

Statement Chairman Mike Doyle

Subcommittee on Communications and Technology

**Hearing on HEARING ON “PRESERVING AN OPEN INTERNET FOR CONSUMERS, SMALL BUSINESSES,
AND FREE SPEECH”**

February 7th, 2019

Rayburn 2322 - 11am

Welcome to the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology’s first hearing of the one hundred and sixteenth congress.

First of all, I would like to thank my colleagues on the Energy and Commerce for making me the Chair of this subcommittee.

I consider it a great honor and a great responsibility to hold this gavel.

I look forward to working with all of my colleagues on the Committee.

I believe we share many of the same goals and values.

I believe strongly in the power of competition to spark innovation, expand access, and give consumers a better experience at a lower price.

Today’s hearing is on Net Neutrality. I believe this is one of the most important digital rights issues we face today.

The Internet is certainly one of the most influential inventions ever, and today it touches almost all aspects of our economy, culture, and politics.

According to estimates by the Bureau of Economic Analysis the digital economy accounts for 6.5 percent of the total US Economy or roughly \$1.2 trillion a year in GDP.

Last year, the Pai FCC repealed the 2015 Open Internet Order.

Let me be clear, this repeal had far greater impact than just removing the FCC’s Net Neutrality rules.

It was a step back, by the FCC, from its role as the agency that regulates and oversees internet access – and a fundamental shift from all previous FCC chairs, who worked to put in place enforceable Net Neutrality rules and preserve the Commission’s vital oversight and consumer protection roles.

Today, the online publication Motherboard is again reporting that mobile carriers sold access to millions of consumers real time locations to bounty hunters and who knows who else.

Their investigation found that one entity had requested more than 18,000 data location requests.

These allegations are very troubling and need to be addressed and investigated.

Last year, firefighters in California had their mobile command center’s internet connection slowed down to a snail’s pace because they had exceeded their data limit.

Because of the FCC's repeal of the Open Internet Order, and specifically the repeal of sections 201 and 202 of the Communications Act as well as the general conduct standard, the Firefighters couldn't call the FCC to restore critical access to their systems.

Instead, they had to call up their wireless company and pay a representative over the phone to increase their data plan, while in the midst of fighting the largest, most complex fire in California's history!

In fact, because of the repeal, these practices were permissible under the F-T-C's jurisdiction, because they were disclosed in the terms of service.

If we agree that public safety is a priority, we need to make sure that they are a priority, and not just another subscriber to be nickel and dimed.

We not only need rules on the books that protect and preserve our nation's digital economy.

We need a cop on the beat--- and the FCC is the agency that was empowered by Congress to protect consumers, competition, and innovators access to the Internet.

Thank you all again for being here and I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses.