Hole’ in Content Analysis,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (Autumn, 1959), pp. 399-403, pin cite to p. 400 (noting measurements of non-advertising newsholes as low as 30 percent, with an average around 40 percent) (available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2746391?seq=2>) (visited 12/7/10).

<sup>122</sup> Alan Mutter, “Robust ad recovery bypassed newspapers,” *Reflections of a Newsosaur* (Dec. 3, 2010) (available at <http://newsosaur.blogspot.com/>) (visited 12/7/10).

Third, it is undisputed that broadband ISPs merit First Amendment protection when using their own platforms to provide multichannel video programming services and similar offerings. The Order acknowledges as much but simply asserts that the new regulations will leave broadband ISPs sufficient room to speak in this fashion<sup>123</sup> – unless, of course, hints elsewhere in the document concerning capacity usage come to pass.<sup>124</sup> So while the Order concedes, as it must, that network management regulation could well be subject to heightened First Amendment review, it disregards the most significant hurdle posed by even the intermediate scrutiny standard.<sup>125</sup> The Order devotes all of its sparse discussion to the first prong of the intermediate scrutiny test, the “substantial” government interest,<sup>126</sup> while wholly failing to address the second and typically most difficult prong for the government to satisfy: demonstrating that the regulatory means chosen does not “burden substantially more speech than is necessary.”<sup>127</sup> And what is the burden here? One need look no further than the Order’s discussion of specialized services to find it. It announces an “expectation” that network providers will limit their use of their own capacity for speech in order to make room for others – an expectation that may rise to the level of effectively requiring the platform provider to pay extra, in the form of capacity build-outs, before exercising its own right to speak.<sup>128</sup> Such a vague expectation creates a chilling effect of the type that courts are well placed to recognize.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Order, ¶¶ 145-46.

<sup>124</sup> Order, ¶¶ 112-14.

<sup>125</sup> Although the Order addresses only intermediate scrutiny, the potential for application of strict scrutiny should not be disregarded completely. Although the Court in *Turner I* declined to apply strict scrutiny to the statutorily mandated must-carry rules, the network management mandates established by today’s Order may be distinguishable. For example, while rules governing the act of routing data packets might arguably be content neutral regulations, application of the rules in the real world may effectively dictate antecedent speaker-based and content-based choices about which data packets to carry and how best to present the speech that they embody.

<sup>125</sup> *American Library Ass’n v. Reno*, 33 F.3d 78 (D.C. Cir. 1994).

<sup>126</sup> Under First Amendment jurisprudence, it typically is not difficult for the government to convince a court that the agency’s interest is important or substantial. See, e.g., *Carey v. Brown*, 447 U.S. 455, 464–65 (1980) (“even the most legitimate goal may not be advanced in a constitutionally impermissible manner”); *Simon & Schuster, Inc. v. Members of the N.Y. State Crime Victims Bd.*, 502 U.S. 105 (1991) (finding that the state interest was compelling, but the Son of Sam law was not narrowly tailored to advance that objective). But I question whether the Order will survive even this prong of the test because the Commission lacks evidence of a real problem here to be solved. Two examples plus some economic theorizing may be insufficient to demonstrate that the asserted harms to be addressed are, in fact, real and systemic. See *Century Communications Corp. v. FCC*, 835 F.2d 292, 300 (D.C. Cir. 1987) (suggesting that to establish a real harm the Commission has the burden of producing empirical evidence such as studies or surveys). The Commission’s most recent Section 706 Report, which – over the dissent of Commissioner Baker and me – reversed course on 11 years’ worth of consistent findings that advanced services are being deployed on a timely basis, is no foundation on which this part of the argument can securely rest. See *supra* Section A.

<sup>127</sup> *Turner I*, 512 U.S. at 662.

<sup>128</sup> See Order, ¶ 114 (“We fully expect that broadband providers will increase capacity offered for broadband Internet access service if they expand network capacity to accommodate specialized services. We would be concerned if capacity for broadband Internet access service did not keep pace.”).

<sup>129</sup> See *Fox v. FCC*, 613 F.3d 317 (2d Cir. 2010) (holding that the FCC’s indecency policy “violates the First Amendment because it is unconstitutionally vague, creating a chilling effect”).



Yet the Order makes *no* effort, as First Amendment precedent requires, to weigh this burden against the putative benefit.<sup>130</sup> Instead, Broadband ISP speakers are left in the dark to grope their way through this regulatory fog. Before speaking via their own broadband platforms, they must either: (1) guess and hope that they have left enough capacity for third party speech, or (2) go hat in hand to the government for pre-clearance of their speech plans.

Finally, it should be noted one of the underlying policy rationales for imposing Internet network management regulations effectively turns the First Amendment on its head. The Founders crafted the Bill of Rights, and the First Amendment in particular, to act as a bulwark against state attempts to trample on the rights of individuals. (Given that they had just won a war against government tyranny, they were wary of recreating the very ills that had sparked the Revolution – and which so many new Americans had sacrificed much to overcome.) More than 200 years later, our daily challenges may be different but the constitutional principles remain the same. The First Amendment begins with the phrase “Congress shall make no law” for a reason. Its restraint on government power ensures that we continue to enjoy all of the vigorous discourse, conversation and debate that we, along with the rest of the world, now think of as quintessentially American.

### **Conclusion**

For the foregoing reasons, I respectfully dissent.

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<sup>130</sup> See, e.g., Order, ¶¶ 146-48.

**ATTACHMENT A**

Letter of FCC Commissioner Robert M. McDowell to the Hon. Henry A. Waxman, Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce, U.S. House of Representatives (May 5, 2010)



Office of Commissioner Robert M. McDowell  
Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20554

May 5, 2010

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Waxman:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you and your colleagues on the Subcommittee on Communications, Technology and the Internet on March 25 regarding the National Broadband Plan.<sup>1</sup> As I testified at the hearing, the Commission has never classified broadband Internet access services as "telecommunications services" under Title II of the Communications Act. In support of that assertion, I respectfully submit to you the instant summary of the history of the regulatory classification of broadband Internet access services.

In the wake of the privatization of the Internet in 1994, Congress overwhelmingly passed the landmark Telecommunications Act of 1996 (1996 Act) and President Clinton signed it into law. Prior to this time, the Commission had never regulated "information services" or "Internet access services" as common carriage under Title II. Instead, such services were classified as "enhanced services" under Title I. To the extent that regulated common carriers offered their own enhanced services, using their own transmission facilities, the FCC required the underlying, local transmission component to be offered on a common carrier basis.<sup>2</sup> No provider of retail information services was ever required to tariff such service. With the 1996 Act, Congress had the opportunity to reverse the Commission and regulate information services, including Internet access services, as traditional common carriers, but chose not to do so. Instead, Congress codified the Commission's existing classification of "enhanced services" as "information services" under Title I.

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<sup>1</sup> *Oversight of the Federal Communications Commission: The National Broadband Plan: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Communications, Technology, and the Internet of the House Comm. on Energy and Commerce*, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2d Sess. (March 25, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Some who are advocating that broadband Internet access service should be regulated under Title II cite to the Commission's 1998 *GTEADSL Order* to support their assertion. See *GTE Telephone Operating Cos.*, CC Docket No. 98-79, Memorandum Opinion and Order, 13 FCC Red. 22,466 (1998) (*GTEADSL Order*). The *GTE ADSL Order*, however, is not on point, because in that order the Commission determined that GTE-ADSL service was an interstate service for the purpose of resolving a tariff question.

