

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 18, 2014

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Thune, Ranking
Member
Committee on Commerce, Science, and
Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Senator Thune,

We wholeheartedly agree with Senator Thune's assertion that any action Congress takes to reform our nation's communications laws must make sense "for today's converged, competitive, and Internet-powered world." Keeping the Internet free and open is essential to this goal. To the extent that any Communications Act reforms are considered in the next Congress, those reforms must be fully consistent with and protective of net neutrality principles. The FCC can and should take strong action to protect consumers as soon as possible. We would forcefully oppose any reforms that would undermine the FCC's authority to act to adopt meaningful net neutrality rules to protect consumers.

To be effective, net neutrality rules must provide maximum protection to consumers and maximum flexibility to promote the Internet economy. Such net neutrality rules contain at least four essential elements: they must prohibit fast lanes, prevent discrimination against and blocking of lawful content, prohibit throttling, and increase transparency. We hope the FCC will adopt such rules without delay.

The Internet has created a \$684 billion economic force, accounting for nearly 5 percent of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product. For example, between 2007 and 2012, the development and use of applications for smartphones and tablets, created 466,000 high-tech jobs and generated more than \$20 billion in annual revenue. We cannot allow Internet service providers to implement practices that threaten this economic force.

A two-tiered Internet that allows Fortune 500 companies to pay for special Internet access imperils the innovation that drives the Internet economy, while leaving slow lanes for the rest of us. This is unacceptable. All consumers and all innovators deserve equal access to an open Internet.

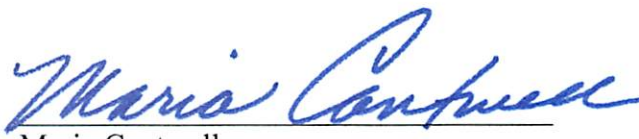
Americans understand this. When the FCC first sought comments on its net neutrality rules, four million Americans registered their views with the FCC, the highest number on any issue in FCC history. These comments deliver one message overwhelmingly—most are in favor of the strongest net neutrality protections.

We stand with the American people in their desire to keep the Internet open and free. And we stand ready to work with you in ensuring that any reform of our communications laws is consistent with strong net neutrality protections.

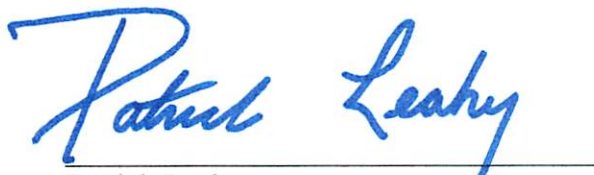
Sincerely,




Harry Reid,
U.S. Senator




Maria Cantwell,
U.S. Senator



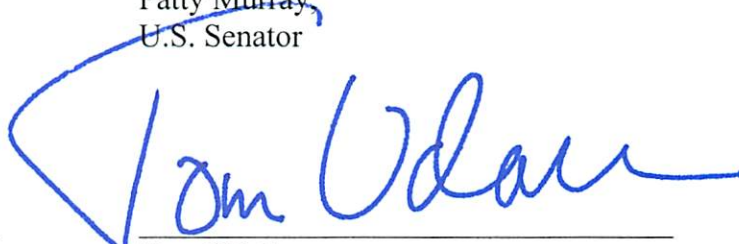
Patrick Leahy,
U.S. Senator




Patty Murray,
U.S. Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.,
U.S. Senator




Tom Udall,
U.S. Senator



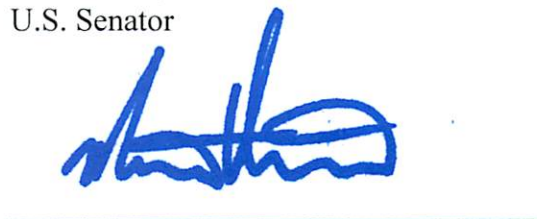
Michael Bennet,
U.S. Senator



Al Franken,
U.S. Senator



Richard Blumenthal,
U.S. Senator



Martin Heinrich,
U.S. Senator

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Mary Ann

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Debbie Stabenow". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Debbie Stabenow,
U.S. Senator