

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Hearing on “Ensuring the Security, Stability, Resilience, and
Freedom of the Global Internet”
April 2, 2014**

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Today our important work continues to protect the future of the Internet – a subject of great consequence. This committee has been at the forefront of the effort to preserve Internet openness and freedom. A non-regulatory, multi-stakeholder governance model is essential to the continued success of the Internet and has been critical to the development of this engine of economic, political, and social engagement. We have affirmed our commitment to this principle more than once – first with the passage of a sense of the Congress resolution in 2012, and then with the unanimous House approval of H.R. 1580 in 2013.

We must do all we can to keep the Internet free from the control of those who wish to use it for less than noble means, keeping it out of the hands of nations like China, Iran, or Russia who have demonstrated hostility toward the free flowing, unfettered exchange of information.

NTIA's recent announcement of its intent to transition Internet oversight functions away from the U.S. government should be met with a critical eye, especially when you take into account the administration's track record of saying one thing and doing another.

When deadlines have no meaning, red lines disappear, and projects like the Keystone XL pipeline are sidelined despite obvious economic benefit, skepticism that “this time we mean it” is natural. Freedom of the Internet and the global implications of this transition are far too important to let slip away because of another broken promise. There is no going back once we relinquish our oversight. This issue has united one-time opponents Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich who are fighting to protect the Internet as we know it.

Something as important as the future of the Internet demands a thoughtful and deliberate process, and I join my colleagues in supporting the DOTCOM Act. I commend Rep. John Shimkus and full committee Vice Chairman Marsha Blackburn for co-authoring the measure, as well as Vice Chairman Latta, and Reps. Renee Ellmers and Joe Barton for their early support and we plan to announce a markup schedule soon.

The DOTCOM Act will step on the breaks until the Government Accountability Office is able to analyze all aspects and implications of the relinquishing of U.S. oversight, including potential national security concerns.

While I do not oppose a vigorous discussion of whether and how we could transition the Domain Name System out of the Commerce Department's purview, we are a long way from seeing a proposal that I could support. As the world moves forward with this discussion, we will conduct vigorous oversight of the process and hold NTIA to their word that it will not allow the Internet to fall victim to international government power grabs. Our work continues.

###