Two years after the 1996 Act was signed into law, Congress directed the Commission to report on its interpretation of various parts of the statute, including the definition of "information service."<sup>3</sup> In response, on April 10, 1998, under the Clinton-era leadership of Chairman William Kennard, the Commission issued a *Report to Congress* finding that "Internet access services are appropriately classed as information, rather than telecommunications, services."<sup>4</sup> The Commission reasoned as follows:

The provision of Internet access service ... offers end users *information-service capabilities inextricably intertwined with data transport*. As such, we conclude that it is appropriately classed as an "information service"<sup>5</sup>

In reaching this conclusion, the Commission reasoned that treating Internet access services as telecommunications services would lead to "negative policy consequences."<sup>6</sup>

To be clear, the FCC consistently held that any provider of information services could do so pursuant to Title I.<sup>7</sup> No distinction was made in the way that retail providers of Internet access service offered that information service to the public. The only distinction of note was under the Commission's *Computer Inquiry* rules, which required common carriers that were also providing information services to offer the transmission component of the information service as a separate, tariffed telecommunications service. But again, this requirement had no effect on the classification of retail Internet access service as an information service.

In the meantime, during the waning days of the Clinton Administration in 2000, the Commission initiated a Notice of Inquiry (NOI) to examine formalizing the regulatory classification of cable modem services as information services.<sup>8</sup> As a result of the *Cable Modem NOI*, on March 14, 2002, the Commission issued a declaratory ruling

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<sup>3</sup> Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1998, Pub. L. No. 105-119, 111 Stat. 2440, 2521-2522, § 623.

<sup>4</sup> *Federal-State Board on Universal Service*, CC Docket No. 96-45, Report to Congress, 13 FCC Red. 11501, K 73 (1998) (*Report to Congress*).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at 180 (emphasis added).

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* at Tj 82 ("Our findings in this regard are reinforced by the negative policy consequences of a conclusion that Internet access services should be classed as 'telecommunications.'").

<sup>7</sup> As Seth P. Waxman, former Solicitor General under President Clinton, wrote in an April 28, 2010 letter to the Commission, "[t]he Commission has *never* classified any form of broadband Internet access as a Title II 'telecommunications service\*' in whole or in part, and it has classified all forms of that retail service as integrated 'information services' subject only to a light-touch regulatory approach under Title I. These statutory determinations are one reason why the Clinton Administration rejected proposals to impose 'open access' obligations on cable companies when they began providing broadband Internet access in the late 1990s, even though they then held a commanding share of the market. The Internet has thrived under this approach." (Emphasis in the original.)

<sup>8</sup> *Inquiry Concerning High-Speed Access to the Internet Over Cable and Other Facilities*, GN Docket No. 00-185, Notice of Inquiry, 15 FCC Red 19287 (2000) (*Cable Modem NOI*).

classifying cable modem service as an information service.<sup>9</sup> In the Commission's *Cable Modem Declaratory Ruling*, it pointed out that "[t]o date ... the Commission has declined to determine a regulatory classification for, or to regulate, cable modem service on an industry-wide basis."<sup>10</sup> Only one month earlier, on February 14, 2002, in its Notice of Proposed Rulemaking<sup>11</sup> regarding the classification of broadband Internet access services provided over wireline facilities, the Commission underscored its view that information services integrated with telecommunications services cannot simultaneously be deemed to contain a telecommunications service, even though the combined offering has telecommunications components.

On June 27, 2005, the Supreme Court upheld the Commission's determination that cable modem services should be classified as information services.<sup>12</sup> The Court, in upholding the Commission's *Cable Modem Order*, explained the Commission's historical regulatory treatment of "enhanced" or "information" services:

By contrast to basic service, the Commission decided not to subject providers of enhanced service, *even enhanced service offered via transmission wires*, to Title II common-carrier regulation. The Commission explained that it was unwise to subject enhanced service to common-carrier regulation given the "fast-moving, competitive market" in which they were offered.<sup>13</sup>

Subsequent to the Supreme Court upholding the Commission's classification of cable modem service as an information service in its *Brand X* decision, the Commission *without dissent* issued a series of orders classifying all broadband services as information services: wireline (2005)<sup>14</sup>, powerline (2006)<sup>1\*</sup> and wireless (2007).<sup>16</sup> Consistent with

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<sup>9</sup> *Inquiry Concerning High-Speed Access to the Internet Over Cable and Other Facilities; Internet Over Cable Declaratory Ruling; Appropriate Regulatory Treatment for Broadband Access to the Internet Over Cable Facilities*, GN Docket No. 00-185, CS Docket No. 02-52, Declaratory Ruling and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 17 FCC Red 4798 (2002) (*Cable Modem Declaratory Ruling*), *aff'd*, *Nat'l. Cable & Telecomms. Ass'n v. Brand X Internet Servs.*, 545 U.S. 967 (2005) (*Brand X*).

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* at H 2.

<sup>11</sup> *Appropriate Framework for Broadband Access to the Internet over Wireline Facilities, Universal Service Obligations of Broadband Providers*, CC Docket No. 02-33, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 17 FCC Red 3019 (2002) (*Wireline Broadband NPRM*).

<sup>12</sup> *Brand X*, 545 U.S. 967.

<sup>13</sup> *Id.* at 977 (emphasis added, internal citations to the Commission's *Computer Inquiry II* decision omitted).

<sup>14</sup> *Appropriate Framework for Broadband Access to the Internet over Wireline Facilities; Universal Service Obligations of Broadband Providers; Review of Regulatory Requirements for Incumbent LEC Broadband Telecommunications Services; Computer III Further Remand Proceedings: Bell Operating Company Provision of Enhanced Services; 1998 Biennial Regulatory Review—Review of Computer III and ONA Safeguards and Requirements; Conditional Petition of the Verizon Telephone Companies for Forbearance Under 47 U.S.C. § 160(c) with Regard to Broadband Services Provided Via Fiber to the Premises; Petition of the Verizon Telephone Companies for Declaratory Ruling or, Alternatively, for Interim Waiver with Regard to Broadband Services Provided Via Fiber to the Premises; Consumer Protection in the Broadband Era*, CC Docket Nos. 02-33, 95-20, 98-10, 01-337, WC Docket Nos. 04-242,

the Court's characterization, the Commission made these classifications to catch up to market developments, to treat similar services alike and to provide certainty to those entities provisioning broadband services, or contemplating doing so. Prior to these rulings, however, such services were never classified as telecommunications services under Title II.

Again, I thank you for providing the opportunity to testify before your Committee and to provide this analysis regarding the regulatory classification of broadband Internet access services. I look forward to working with you and your colleagues as we continue to find ways to encourage broadband deployment and adoption throughout our nation.

Sincerely,



Robert M. McDowell

cc: The Honorable Joe Barton  
The Honorable Rick Boucher  
The Honorable Cliff Steams

05-271, Report and Order and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 20 FCC Red 14853 (2005) (*Wireline Broadband Order*), *affd*, *Time Warner Telecom, Inc. v. FCC*, 507 F.3d 205 (3d Cir. 2007).

<sup>15</sup> *United Power Line Council's Petition for Declaratory Ruling Regarding the Classification of Broadband over Power Line Internet Access Service as an Information Service*, WC Docket No. 06-10, Memorandum Opinion and Order, 21 FCC Red 13281 (2006).

