

Miles Anton
UCB Studios
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Support for H. 680 and S. 289

Distinguished members of the committee, Chairman Carr, Representative Sibilila, Good morning.

My name is Miles Anton. I am a 9th grade student at Brattleboro Union High School and I manage and operate a small internet comedy production company; UCB Studios. I am a writer, an entrepreneur and a Vermonter. And I am just one of thousands of Vermonters who will be drastically affected if the Federal Communications Commission's ruling takes effect.

In November of last year the FCC voted 3-2 to repeal Obama-era regulations that insured an even handed network of internet service providers. This made it so that ISPs could not increase the speed of certain content or decrease the speed of other content. Upholding net neutrality maintained a free internet where corporate bribery couldn't influence the promotion or accessibility of content. The repeal of these common sense regulations have harsh side effects on emerging small businesses and the consumers who make up the traffic of smaller websites. In the FCC's own document that includes the declaratory ruling on the matter, they state "[the repeal will]...promote future innovation and investment."¹ and "create jobs, increase competition and lead to better, faster, cheaper Internet access for all Americans, especially those in rural and low-income areas."² However, experts have shed light on the massive problems with this bill. A *PolitiFact.com* analysis demonstrated how the repeal would not only crush small business growth by allowing ISPs to charge for access to "fast lanes", that could only be afforded by larger corporations and organizations, but could also potentially hurt consumers if companies used price inflation to afford purchasing faster web speed. Using entertainment viewing website, Netflix, as an example, the article states, "Consumers could also see the price of their Internet feed go up for access to sites like Netflix, which rely on high-speed and reliable connections to deliver the kind of seamless streaming content customers have come to expect. If Netflix has to pay for the fast lane, it could pass the cost onto customers."³

States across our country have already begun to stand up against this repeal. Montana has passed a bill protecting our internet freedom and California's state senate has voted to reinstate net neutrality in their state. Here in Vermont, S.289, a bill created to protect our internet and stand up against these unfair changes, has passed our senate and been referred to the committee. Likewise, H.680, the House bill with the same objective will be voted on.

At a national level, keeping net neutrality rules in place has proven to be popular across the political spectrum. A national poll in December conducted by *The University of Maryland's Program for Public Consultation* showed that 83% percent of Americans support net neutrality, including over 75% of Republicans, Democrats and Independents⁴. The people have spoken

¹ https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-347927A1.pdf Federal Communications Commission[US]. Web. Nov. 2017.

² https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-347927A1.pdf Federal Communications Commission[US]. Web. Nov. 2017.

³ John Kruzel

<http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/article/2017/dec/13/what-you-need-know-about-net-neutrality/> *PolitiFact.com*. Web. Dec. 2017

⁴ Harper Neidig

<http://thehill.com/policy/technology/364528-poll-83-percent-of-voters-support-keeping-fccs-net-neutrality-rules> *TheHill.com*. Web. Dec. 2017.

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and made it clear that it is an immediate priority to make sure net neutrality remains in our country and especially here in Vermont. Vermont is a state built off of small business and self reliance. Thousands of Vermonters have benefitted from the economic creativity and entrepreneurship that is guaranteed by a level digital playing field. Red or Blue, Progressive or Conservative, we can all agree that the internet is the marketplace of the future and innovation is the currency. So I ask you all today to support S.289 and H.680 so that the future of Vermont's economy is in support of ingenuity and freedom. Our state has, since its inception, been at the forefront of issues concerning equality and freedom. It's time for us to act again. Thank you.