

Sen. Maria Cantwell

April 18, 2024

Net Neutrality Press Conference

Sen. Cantwell Remarks

[\[VIDEO\]](#) [\[AUDIO\]](#)

Sen. Cantwell: Thank you, Senator Markey, and thank you for your incredible long-time leadership as champion of Net Neutrality.

I'm glad to be here with Chair Rosenworcel and am so appreciative of her efforts to have a free and open internet, protect consumers, make sure that competition and innovation continues, and that we promote public safety and national security.

Net Neutrality rules also protect the innovation economy. I know this, Jessica, Chair Rosenworcel came to the Northwest and visited many small businesses who were worried about their innovation opportunity in a world where they had to pay more for services and connectivity.

We also visited healthcare, individuals in a hospital, we visited a gentleman who had just had a stroke, and literally, it was the good broadband and connectivity that he was able to go from his island home to Bellingham, and then get the information and immediately told, get him on a helicopter and get him to Harborview Hospital. And we were able to talk to him about why this kind of connectivity is so important.

The State of Washington has the fifth highest share of remote workers in the country, and the highest concentration of tech workers, so they rely on safeguarding for small businesses the ability to compete online, the quality of the product, and whether or not they can pay internet providers for preferential treatment.

That is why we need rules that say you can't throttle, you can't slow down, and you can't affect the consumer and businesses that want to grow the innovation economy with these kinds of negative impacts.

I also want to address national security concerns. Because part of this is about safety and empowering agencies to restore internet service when there is an outage, particularly significant in my state, where we have an average of 900 wildfires a year. These wildfires pose a significant threat to broadband.

But the FCC's new proposal also promotes national security. With the proper oversight of broadband providers, the FCC can revoke a [broadband] license for national security reasons.

Americans should be able to use the internet without fear, without foreign adversaries posing legitimate threats to them on U.S. soil, and we need to protect the growing innovation economy by making sure that we have rules that say you can't throttle, you can't slow down, and you can't charge exorbitant fees just to have preferential treatment.

So I applaud the chair for their work, and look forward to working with her. And I thank my two colleagues, again. Senator Markey, who has been such a lead on this, and my dear, dear friend, Anna Eshoo, for her unbelievable leadership in the House on this as well.

So thank you so much.

Net Neutrality Press Conference

Federal Communications Commission Chair Remarks

[\[VIDEO\]](#) [\[AUDIO\]](#)

FCC Chair Jessica Rosenworcel: Thank you so much, Senator Markey. I appreciate Senator Cantwell, Senator Wyden, and Congresswoman Eshoo. These are folks who've been talking about an open internet for an awfully long time. And I'm also grateful for all the advocates who are here today.

You know, members of Congress are really famous for racing to airports moments after the last vote of the week. I get it, because I also enjoy getting out of Washington. And last week, I was actually in your district. I was in Santa Clara County.

And, you know, it's kind of obvious you would go to the Bay Area community that has long been home to digital startups. They've been able to grow their ideas from garages, coffee shops, and cubicles, because the internet is an open platform where you can go where you want, and do what you want, without asking for anyone's permission. And restoring national Net Neutrality rules will make that approach the law of the land.

Net Neutrality rules protect internet openness by prohibiting broadband providers from playing favorites with internet traffic. In fact, it has long been the policy of the United States that broadband providers are not allowed to block internet traffic, slow down services, or censor online content. But in Washington, the last administration took these policies away.

So in California, they did something about it. When Washington stepped out, the state stepped in. They passed their own net neutrality laws. But they weren't alone. In fact, there were about a dozen states that passed net neutrality laws, developed executive orders, and contracting policies.

And some of this explains why I was in the Bay Area last week. But there's actually a twist, because the roundtable discussion I attended was not at a startup, it was at the fire station. That's because the net neutrality rules the FCC is going to vote on next week are about more than just preserving the internet as an open platform for innovators and entrepreneurs. It's also about public safety, and national security.

That's because these rules reclassify broadband as a telecommunication service under Title Two of the Communications Act. That means they reassert the FCC's role as the country's leading communications watchdog.

Think about it. We came out of this pandemic and broadband became more important, not less. It went from being nice to have, to need to have, for everyone, everywhere. It's just common sense that we should have some meaningful oversight of this essential service.

So last week, I was hosted by the Santa Clara County Fire Department, and they told me how in 2018, they discovered that their internet connection in one of their command vehicles was being throttled. And it compromised their ability to stay connected and fight fires.

But you see, the last FCC gave up their authority to even investigate what happened, let alone help them, or any other consumer, having problems with their broadband connection. That's not right. It's also not right when the last administration took these policies away, because it hampered our ability to investigate network outages.

I think everyone would agree that we should have the ability to track outages around the country. But the reality right now is that the FCC can gather data about long distance voice outages, not broadband outages. There's nothing modern about that, because it makes it harder to identify patterns of failure, fix them when they occur, and put in place policies that make our networks more resilient across the board.

This same lack of authority creates a security risk by limiting FCC ability to deny companies controlled by hostile foreign governments the right to access our broadband networks.

Look, there's no shortage of reasons why it makes sense to adopt the net neutrality proposal that is currently before the agency. But one more I want to put in front of you.

There's a lot of things in this country that divide us, actually, net neutrality is not one of them. Survey after survey show that 80% of the public support the FCC's Net Neutrality rules and oppose their repeal. So bringing back the FCC's authority over broadband, and putting back in place Net Neutrality rules is popular. It's also been court tested, and court approved. It's good for consumers who count on broadband like never before. It's important for public safety. It's important for national security.

And when the FCC votes next week, we have an opportunity to get this right. Because in a modern digital economy, it is time to have broadband oversight, a national net neutrality rule and policies that ensure the internet is fast, open, and fair for all of us.