

NET NEUTRALITY

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I rise today to call the Senate's attention to one of the most important economic issues before us, and that is the issue of Net neutrality.

We face a pivotal moment in the fight to preserve an open and fair Internet. Last week, the President called on the FCC to protect the bedrock principle of Net neutrality.

A strong, open Internet is one of the best ways to protect the innovation that supports millions of American jobs. It is one of the best ways to protect the competitiveness of the digital economy.

Now the FCC is working on formulating ways to protect a robust Internet. We know that the FCC received over 4 million comments on the issue of Net neutrality, and it registered many concerns by the public in making sure that we protect what has been a great resource for them.

They have spoken. They want to protect innovation, and they want to protect a free Internet.

Consumers should know for a fact that their Internet service is being held to the same standards as everywhere else. But we know now there are concerns about the concentration of players in the cable and large telephone market as it continues to develop. Maybe two providers will provide as much as 85 percent of the provider market, which raises concerns to many consumers.

Today I am calling on the FCC to take forceful action that adopts the strongest rule possible to provide maximum protection for consumers—maximum flexibility to promote the Internet economy.

I encourage the FCC to adopt robust and durable rules to prevent locking, throttling, fast lanes, and to safeguard transparency for consumers. These rules should apply both to the wired and wireless broadband networks so that your Web browser, your personal computer, your apps on your phone, all are treated in the same way.

This important policy would provide certainty to startup and business communities the same way as it will to support the Fortune 500 companies. In other words, we will treat an entrepreneur who started their company in their garage the same way we treat a big multinational corporation.

We need to send a clear message: We do not want artificial toll lanes on the innovation economy of the future. It is my hope the FEC arrives at a conclusion next year and issues these rules. The Internet has been an engine for unprecedented economic growth for our country. Today, the text-up sector represents 3.9 millions jobs, according to Pew Research, and it is continuing to grow. It really does represent the American entrepreneurial spirit.

YouTube was created in a garage in San Mateo; Facebook launched in a dorm room in Cambridge, MA; Amazon—when Jeff Bezos came to Bellevue,

WA—has now become a juggernaut in downtown Seattle for new growth and development. These companies might have started in a garage, but they are supporting thousands of jobs across our country.

So today we want to make sure the Internet is not under attack by those who would prefer a pay-for-play system. The biggest telecom companies are trying to write the rules of the road that would crowd out some of these opportunities for unique entrepreneurs to continue to grow the application economy of the future. That is why we can't allow Internet service providers to set up fast lanes for those who can pay and slow lanes for those who can't. Our innovation economy depends on equal access for ideas.

Between 2007 and 2012, development of applications for smart phones and tablets created over 466,000 high-tech jobs and generated more than \$20 billion in annual revenue. A tiered Internet system would put all of that at risk. It would allow Internet service providers to cut back from the deals to determine what information America can access on line.

We live in an economy based on speed, and a tiered Internet system would give the power to set speed limits to those few Internet service providers and what they wanted to do. This has a major ripple effect. Imagine your doctor examining a patient via telemedicine or a student trying to access a report through a university server, all of this put at challenge by whether they have fast access.

As an editorial in the Seattle Times said: America's democracy is in trouble when information is throttled or controlled by a few. The FEC must reverse this shameful trend.

What they are really trying to say is that creating additional barriers is tantamount, in my mind, to creating a tax on the Internet. A tiered Internet provider would have the range of control, and it means that individual users could be challenged. Strong Net neutrality rules will help maintain the same Internet we have today, and that is why the FEC should act.

Across the country, innovators, entrepreneurs, are experimenting with different app designs and different content creation and they rely on this open Internet to pursue those new business models. Nearly every startup relies on understanding that their product can reach any user connected to the Internet. So allowing Internet service providers to erect toll lanes would threaten the fundamental nature of the Internet and every business plan of every startup that relies on the consumer's ability for equal access to content.

We must do better than what has been done so far, and I encourage this body to make sure we too are going to stand up and protect the American spirit of entrepreneurship by making sure that Net neutrality is the law of the land.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The Senator from Rhode Island.

(The remarks of Mr. WHITEHOUSE pertaining to the introduction of S. 2940 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I thank my colleague for allowing me the extra time, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate for up to 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RETIREMENT OF STEVE BACCUS, PRESIDENT OF KANSAS FARM BUREAU

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, agriculture is the lifeblood of my home State of Kansas. It drives our economy, but more importantly, it offers our citizens a way of life that is unique in today's world.

Within that industry I often encounter thoughtful, committed men and women who work every day to raise their families, run their businesses, serve their neighbors, and provide a better future for the next generation. Those qualities are found in Steve Baccus, who for the past 17 years has served on the Kansas Farm Bureau Board of Directors and for the last 12 served as its president.

Kansas Farm Bureau is our State's largest general farm organization, with nearly 105,000 members. Under Steve's leadership, the organization has influenced policy and politics, promoted rural values, and worked to show an increasingly urban population how food is produced and why technology is indispensable to feeding a hungry world.

Steve is a native Kansan, a veteran, a husband, a father of five, and a grandfather. His fourth-generation family farm in Ottawa County produces wheat, corn, soybeans, and occasionally a sunflower or a bit of sorghum.

I met Steve now many years ago when he was on his local farm bureau board, and we grew to be friends over the years. He was always someone I could count on to give trustworthy advice and counsel.

As agricultural issues repeatedly come to the forefront of debate in Washington, DC—from trade and energy, to the economy, overregulation, and the farm bill—Steve has worked to make certain the voices of Kansas farmers and ranchers are heard in the Nation's Capital.

Steve's passion for improving the lives of Kansans and advocating for the future of our rural State has always impressed me. His service on the Kansas Farm Bureau board was inspired by Steve's deeply held belief that there is a better future ahead for Kansas agriculture and for our State. He has always been selfless in his service, often