<sup>16</sup> *Appropriate Regulatory Treatment for Broadband Access to the Internet Over Wireless Networks*, WT Docket No. 07-53, Declaratory Ruling, 22 FCC Red 5901 (2007)

## **APPENDIX B**

REMARKS OF  
**THE HONORABLE ROBERT M. MCDOWELL**  
COMMISSIONER  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
BEFORE THE  
ASSOCIAZIONE EGO AND PUNTOIT  
ITALIAN PARLIAMENT  
AULA DEI GRUPPI PARLAMENTARI  
ROME, ITALY  
JUNE 28, 2012

[AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY]

*The Siren Call of “Please Regulate My Rival”:  
A Recipe for Regulatory Failure*

Thank you, Gildo, for that kind introduction. It is a great pleasure to be back in Rome, and an honor to be speaking before this impressive gathering of policy and business leaders.

Although planned months ago, both the location and timing of this conference could not have been more opportune. The Internet’s fate is, yet once again, at a crossroads. As 193 countries convene in Dubai later this year to renegotiate the International Telecommunications Regulations (ITRs), Europe’s view of new Internet regulations proposed by others will be pivotal to the outcome of this important debate. Furthermore, Italy has a crucial role to play in shaping Europe’s position on these matters as we head towards the World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT) treaty negotiation this coming December.

As always, but especially with the world economy in such a weakened and precarious position, governments should resist the temptation to regulate unnecessarily, get out of the way of the Internet and allow it to continue to spread prosperity and freedom across the globe. Internet connectivity, especially through mobile devices, is improving the human condition like no other innovation in world history.

Take for example the profound effect the mobile Internet has had on the lives of Ali Morrison and Isaac Assan.<sup>1</sup> Ali and Isaac operate a small pineapple farm in Central Ghana. In the past, all too often they had no choice but to sell their pineapples well below market value due to a lack of accurate pricing information. Today, however, through a new mobile application, Ali, Isaac and countless farmers just like them, can instantly find the prevailing value of pineapples in surrounding markets and price their product accordingly. What was previously impossible to accomplish is now easy and quick, not to mention incredibly empowering. Earning more money from this new Web-powered knowledge enables Ali and Isaac to own more property and increase their

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<sup>1</sup> See Ken Banks, *In African Agriculture, Information is Power*, NAT’L GEOGRAPHIC (Sept. 5, 2011), <http://newswatch.nationalgeographic.com/2011/09/05/in-african-agriculture-information-is-power/>.



standard of living – all while raising their expectations in both an economic and political sense. In short, the mobile Internet empowers the sovereignty of the individual while growing economies and fundamentally improving lives around the world.

Globally, upwards of 500,000 people become first-time Internet users *each day* precisely because the Internet has migrated further away from government control since its inception.<sup>2</sup> As governmental barriers around the Internet melted away in the mid 1990s, Internet usage skyrocketed – from only 16 million worldwide users in 1995 to over 2.3 billion today.<sup>3</sup> In short, the absence of top-down government control of the Internet sparked a powerful explosion of entrepreneurial brilliance which has not abated. That could soon change, however.

As we meet here today, some Member States of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), as well as a few independent groups, are advocating for expanded intergovernmental powers over the Internet.<sup>4</sup> Some proposals are seemingly small or innocuous while others are conspicuously large and radical. We should be especially aware of incremental changes to the ITRs. With the potential to grow larger quite rapidly, proposed ITR amendments that appear tiny today can be the most insidious and lethal to the spread of prosperity and freedom tomorrow.

The proposals I am referring to are quite real, explicit and concrete. They are not imagined. Nor are they the product of caricatures or distortion, as a few pro-regulation proponents and some ITU leaders have alleged. The proposals speak for themselves. Or as they may have said here in Ancient Rome, “Res ipsa loquitur.” So in the absence of rhetoric and hyperbole, please allow me to briefly outline a few of them.

First, let us start with then-Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin’s proposal during a meeting with the Secretary General of the ITU almost exactly one year ago. Last June, he proclaimed that Member States should establish “international control over the Internet using the monitoring and supervisory capabilities of the International

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<sup>2</sup> See Internet Growth Statistics, INTERNET WORLD STATS, <http://www.internetworldstats.com/emarketing.htm> (last visited June 19, 2012). The estimated number of new users per day, as calculated by determining the change in the number of Internet users over a year divided by 365, has varied greatly over the last 5 years. Between March 2011 and March 2012, the estimated number of new online users was 506,849 per day. Over the past 5 years, however, the average daily increase in online users was approximately 630,685. *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., *Proposals for Revision of the International Telecommunication Regulations*, ITU Member States Belonging to the Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communications (RCC), at 6 (Apr. 17, 2012) (“Member States shall ensure that administrations/operating agencies cooperate within the framework of these Regulations to provide, by mutual agreement, a wide range of international telecommunication services of any type, including . . . services for carrying Internet traffic and data transmission.”).

Telecommunication Union.”<sup>5</sup> Again, these words speak for themselves and should be taken seriously.

True to Mr. Putin’s word, the Russian Federation subsequently put forth formal proposals that would expand the jurisdiction of the ITU into the Internet sphere simply by changing the definition of “telecommunications” to include “processing” and “data.”<sup>6</sup> At first glance, this proposed change seems small, but it is tectonic in scope. The submission by the Arab States is almost identical, by the way.<sup>7</sup>

The Russian proposal would also explicitly give the ITU jurisdiction over IP addresses, one of the most important components of the inner workings of the Net.<sup>8</sup> Control of IP addresses is control of the Internet itself.

Although the Russian Federation claims to support “unrestricted use” of the Internet, its submission calls for making a number of revealing *exceptions*, such as “in cases where international telecommunication services are used for the purpose of interfering in the internal affairs or undermining the sovereignty, national security, territorial integrity and public safety of other States, or to divulge information of a sensitive nature.”<sup>9</sup> In short, the exceptions created by the Russian Federation’s proposal would allow for unlimited intergovernmental control over the Internet’s affairs, in keeping with Mr. Putin’s vision.

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<sup>5</sup> Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, Working Day, *Prime Minister Vladimir Putin meets with Secretary General of the International Telecommunication Union Hamadou Touré*, GOV’T OF THE RUSSIAN FED’N (June 15, 2011), <http://premier.gov.ru/eng/events/news/15601/>.

<sup>6</sup> *Proposed Revisions to Individual Articles of the ITRs*, Russian Federation, CWG-WCIT12 Contribution 95, at 2 (Apr. 13, 2012), <http://www.itu.int/md/T09-CWG.WCIT12-C-0095/en> (“*Russian Federation Contribution 95*”) (defining telecommunication as “[a]ny transmission, emission, processing or reception of signs, signals, writing, images and sounds or data of any nature by wire, radio, optical or other electromagnetic system”).

<sup>7</sup> *Proposed Revisions*, Arab States, CWG-WCIT12 Contribution 67, at 3 (Feb. 1, 2012), <http://www.itu.int/md/T09-CWG.WCIT12-C-0067/en> (defining telecommunication as “[a]ny transmission, emission, reception or processing of signs, signals, writing, images and sounds or intelligence of any nature by wire, radio, optical or other electromagnetic system”); *Proposal on Third Draft of the Future ITRs*, Arab States, CWG-WCIT12 Contribution 103, at 5 (June 4, 2012), <http://www.itu.int/md/T09-CWG.WCIT12-C-0103/en> (“*Arab States Contribution 103*”). Further, Iran argues that the current definition already includes the Internet. *Contribution from Iran*, The Islamic Republic of Iran, CWG-WCIT12 Contribution 48, Attachment 2 (Sept. 12, 2011), <http://www.itu.int/md/T09-CWG.WCIT12-C-0048/en>.

