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## Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

God of grace and glory, lift us with Your might. You are our security, our hope for years to come.

Lord, give our Senators such confidence in Your power that they will celebrate the victories that are yet to be. May they never forget the inheritance that belongs to all who love and serve Your will on Earth. Provide them with the wisdom to know that You are the only sure foundation for all their strivings. Remind them that unless You protect the Nation, its leaders and citizens labor in vain.

Eternal Spirit, great and marvelous are Your works, just and true are Your ways.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HELLER). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session for the consideration of the Erickson nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Ralph R. Erickson, of North Dakota, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 10:30 a.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

If no one yields time, the time will be charged equally.

The Senator from Oregon.

#### NOMINATION OF AJIT PAI

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to the President's nomination of Ajit Pai to head the Federal Communications Commission.

My view is that, Mr. Pai will do an enormous amount of damage to one of the foundational principles of the internet—net neutrality. I am going to outline why that would be a horrendous mistake for our country.

After we came to use the internet and see what an extraordinary asset it would be to our country, really beginning in the late 1990s, and early 2000s, we laid out what I still consider to be the legal foundation for the internet.

On a bipartisan basis, there was a big effort in the Senate and the House to really lay out what were the foundational principles of the net, and there were a variety of them. We wanted to make sure that folks were not hit with multiple and discriminatory taxes, and that they were not taxed on access to the internet. We wrote the digital signatures act, which is of enormous benefit to people, for example, in the Presiding Officer's home State of Nevada, where they are making business transactions. We made a judg-

ment, which some have said has led to \$1 trillion worth of private wealth for our economy, whereby we said that we were not going to expose the small entrepreneur—the person who is getting started in the garage—to needless litigation.

One of those core principles was net neutrality, which, in my view, for the reasons that I am going to describe this morning, I think Mr. Pai would work long and hard to try to undermine.

Because so much of the telecommunications debate sounds like a lot of complicated lingo, I want to try to describe in something resembling English what “net neutrality” is. Essentially, “net neutrality” means that after you have paid your internet access fee, you get to go where you want, when you want, and how you want. In a sentence, that is what net neutrality is all about, and it is a bedrock principle for internet users in the Presiding Officer's home State of Nevada and in Oregon and all across the country.

It locks in equal treatment to accessing the internet.

We are not going to have some kind of information aristocracy in our society whereby the affluent have access to some kind of technological treasure trove, and folks who do not have much are kind of stuck with what almost resembles dial-up. That is not what we want for communications policy in America. We want to give everybody a chance to get ahead so that the kids in rural Oregon and rural Nevada have the same kind of opportunities as youngsters in Beverly Hills or the Gold Coast of Chicago or Palm Beach. We want to make sure everybody has a chance to get ahead.

Mr. Pai says that he is for real net neutrality, and we have tried to pin him down on a whole host of policies that really get him to commit to the essence of it, but he mostly says a version of what the big cable companies say. The big cable companies have

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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