



December 2017

## Fact Sheet on the Trump FCC's Rollback of Net Neutrality

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Democratic Staff

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) used the cover of the Thanksgiving holiday to unveil its plan to destroy net neutrality. These are the protections that empower consumers, safeguard free speech online, and help small businesses prosper. The FCC's proposed rollback could change the internet as we know it, harming both our economy and our democracy.

### **Net Neutrality Preserves a Free and Open Internet.**

Under the previous administration, the FCC adopted strong net neutrality protections that make sure broadband providers do not: (1) block websites, (2) slow down websites, (3) charge companies for access to internet fast lanes. Broadband providers also had to be transparent about their network practices. The FCC also adopted in 2015 a "general conduct" rule that stops internet service providers (ISPs) from gaming these protections.

### **The Trump FCC is Planning to Eliminate Net Neutrality Protections.**

Although the courts have approved the existing rules twice, Trump's FCC is ignoring these legal decisions and wiping out nearly all existing protections. Instead, the FCC would send oversight of broadband providers to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) — an agency with no network expertise, limited resources, limited jurisdiction over ISPs, no rulemaking authority, and no ability to impose civil penalties. This proposal is simply not net neutrality.

### **Without Net Neutrality, ISPs Could Stifle Social Movements of All Political Stripes.**

Under the Trump plan, organic online movements like the Women's March, Black Lives Matter, or even political candidates use of twitter could all be stifled. Without net neutrality protections, the ISPs get to decide what you see and to whom you talk. This rollback hands your power to choose over to big corporations.

### **Undoing Net Neutrality Will Hurt Small Businesses, Cost Jobs, and Harm Innovation.**

Keeping the internet free and open is a necessity for small businesses and the jobs they create, which is why more than 800 startups have written to the FCC in favor of net neutrality. Just after Thanksgiving, 200 internet sites wrote to the FCC, cautioning that without net neutrality, the commerce brought by events like Cyber Monday might disappear. Under the Trump plan, starting new businesses will be harder and innovation can be shut down. If ISPs discriminate against small businesses, by either blocking or slowing down access, the small businesses may have to close their doors and layoff their employees.

### **Rolling Back Net Neutrality Delivers the Final Knock Out Blow to Your Privacy Online.**

Following the rollback of privacy protections earlier this year, even House Republicans urged the FCC to use Title II of the Communications Act to protect consumers' privacy. But under this proposal, that authority will disappear. If the FCC enacts this proposal, neither the FCC nor the FTC will have power under existing law to protect consumers served by most of the big ISPs.