<sup>8</sup> *Further Directions for Revision of the ITRs*, Russian Federation, CWG-WCIT12 Contribution 40, at 3 (2011), <http://www.itu.int/md/T09-CWG.WCIT12-C-0040/en> (“To oblige ITU to allocate/distribute some part of IPv6 addresses (as same way/principle as for telephone numbering, simultaneously existing of many operators/numbers distributors inside unified numbers space for both fixed and mobile phone services) and determination of necessary requirements.”). See also *Arab States Contribution 103* at 9 (“Member States shall, if they so elect, be able to control all naming, numbering, addressing and identification resources used within their territories for international telecommunications/ICTs.”).

<sup>9</sup> *Russian Federation Contribution 95* at 3; *Comments on Document CWG-WCIT12/TD-64*, Russian Federation, CWG-WCIT12 Contribution 112, at 54 (June 6, 2011), <http://www.itu.int/md/T09-CWG.WCIT12-C-0112/en>.

Similarly, Egypt's submission calls for unprecedented economic regulation of Internet traffic through the ITU.<sup>10</sup>

Even though a few proposals have been offered in fora other than the ITU, each gives us a sense of where some ITU Member States would like to go with intergovernmental Internet regulation. For instance, proposals made directly to the U.N. General Assembly by China, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan call for intergovernmental regulation of Internet content and applications.<sup>11</sup> And, last year, India introduced a resolution at the U.N. calling for a new U.N. body to oversee the Internet.<sup>12</sup>

In short, whether submitted to the U.N. or the ITU, these proposals are about much more than conventional Internet governance. Their scope dwarfs the controversies regarding ICANN and domain names. Without exception, each proposal would radically restructure the Internet ecosystem for the worse. They are before us in black and white. So please look with great skepticism on vehement claims that no proposals to regulate the Internet are before the ITU or the U.N.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Africa Region's Proposals to the Review of the ITRs*, Africa Region, CWG-WCIT12 Contribution 116, at 20 (2012), <http://www.itu.int/md/T09-CWG.WCIT12-C-0116/en> ("Member States shall [take measures to] ensure that fair compensation is received for carried traffic (e.g. interconnection or termination)."). See also *Proposal on International Telecommunications Connectivity (Based on Contribution CWG-WCIT12/C-84)*, Paraguay, CWG-WCIT12 Contribution 113, at 5 (June 6, 2012), <http://www.itu.int/md/T09-CWG.WCIT12-C-0113/en> (proposing that parties that enter into Internet connection agreements "take into account the possible need for compensation . . . for the value of elements such as traffic flow, number of routes, and cost of international transmission, and the possible application of network externalities, amongst others."); *Arab States Contribution 103* at 9 (proposing an amendment containing language similar to Paraguay's proposal).

<sup>11</sup> Letter dated 12 September 2011 from the Permanent Representatives of China, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, Item 93 of the provisional agenda - Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Annex (Sep. 14, 2011), [http://www.cs.brown.edu/courses/csci1800/sources/2012\\_UN\\_Russia\\_and\\_China\\_Code\\_o\\_Conduct.pdf](http://www.cs.brown.edu/courses/csci1800/sources/2012_UN_Russia_and_China_Code_o_Conduct.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Dushyant Singh, Member of Parliament, Statement on Agenda Item 16 - Information and Communication Technologies for Development, 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (Oct. 26, 2011), <http://www.un.int/india/2011/ind1945.pdf> (proposing "the establishment of a new institutional mechanism in the United Nations for global internet-related policies."). See also Commission on Science and Technology for Development, Summary Report of the Chair: Briefing on the Open Consultation on Enhanced Cooperation on Public Policy Issues Related to the Internet (May 18, 2012), [http://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/ecn162012crp2\\_en.pdf](http://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/ecn162012crp2_en.pdf) ("Some delegates called for the establishment of an intergovernmental mechanism for enhanced cooperation within the United Nations structure, which would enable governments, on an equal footing, to carry out their roles and responsibilities in international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet.").

<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., Hamadoun I. Touré, Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union, Opening Remarks to Council Working Group – WCIT-12 (June 20, 2012), <http://www.itu.int/en/osg/speeches/Pages/2012-06-20.aspx>; Hamadoun I. Touré, Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union, Remarks to ITU Staff on World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT-12) (June 6, 2012), <http://www.itu.int/en/osg/speeches/Pages/2012-06-06-2.aspx>; Hamadoun I. Touré, Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union, Opening Welcome Speech at the World Telecommunication Policy Forum (WTPF), Meeting of the Informal Experts Group (IEG) (June 5, 2012), <http://www.itu.int/en/osg/speeches/Pages/2012-06-05.aspx>; Eric Pfanner, Debunking Rumors of an Internet Takeover, N.Y. TIMES (June 11, 2012),

In addition to the pro-regulation proposals emanating from Member States, a few non-governmental groups have put forth their own ideas for expanded Net regulation as well. This is not entirely surprising. I have learned during my six years on the U.S. Federal Communications Commission that the most common request we receive from industry is, “Please regulate my rival.” Essentially, this request translates into, “My rival is running too fast, and I want government to slow him or her down to my level.” Industry players that have long operated under legacy regulations are the most susceptible to this affliction.

Perhaps the same could be said of the recent proposal by the European Telecommunications Network Operators’ Association (ETNO).<sup>14</sup> ETNO would like IP interconnection agreements to be brought under the ITRs for the first time with a new “sending party network pays” construct.<sup>15</sup> To be effective, the ETNO proposal would have to require an international dispute resolution forum with enforcement powers as well as an intrusive new mechanism for recording Internet traffic flows on the basis of the value of traffic delivery, presumably determined by the ITU. Such expanded “monitoring capabilities” for the ITU fit perfectly into Mr. Putin’s vision of the Internet of the future.

In short, the ETNO proposal would upend the economics of the Internet by replacing market forces with international regulations that would create tremendous uncertainty, increase costs for all market players, especially consumers, and ultimately undermine the rapid proliferation of Internet connectivity throughout the globe. Disproportionately harmed by this upheaval would be the developing world. The upward trajectory of living standards for billions of people like Ali and Isaac, the pineapple farmers from Ghana, could be put in jeopardy too.

Furthermore, I can’t imagine why network operators would consciously surrender their autonomy to negotiate commercial agreements to an international regulator – unless, of course, they suffer from the “please regulate my rival” malady of an industry that has been regulated too much and for too long. History is replete with such scenarios, and the desire for more regulation for competitors *always* ends badly for the incumbent regulated industry in the form of unintended and harmful consequences.

Take, for example, the American railroads of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Having been heavily regulated since the 1880s,<sup>16</sup> the railroads feared competition from a new and

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<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/11/technology/debunking-rumors-of-an-internet-takeover.html?pagewanted=all>.

<sup>14</sup> *Revisions of the International Telecommunications Regulations – Proposals for High Level Principles to be Introduced in the ITRs*, ETNO, CWG-WCIT12 Contribution 109, at 3 (2012), <http://www.itu.int/md/T09-CWG.WCIT12-C-0109/en>.

<sup>15</sup> *Id.* at 2.

