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CHAIRMAN FRANK PALLONE, JR. | 116TH CONGRESS

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CONTACT

[Evan Gilbert](#) – (202) 225-5735

Pallone Remarks at Net Neutrality Subcommittee Markup

Washington, D.C. – *Energy and Commerce Chairman Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) delivered the following opening remarks today at a Communications and Technology Subcommittee Markup of H.R. 1644, the Save the Internet Act of 2019:*

Today is the Committee's first Subcommittee markup of the 116th Congress. It is fitting that the markup is on such an important topic as keeping the internet open and free.

H.R. 1644, the Save the Internet Act, will return strong net neutrality protections to the internet, which is so integral to modern American life. For over a decade, both Republican and Democratic Federal Communications Commissions, have restricted the ability of internet service providers to control consumer access to the internet and undermine small businesses' ability to compete. That all changed in 2017 when the Trump FCC abandoned its regulatory role over the internet. No one was left to police cable and wireless companies to make sure they didn't abuse their power.

The bill before us returns the FCC to its traditional oversight role and restores the net neutrality protections that both Democrats and Republicans demand.

When the FCC decided to repeal net neutrality, it introduced terrible uncertainty into the market for ISPs, consumers, and small businesses alike. Back in New Jersey, I would hear from small businesses that their success depended on a free and open internet. I would also hear from job-seekers who relied on unfettered access to the internet in order to find their next job. A free and open internet is critical to strengthening our nation's economy, and ensuring that everyone has access to a better future. It is about a marketplace of innovation, connection, and economic opportunity.

This legislation restores the protections that 86 percent of Americans want and that millions of people demanded when the FCC made its ill-advised decision to strip away those protections two years ago.

By codifying the FCC's 2015 Open Internet Order, we are reestablishing light touch regulation of the internet service providers. In addition to prohibiting blocking, throttling and paid prioritization, the FCC will have the authority to stop future harmful practices that are unjust or unreasonable. At the same time, the bill eliminates dated regulations and statutes that are not applicable to the modern internet. This includes restricting the FCC from setting rates or requiring unbundling of networks.

The Save the Internet Act locks in these rules of the road so that consumers and business will know—now and into the future—that the internet will remain free and open, just as it was when it began: with end-users assured of full access to the internet.

Failure to move forward on this legislation is simply not an option. Without this legislation, there is no backstop to make sure big corporations don't use their power to undermine and silence their small competitors or the political opposition. Without this legislation big corporations will have free reign. When we talk about saving the internet, we're talking about what this country stands for, we're talking about saving an engine of innovation and opportunity, and we're talking about saving our democracy. That's how important this is.

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