

**Free State Foundation
Opening Remarks
November 14, 2014**

Good morning and thank you to Randy May and the Free State Foundation for inviting me to speak today. I want to acknowledge Randy and the Foundation's effective advocacy on free market reform in our communications policies. I also want to welcome the distinguished guests and leaders and extend my appreciation for all you do to promote innovation and investment in the information and communications industry. I am pleased to speak here today on the importance of maintaining an open internet, free from heavy regulations.

The last two decades have been an incredible period for growth, investment, and innovation in the information and communications technology industry. Since the passage of the

1996 Communications Act, we've seen phenomenal advances in technology and much of this is due to the Internet and the infinite possibilities for innovation and creativity that it renders to businesses, entrepreneurs, and consumers.

In a relatively short time, the Internet has become a central platform for job creation, education, business development, and health care. Thanks to the more than \$1.2 trillion in broadband infrastructure investment by Internet service providers, technological advancements have expanded into multiple economic sectors and Internet access and availability have pushed geographical barriers. It is clear that given the Internet's near universal reach and continued growth and integration into every aspect of our lives, its ability to

remain free from heavy-handed regulations is absolutely critical to driving economic expansion.

The success of the Internet has not been by chance. The light-touch regulatory framework that has long governed its operation and functionality has been central to the innovation and advancement we are experiencing at both the core and edge of the network today. Unfortunately, many ignore or underestimate the significance of this light-touch regulatory approach and negligently dismiss its importance to the success of the broadband marketplace and surrounding ecosystem.

While the Internet has expanded in availability, become more robust to support heavy-bandwidth applications and services, and most importantly, remained open and free, some

are recklessly advocating that the FCC reclassify broadband as a public utility under Title II of the Communications Act.

This view was reiterated earlier this week by President Obama when he announced his support to regulate the Internet as a utility under Title II. It is extremely troubling and disappointing to hear the president urge the FCC to adopt a stronger regulatory framework for the open Internet.

Reclassification under Title II threatens our thriving Internet economy and the American jobs it creates. If we heap 80 years of regulatory baggage on broadband providers, this will undoubtedly restrict Internet Service Provider's flexibility to innovate and stunt their ability to make robust investments and expand high-quality broadband service to all Americans. The

end loser will be consumers. The Internet isn't a utility, so we shouldn't treat it as one.

That is why earlier this year I introduced legislation to prohibit the FCC from reclassifying broadband under Title II of the Communications Act. My proposal would maintain the FCC's long-standing precedent on broadband classification, which was established in 1998, and affirmed in three separate FCC rulings in 2002, 2005, and 2007, and reaffirmed by the Supreme Court. My bill would uphold the very regulatory structure that has enabled the Internet to remain open, flexible, and adaptable. Too much is at stake to entertain proposals suggesting a different course of action.

As the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology works on drafting legislation to update the Communications Act, I believe it is vitally important to encourage and enable growth and ideas, not hold back those taking risks and making substantial investments. I rely on hearing from job creators for insight into matters of public policy, which is why I am always touring businesses in my District. The private sector, not the government, knows best how to innovate and expand economic opportunity.

At a time when the Internet is one of the few bright spots of the economy, driving productivity and economic growth, and offering increased speeds, lower costs, and more choices for consumers, fundamentally changing the laws to preserve this progress simply does not make sense. My hope is that the FCC

will reject calls to increase its regulatory footprint over the Internet.

Once again, thank you for having me here today. I greatly appreciate all of you for attending this event and for engaging in this critically important discussion.

At this time, I would like to open the floor for any questions you may have.