<sup>16</sup> Interstate Commerce Act of 1887, Pub. L. No. 49-104, 24 Stat. 379 (1887). I thank Clifford Winston, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution’s Economic Studies program, for lending his expertise with transportation and industrial organization research and Dominique Lazanski, the Head of Digital Policy at

nimble competitor, the trucking industry. Anxious not to let a less-regulated upstart eat their lunch, instead of convincing the U.S. Congress to deregulate rail to be on an even footing with trucking, the railroads asked lawmakers to *regulate their rivals*. The New Deal Congress, which was enamored with regulation (thus likely prolonging the Great Depression, but that's for another speech) was more than happy to oblige in 1935.<sup>17</sup>

What was the unintended consequence of regulating rivals in the transportation context? With transportation rates cemented at artificially high levels by the regulator, manufacturers and distributors of goods that required shipping found it cheaper to deploy their own trucking fleets.<sup>18</sup> Trucks that operated privately and not as common carriers were exempt from federal economic regulation. Of course, investment and revenue flowed to the least regulated option, private trucking. Congress, the regulators and the railroads didn't foresee this entirely predictable consequence. As a result, the regulated railroads lost market share and income for decades. Rail's share of the surface freight market had fallen from 65 percent at the end of World War II to only 35 percent by the 1970s.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, by the mid 1970s, railroad and trucking executives alike saw the light and pled with Congress to *deregulate* them to give them the freedom to invest and compete in an unfettered market. After enactment of deregulatory laws in 1976 and 1980,<sup>20</sup> the rail and trucking industries respectively began to grow and prosper. Consumers were immediate beneficiaries of deregulation with rates falling by 30 percent<sup>21</sup> and transit time reduced by at least 20 percent by 1988.<sup>22</sup>

But what about profitability? Don't falling prices equate to reduced profits? Isn't jumping from the certainty of price regulation into the unknown chaos of an unregulated competitive market sure to put downward pressure on net revenue? Aren't industries, and even individual companies, really better off in the shelter of command and control regulatory regimes? Doesn't investment in infrastructure increase under the certainty of rate regulation? The answer to all of these questions is: no.

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the TaxPayers' Alliance, for her assistance with research regarding the regulation of the European postal system in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. I also would like to thank Tyler Cox, Emilie de Lozier, Emanuel Gawrieh and Sarah Leggin for their research contributions.

<sup>17</sup> Motor Carrier Act of 1935, Pub. L. No. 74-255, 49 Stat. 543 (1935).

<sup>18</sup> CLIFFORD WINSTON ET AL., THE ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF SURFACE FREIGHT DEREGULATION 4 (1990).

<sup>19</sup> Robert E. Gallamore, *Regulation and Innovation: Lessons from the American Railroad Industry in ESSAYS IN TRANSPORTATION ECONOMICS AND POLICY: A HANDBOOK IN HONOR OF JOHN R. MEYER* 493, 493 (José Gómez-Ibáñez, William B. Tye & Clifford Winston, eds., 1999).

<sup>20</sup> Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976, Pub. L. No. 94-210, 90 Stat. 31 (1976); Motor Carrier Act of 1980, Pub. L. No. 96-296, 94 Stat. 793 (1980); Staggers Rail Act of 1980, Pub. L. No. 96-448, 94 Stat. 1895 (1980).

<sup>21</sup> Clifford Winston, *The Success of the Staggers Rail Act of 1980* 8-9 (AEI-Brookings Joint Center, Oct. 2005), available at <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2005/10/railact-winston>.

<sup>22</sup> Clifford Winston, *U.S. Industry Adjustment to Economic Deregulation*, 12 J. ECON. PERSP. 89, 99 (1998).

History teaches us that profitability and investment tend to *increase* once the weight of regulation is lifted from the collective chest of industry. For example, rail's profitability gained steam after deregulation with its return on investment (ROI) nearly doubling.<sup>23</sup> Better yet, return on equity (ROE), or profit earned on shareholder investment, more than tripled in the early years after deregulation.<sup>24</sup> And investment was stoked by deregulation – railroads invested U.S. \$480 billion into network upgrades, or 40 percent of revenue, between 1980 and 2010.<sup>25</sup> All of this was achieved even though the U.S. railroad industry's rates are half of Europe's and are the lowest in the world.<sup>26</sup>

My use of the railroad and trucking example isn't a matter of cherry-picking the most useful scenarios. Deregulation in other networked industries benefited all involved as well. For instance, American airline deregulation that encouraged competition and allowed pricing freedom produced similar results: fares declined, revenues increased, consumers enjoyed more choices and were able to fly more.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, after the partial deregulation of the American telecom sector in 1996, markets witnessed lower prices, increased investment, more powerful innovation, and skyrocketing consumer adoption of new offerings.<sup>28</sup> Success has been especially robust in the American wireless sector because it has been lightly regulated since its inception.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Railroad's ROI averaged 4.9 percent from 1971 through 1980, compared with a 2.5 percent average between 1970 and 1979. U.S. GEN. ACCOUNTING OFFICE, GAO/RCED-90-80, RAILROAD REGULATION: ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL IMPACTS OF THE STAGGERS RAIL ACT OF 1980 34 (1990).

<sup>24</sup> Railroad's ROE, which averaged only 2.3 percent in the 1970s, climbed to 9 percent between 1971 and 1980. *Id.* at 35.

<sup>25</sup> ASS'N OF AM. RAILROADS, RAIL EARNINGS TODAY PAY FOR CAPACITY AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS FOR TOMORROW 1 (2011), *available at* <http://www.aar.org/~media/aar/Background-Papers/Rail-Earnings-Today.ashx>.

<sup>26</sup> ASS'N OF AM. RAILROADS, THE COST EFFECTIVENESS OF AMERICA'S FREIGHT RAILROADS 2 (2012), *available at* <http://www.aar.org/~media/aar/Background-Papers/The-Cost-Effectiveness-of-Freight.ashx>.

<sup>27</sup> From 1976 to 1982 alone, real fares fell by more than 9 percent. *Compare* U.S. BUREAU OF THE CENSUS, STATISTICAL ABSTRACT OF THE UNITED STATES 1978 671, table 1134 (99th ed. 1978) *with* U.S. BUREAU OF THE CENSUS, STATISTICAL ABSTRACT OF THE UNITED STATES 1984 633, table 1099 (104th ed. 1983). These figures are even more impressive considering fuel costs increased by 88 percent over the same period. *Id.* at 636, table 1103. Moreover, passenger traffic and, with it, industry revenues, have expanded. Specifically, total operating revenues grew from 37,629 million in 1975 to 37,629 million in 1985. *See* U.S. DEP'T OF TRANSP., RESEARCH & INNOVATIVE TECH. ADMIN., NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION STATISTICS table 3-22 (2011), *available at* [http://www.bts.gov/publications/national\\_transportation\\_statistics/pdf/entire.pdf](http://www.bts.gov/publications/national_transportation_statistics/pdf/entire.pdf) (total operating revenues in 1975 to 37,629 million in 1985. Additionally, the number of air carriers, both passenger and freight, approximately tripled between 1976 and 1983. Thomas Gale Moore, *U.S. Airline Deregulation: Its Effects on Passengers, Capital, and Labor*, 29 J.L. & ECON. 1, 5 (1986) (citing thirty-three certificated carriers in 1976, compared with ninety-eight in 1982). Many new entrants have made their presence known by operating as "low-cost" or "independent," like Southwest Airlines or ValuJet (now known as AirTran). *See* Winston, *supra* note 22, at 93-94.

