



Representative Thomas E. West
House District 49

House Federalism and Interstate Relations Committee

House Concurrent Resolution 18 Sponsor Testimony

Representatives Thomas West and Dan Ramos

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Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Lipps, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the Federalism and Interstate Relations Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony today on House Concurrent Resolution 18, which will urge Congress, the FCC, and the President of the United States to protect the vital consumer protection of Net Neutrality.

The basic principle of Net Neutrality is that access to all websites and web services should be equal. Anyone can start his or her own website or online service and make it accessible to anyone else with internet access. Be it buying school supplies on Amazon or reading a personal blog, the internet is built to transfer data as fast as possible.

The first form of net neutrality was first implemented in 2004 under FCC Chairman Michael Powell, who was appointed by President George W Bush. The FCC did not have to wait long to enforce its first case. In 2005, the North Carolina-based Madison River Communications blocked certain services to its customers until the FCC forced them to cease the practice. Since then, the FCC has used net neutrality to protect consumers and businesses from price gouging and data throttling on a number of occasions, including against corporate giants like Comcast and Verizon.

Washington lobbyists for Internet Service Providers have worked for years to eliminate Net Neutrality so that they can slow down traffic for smaller websites and charge exorbitant fees to businesses and consumers alike to use the internet at full speed. Without Net Neutrality, your Internet Service Provider (or ISP) can arbitrarily block whatever websites it does not want you to access. It also means that your ISP can purposefully slow down access to certain websites or services and force you to pay extra to access certain websites or services.

Comcast could charge consumers more money to access FoxNews.com because Comcast owns MSNBC. The elimination of Net Neutrality would allow for price gouging by Internet Service Providers and would stifle the incredible innovation that the internet promotes – the sort of innovation that has added trillions of dollars to our economy and created millions of jobs.

I would now like to turn the podium over to Representative Ramos.