<sup>28</sup> For instance, local service providers doubled their revenues the year after the Telecommunications Act of 1996 ("1996 Act"), Pub. L. No. 104-104, 110 Stat. 56 (1996), was passed. *See* INDUSTRY ANALYSIS DIVISION, COMMON CARRIER BUREAU, FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION, LOCAL COMPETITION (Dec. 1998), [http://transition.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Common\\_Carrier/Reports/FCC-State\\_Link/IAD/lcomp98.pdf](http://transition.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Common_Carrier/Reports/FCC-State_Link/IAD/lcomp98.pdf) ("Local Competition Report"). And, between 1996 and 2001, investment by telecommunications firms skyrocketed and capital stock increased at a rate that far exceeded the period

Examples of deregulatory phenomena are by no means limited to American success stories. Europe has also benefited from deregulation. Since the introduction of competition, the European freight rail market has enjoyed healthier growth and investment just as the European postal system did in the 17<sup>th</sup> century!<sup>30</sup>

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before the passage of the 1996 Act. *See id.* at 3-4; Lawrence J. Spiwack, *The Truth About Telecommunications Investment After the Telecommunications Act of 1996*, PHOENIX CENTER POLICY BULLETIN NO. 4, at 3-4 (2003), available at [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=503364](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=503364). Additionally, the 1996 Act resulted in lowered prices and increased innovation. *See, e.g.,* Reed Hundt, *Ten Years Under the 1996 Telecommunications Act*, 58 FED. COMM. L.J. 399, 402 (2006); The Telecommunications Act of 1996, NTIA (Feb. 4, 1999), available at [http://www.ntia.doc.gov/legacy/otiahome/top/publicationmedia/newsltr/telcom\\_act.htm#LOCAL](http://www.ntia.doc.gov/legacy/otiahome/top/publicationmedia/newsltr/telcom_act.htm#LOCAL) (citing ECONOMIC REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT, ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISERS, U.S. Gov't Printing Office (1999), available at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/ERP-1999/pdf/ERP-1999.pdf>).

<sup>29</sup> Today, the U.S. wireless industry directly or indirectly provides more than 2.4 million jobs and its economic contribution has grown more than five times faster than the overall economy (16 percent versus 3 percent). *See* CTIA-THE WIRELESS ASSOC., SEMI-ANNUAL 2011 TOP-LINE SURVEY RESULTS 10 (2012), [http://files.ctia.org/pdf/CTIA\\_Survey\\_Year\\_End\\_2011\\_Graphics.pdf](http://files.ctia.org/pdf/CTIA_Survey_Year_End_2011_Graphics.pdf) (“CTIA SEMI-ANNUAL 2011 SURVEY RESULTS”); *National Framework*, CTIA – THE WIRELESS ASSOC., [http://www.ctia.org/advocacy/position\\_papers/index.cfm/AID/12062](http://www.ctia.org/advocacy/position_papers/index.cfm/AID/12062) (last visited June 20, 2012) (“CTIA National Framework”). Since the 1996 Act, estimated connections in the wireless industry have increased from 44 million in 1996 to over 331 million in 2011, while average local monthly bills have decreased. Also, in 2011 alone, over \$25 billion was invested in United States’ wireless infrastructure. *See* CTIA-THE WIRELESS ASSOC., CTIA SEMI-ANNUAL WIRELESS INDUSTRY SURVEY (2012), <http://www.ctia.org/advocacy/research/index.cfm/AID/10316> (last visited June 19, 2012); CTIA SEMI-ANNUAL 2011 SURVEY RESULTS at 2, 10. According to the most recent FCC statistics, nine out of ten American consumers have a choice of at least *five* wireless service providers. *See* Implementation of Section 6002(b) of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993, Annual Report and Analysis of Competitive Market Conditions with Respect to Mobile Wireless, including Commercial Mobile Services, WT Docket No. 10-133, *Fifteenth Report*, 26 FCC Rcd 9664, 9669 (2011). As a result, American consumers enjoy low prices – 4 cents per minute – and high mobile usage rates. *See* Roger Entner, *The Wireless Industry: The Essential Engine of U.S. Economic Growth*, RECON ANALYTICS, at 1 (May 2012), <http://reconanalytics.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Wireless-The-Ubiquitous-Engine-by-Recon-Analytics-1.pdf>).

<sup>30</sup> *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on Monitoring Development of the Rail Market*, at 6, COM (2007) 609 final (Oct. 18, 2007), available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0609:FIN:EN:PDF> (reporting that, between 2000 and 2005, the Member States with non-incumbent railways witnessed a significant increase in freight rail performance than Member States in which the market was still dominated by a monopoly); *see also* Oliver Stehmann & Hans Zenger, *The Competitive Effects of Rail Freight Mergers in the Context of European Liberalization*, 7 J. COMPETITION L. & ECON. 455, 462 (2011), available at [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1833323](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1833323). Member States that liberalized early recorded the biggest increases in freight rail volume between 1995 and 2004: the U.K. (70 percent), Netherlands (67 percent), Austria (36 percent), and Germany (24 percent). By contrast, output declined in Member States like France that shielded their incumbents from competition. *See Annexes to the Communication on the Implementation of the Railway Infrastructure Package Directives (‘First Railway Package’)*, at 64, COM (2006) 189 final (May 3, 2006), available at [http://ec.europa.eu/transport/rail/doc/communication\\_implementation\\_1st\\_rail\\_pack\\_annexes.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/rail/doc/communication_implementation_1st_rail_pack_annexes.pdf).

Furthermore, during the 30 years war (1618-1648), the decentralization of government undermined the previously monopolistic postal system. Where state monopolies were not enforced, wide diversity existed. For example, in 1695, postal customers in the Free City of Hamburg could choose among local postal entities affiliated with at least eight different regions and various private delivery services.

Hopefully, the point of these analogies is obvious. “Regulating my rival” is a seductive notion for many, but it only lures its victims to rocky shores before revealing itself as a perilous Siren call. Telecom companies should not look to regulate their “rivals,” Internet content and applications companies, down to their level – especially not through an intergovernmental body.

Instead, network operators should seek deregulation by their home governments to allow them full flexibility to produce and price freely in competitive markets. In fact, as history shows us, attempting to regulate rivals will only produce unintended consequences that will harm the companies advocating regulation. More importantly, consumers end up losing the most. In short, the opposite of what is desired will occur, something called “regulatory failure.” No government, let alone an intergovernmental body, can make economic and engineering decisions in lightning fast Internet time. Nor can any government mandate innovation. But new rules can undermine investment, innovation and job creation all too easily.

Despite these realities, resisting the temptation to regulate is difficult for many. Furthermore, deregulation can seem counterintuitive to some. We always hear talk of “market failure,” but we rarely see analyses of “regulatory failure.” Perhaps that is why, in the words of Professor Adam Thierer, “regulation *always* spreads.”<sup>31</sup> As world economies contract and government debt mounts, repeating the same government actions of regulating more and spending more of the public’s money will only produce the same results: shrinking economies and growing debt. It is time to reverse these trends, but doing so will require tremendous political courage.

We can start by avoiding any expansion of regulation to the Internet. Its phenomenal success can be traced directly to its *voluntary* and *self*-governing structure, the result of a multi-stakeholder process free from top-down governmental influences. In fact, policy makers should head in the opposite direction of the proposals outlined earlier. We should learn from the voluntary, bottom-up, self governance approach in the image of the non-hierarchical Internet itself, and look to apply this successful model elsewhere. Revolutionizing public policy through a fundamental modernization of legacy laws to clear away unnecessary regulatory obstructions will uncork the flow of investment

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Competition drove down costs. In 1712, a postal order was issued reiterating the governmental monopoly and reversing private post in Prussia. By 1720, other European states proposed the establishment of cooperative postal arrangements which would bypass Prussia, but serve the Danzig to Petersburg line. The other European states signed a treaty in 1723, which divided the routes amongst the states and included a promise to suppress independent postal carriers, returning postal carriage to a monopolistic state. See ELI NOAM, TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN EUROPE 8-13 (Oxford University Press, 1992) (for broader economic themes, see all of chapter 2).

<sup>31</sup> Berin Szoka & Adam Thierer, *Net Neutrality, Slippery Slopes & High-Tech Mutually Assured Destruction*, TECH. LIBERATION FRONT (Oct. 23, 2009), <http://techliberation.com/2009/10/23/net-neutrality-slippery-slopes-high-tech-mutually-assured-destruction/> (“The reality is that regulation *always* spreads. The march of regulation can sometimes be glacial, but it is, sadly, almost inevitable: Regulatory regimes grow but almost never contract.”).



capital, spark innovation, drive economic growth and propel job creation. Couldn't today's world economy benefit from such positive and constructive change?

On the other hand, dragging rivals down to the lowest common denominator of overly regulated international telecom companies will enshrine mediocrity at best, and, at worst, snuff out incentives to take risks and reap the resulting rewards, therefore killing opportunities to revitalize moribund economies and improve the human condition.

Thank you for having me here today and I look forward to learning from this fabulous conference.

**APPENDIX B**

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS



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## OPINION

# Net Neutrality Vs. Free Speech

*Cable interests are trying to drag Internet 'edge' providers down with them into the regulatory abyss.*

By ROBERT M. MCDOWELL

Aug. 28, 2014 7:43 p.m. ET

As the Federal Communications Commission's Sept. 15 deadline for public comment on its new net-neutrality rules approaches, the "open Internet" movement has taken an unexpected turn toward undermining free speech. Net-neutrality activists have long tried to sell the public on the need to protect people from Internet service providers blocking or degrading consumer access to websites and online applications. Now the cable industry has jumped on the net-neutrality bandwagon.

Historically, cable companies vehemently opposed new rules governing Internet network management. Why? Because nothing is broken in the Internet-access market that needs fixing, and existing laws could prevent or fix any future problems. Also, new net-neutrality rules would politicize business and engineering decisions and slow down lightning fast developments in the Internet space to the sclerotic crawl of Washington bureaucrats.



Federal Communications Commission (FCC)  
Chairman Tom Wheeler *European Pressphoto Agency*

Now, however, as a third misguided FCC attempt to implement net neutrality gains momentum, Time Warner Cable and the National Cable and Telecommunications Association are trying to drag Internet "edge" providers—including the websites of local broadcasters airing ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox—down with them into the regulatory abyss.

The "edge" of the Internet is where consumers go to get content such as movies from Amazon, streaming online TV shows from broadcasters and apps from companies like Uber. Thousands of start-ups sprout each year while billions in private risk capital is being plowed into a new economy that is providing unprecedented consumer freedom and benefits. Today's Internet blossomed precisely because the government kept its hands off of it.

Until now.

The FCC's attempt to turn the Internet into what amounts to a federally regulated public utility—all in the

name of protecting consumers—has produced tortured logic among cable interests: If Internet service providers are going to be regulated, then websites that their subscribers watch—especially broadcasters' sites—should be regulated too.

According to comments filed with the FCC by Time Warner Cable and the National Cable and Telecommunications Association, broadcasters should not be allowed to take down or withhold the content they produce and own from online distribution even if subscribers have not paid for it—as a matter of federal law. In other words, edge providers should be forced to stream their online content no matter what. Such an overreach, of course, would lay waste to the economics of the Internet. It would also violate the First Amendment's prohibition against state-mandated, or forced, speech—the flip side of censorship.

It is possible that the cable companies figure that subjecting powerful broadcasters to anti-free speech rules will shift the political momentum in the FCC and among the public away from net neutrality. But cable's anti-free speech arguments play right into the hands of the net-neutrality crowd. They want to place the entire Internet ecosystem, physical networks, content and apps, in the hands of federal bureaucrats.

For instance, Columbia law professor Tim Wu, the architect of the movement who coined the term "net neutrality," testified before Congress in June that new rules should "capture" "media policy, social policy" and even FCC "oversight of the political process." His goal, and that of his myriad followers, is to have "FCC oversight of the Internet." Period.

Mr. Wu has outside influence over regulators. He penned the first-ever net-neutrality conditions that were part of the FCC's approval of the AT&T -BellSouth merger in 2006. And he now appears to have a powerful industry ally, albeit perhaps unwittingly, in cable.

But America's cable companies should be careful what they wish for. History teaches us that once you invite regulators into your neighborhood to regulate your rival, it won't stop at the house across the street. Having cable argue for dragging edge-based content providers, like broadcasters or anyone else, into the morass only adds momentum to the net-neutrality effort.

Instead of sympathizing with its captors and helping to expand the dragnet of unnecessary regulations to every corner of the Internet, cable should flatly oppose new rules. The FCC has an unsuccessful track record in court after two similar power grabs in 2010 and this past January, so there's good reason to believe a hat trick of losses is in the making. Now is not the time to panic; it is the hour to persist in favor of a free Internet, and to begin preparing court appeals.

*Mr. McDowell, a former commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission, is a visiting fellow at the Hudson Institute.*

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# This is why the government should never control the internet

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 [washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2014/07/14/this-is-why-the-government-should-never-control-the-internet/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2014/07/14/this-is-why-the-government-should-never-control-the-internet/)

Tomorrow is the deadline for the public to comment on the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) attempt to regulate the Internet under the seemingly innocuous moniker of "net neutrality." The [architect of this movement](#), and the man who coined the term "net neutrality," is Columbia law professor Tim Wu. Unfortunately, he has proved to be immensely influential among regulators.

Net neutrality rules have been sold for a decade as a way to keep the Internet "open and free" by keeping Internet service providers (ISPs), such as phone and cable companies, from blocking or degrading Web sites. Its advocates have argued that ISPs have an economic incentive to act anti-competitively toward consumers and competitors. In a common hypothetical they cite, ISPs would slow — or buffer — traffic for Netflix unless it unfairly pays for more access points, or "off ramps," and better quality of service.

In truth, however, market failures like these have never happened, and nothing is broken that needs fixing. If consumers were being harmed by ISPs, ample antitrust, competition and consumer protection laws already exist to fix the problem. And major broadband providers have pledged, in their terms of service, to keep the Net open and freedom-enhancing. Why? Because it is good business to do so.

Additionally, Netflix produces upwards of 34 percent of the Net's traffic at peak times. It can clog any pipe it touches. That torrent of traffic imposes delivery costs that Netflix would prefer to pass on to others. But the market is sorting out these growing pains as the open Net grows, just as it has successfully from the beginning. (My views on this subject long predate my affiliation with the Hudson Institute, but in the interests of full disclosure: Hudson receives financial support from media, technology and telecom companies, as well as foundations, including those on both sides of the net neutrality debate.)

The Net *has been* open since it was privatized by the Clinton administration. It proliferated globally as it migrated farther away from government control — bringing freedom and prosperity to billions. It grew from a mere 88,000 users in the late 1980s, to more than 3 billion today. Cisco estimates that the exploding "Internet of Everything" (that is, machines talking to one another online, such as your car and your tablet) will generate more than \$14 trillion in global economic growth by 2022. In short, the Internet is the greatest deregulatory success story of all time — a simple fact that vexes those seeking new and unnecessary rules.

In refreshingly honest [congressional testimony](#), Wu has crystalized the net neutrality movement's goal: "FCC oversight of the Internet." His simple statement acts as a dog whistle to regulators, telling them to sweep everything about the Internet under the government-controlled net neutrality umbrella— technical operations, business decisions, content and *speech*. State manipulation of the Net would shape "not merely economic policy, not merely competition policy, but also media policy, social policy" and "oversight of the political process," according to Wu's testimony. Current regulations simply do not "capture" the Net the way more government powers would through powerful new rules, he argued.

Without contesting the adequacy of existing laws to protect consumers and preserve the free flow of information over the Net, Wu asserted that only "the FCC is equipped to deal with issues like regionalism,

like localism, like diversity, which ... aren't captured" by other agencies. These words were likely not selected randomly: They have legal significance at the FCC in regulating speech and go far beyond net neutrality's original sales pitch.

Wu's vision of more government "capture" strongly resembles old broadcast regulations spurred by a "scarcity" of outlets in the mid-20th century — the legal rationale for government regulation of speech over the airwaves, which would never be tolerated by, say, newspapers. Even in today's competitive and digitized media markets, broadcasters must adhere to strict rules dictating speech, or risk losing their licenses. This Supreme Court-blessed government speech control operates under aliases such as "regionalism" and "localism" as invoked by Wu. These rules compel broadcasters to tailor their content to serve properly (in the eyes of regulators) their "communities of license." That could include mandates ranging from sufficient local news, sports and weather, to a minimum amount of programming for children.

Broadcast regulations have also controlled political speech. The most infamous FCC effort to exert "oversight over the political process," in Wu's words, was known as the "Fairness Doctrine." For decades, it allowed the government to censor political speech by justifying its purpose as "balancing" competing points of view in the name of "diversity," serving the "public interest" and, most cynically, *protecting* freedom of expression. That meant the state muted some political voices while amplifying others. Although the Reagan-era FCC correctly scrapped the Fairness Doctrine, vestiges of it remain, such as the confusingly similar "equal time rule," which, for example, curtailed the airing of old Reagan movies when he ran for office. FCC "oversight of the political process" through more Internet regulations sounds eerily like political speech controls. Will new FCC rules lay down a slippery slope toward those kinds of controls?

While some tech companies have been inspired by Wu as they try to "regulate their rivals," phone and cable companies, they may be forging their own regulatory chains, link by link. During my seven years as a FCC commissioner, I lived through several iterations of the net neutrality debate. Its proponents have broadened the term's definition each time to serve their own growing purposes, both here and abroad. Wu's vision, which goes far beyond the Netflix scenario, shows how their ostensible goal could continue to morph into a regulatory regime for the entire Internet ecosystem, affecting far more than ISPs. Inviting regulators into your neighborhood is likely to embolden them to control not only your neighbor but you, too. Wu's supporters should be careful what they wish for.



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## OPINION

# A Victory for an Unfettered Internet

*After another court loss, the FCC should abandon its 'net neutrality' regulation goal.*

By ROBERT MCDOWELL

Jan. 14, 2014 7:09 p.m. ET

A federal appeals court in Washington slapped the Federal Communications Commission on Tuesday for overstepping its legal authority by trying to regulate Internet access. The FCC is now a two-time loser in court in its net-neutrality efforts. Has the government learned its lesson, or will the agency take a third stab at regulating the Internet? The answer to that question will affect the Internet's growth in the 21st century.

The FCC's quest to regulate the Internet began in 2010, when the commission first promulgated rules for net neutrality. The rules, proponents argue, are needed to police Internet "on-ramps" (Internet service providers) ostensibly to ensure that they stay "open." To accomplish this, some want the FCC to subject the Internet to ancient communications laws designed for extinct phone and railroad monopolies.

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### Related Video

Former FCC Commissioner Robert McDowell on why a federal appeals court decision against net-neutrality rules is a win for free access to the Internet. Photos: Getty Images

But the trouble is, nothing needs fixing. The Internet has remained open and accessible without FCC micromanagement since it entered public life in the 1990s. And more regulation could produce harmful results, such as reduced infrastructure investment, stunted innovation, slower speeds and higher prices for consumers. The FCC never bothered to study the impact that such intervention might have on the broadband market before leaping to regulate. Nor did it consider the ample consumer-protection laws that already exist. The government's meddling has been driven more by ideology and a 2008 campaign promise by then-Sen. Barack Obama than by reality.

Further FCC attempts to regulate the Internet could trigger global regulation of the Internet by the International Telecommunication Union, a treaty-based organization under the U.N.'s control. Russian President Vladimir Putin and his allies have been working for a decade to upend a 1988 agreement—forged by delegates from 114 countries—to leave the Internet unfettered. The U.S. has so far been opposed to applying new international rules for the Internet. In October, 193 countries will gather again for talks to conclude a new treaty that will decide the Internet's fate. Proponents hope to build off

victories won last year at International Telecommunication Union talks in Dubai that gave the agency narrow authority to regulate. The goal is to achieve what Mr. Putin summarized in 2011 as "international control of the Internet."

The prospect of multilateral regulation makes the FCC's next move all the more important, as it will set the standard for what happens in the next round of negotiations in South Korea. The U.S. argument that regulation of the Internet at home is a good idea but a bad one internationally is eroding American credibility. The U.S. attempt to have it both ways has inspired scorn from other countries, as I personally experienced during official meetings in Dubai in 2012.

Which is why the FCC should drop its pursuit of net-neutrality rules altogether. The regulations are a bad idea for many reasons, but especially because they radically depart from—and endanger—the highly successful, nongovernmental, private-sector-led, "multi-stakeholder" process for resolving the Internet's technical challenges. Under this loose structure, engineers, academics and users from all over the world work individually to keep a borderless "network of networks" open and thriving. The flat and dispersed architecture of the Internet defies centralized and top-down control: No government is capable of keeping up with the Web's warp-speed evolution. The nimble multi-stakeholder structure of Internet governance, which enjoyed broad bipartisan and international support during the Clinton and Bush administrations, has made the Internet the greatest deregulatory success story of all time.

As a result of this framework for innovation, Internet usage has penetrated faster than any technology in history. Rapid adoption of Internet-enabled mobile devices is profoundly improving the lives of billions of people, especially in the developing world. It is also helping to change their political expectations as it strengthens the sovereignty of the individual by providing fast and inexpensive access to the world's information. Authoritarian regimes feel threatened by unfettered Internet access. That's why they've embarked on a patient diplomatic strategy to accrue power over its on-ramps.



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Pursuing an expanded U.S. government role into the Internet's affairs foolishly plays into the hands of these pro-regulation regimes. At a minimum, new American rules provide them with political cover and the veneer of a rational argument to use for their own nefarious ends. Especially in light of current concerns about National Security Agency surveillance, it should be obvious that the problem of too much state interference with the Internet will not be cured by even more government meddling, either domestically or internationally. Now is a chance to turn back the tide of state encroachment.

The U.S. government must reverse course immediately. First, the FCC should abandon any further legal appeals of its case. Next, the FCC should unequivocally restate its commitment to the multi-stakeholder model of resolving network-management challenges and Internet governance. Then, the commission should work with antitrust and consumer-protection agencies to take an inventory of all existing laws that could either prevent or cure anticompetitive conduct in the Internet sphere, instead of making new rules. This will be essential to the International Telecommunication Union negotiations in the fall, as proponents of global rules just need a simple majority of the 193 to impose their agenda.

In short, governments could have a seat at the multi-stakeholder Internet-governance table, they just



shouldn't own the table. The existing paradigm has produced positive and constructive results and will continue to do so if governments stay out of the way.

Otherwise, the consequences of multilateral control of the Internet could cause a radical disruption of the digital economy that would harm tomorrow's Internet users in the developing world the most. It is not too late to turn back these assaults on Internet freedom, but we are running out of time.

*Mr. McDowell is a former commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission and a visiting fellow at the Hudson Institute.*

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