

sports is in any way “less than” because it is not. These women, who inspire our country with their poise, tenacity, skill, and excellence every time they take the field, deserve to be fairly compensated.

Right now, the Senate could take a meaningful step to support the women’s international team by passing legislation that aims to end gender-based wage discrimination. The House passed a paycheck fairness bill months ago, which languished here in the Senate in Leader McCONNELL’s legislative graveyard. Bill after bill comes from the House, has the support of large percentages of Americans, gets Republican support in the House, and Leader McCONNELL just lets them lie there—another tombstone in the graveyard.

As the women of Team USA take the field today, I call on Leader McCONNELL to bring up the House legislation already passed that would aid in their fight for equal pay.

I will be rooting for Team USA women to kick off their campaign with a win against Thailand.

HUAWEI

Madam President, on another matter, Huawei, according to public reports, the Acting Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Russell Vought, is pushing a 2-year delay—a 2-year delay—in the implementation of key portions of a law intended to protect U.S. agencies and government contractors from Chinese telecom technology, chiefly Huawei.

This is deeply concerning for two reasons. First, from a national security standpoint, the FBI, CIA, and other members of the intelligence community have testified that the technology from Chinese telecom companies, such as Huawei and ZTE, present a national security risk, potentially allowing China to build backdoors into our networks, enabling their cyber theft and cyber espionage for which they are, unfortunately, well known. That is why Congress banned U.S. Government agencies and contractors from using this technology—because they are our highest valued targets. We have been encouraging our European allies to do the same.

Why on Earth, then, is the Acting Director of OMB, Russell Vought, asking for a 2-year delay in these rules? We passed the law more than a year ago. President Trump has signed it, and our agencies and contractors have had time to make sure their technology doesn’t come from Huawei.

There is simply no reason, in my mind, for such a lengthy delay. It would only extend a window of opportunity for what is already a dire threat to our national security.

The second reason this news concerns me so is that it is about the Trump administration’s broader approach to China. Across many issues in the Trump administration, it sometimes feels as though the right hand doesn’t know what the left hand is doing. A few weeks ago, the administration

issued an Executive order largely banning U.S. companies from selling equipment to Huawei, an action I praised. But then the Commerce Department abruptly delayed that decision by 3 months. Now we have this additional request from OMB to soft-pedal a different set of restrictions on Huawei.

China needs to understand that the United States is serious when it comes to our trade relationship. We must have a consistent policy implemented with rigor. This idea of reciprocity, of barring China’s companies from doing business here until they let our biggest companies do business there, is an important part of our overall effort to increase pressure on China to agree to meaningful economic reforms.

I am very troubled by the OMB’s request, and I plan on strenuously opposing the approval of the delay here in Congress.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order of the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I rise today in defense of net neutrality. In April the House of Representatives took an important step in passing the Save the Internet Act, legislation that would overturn the Trump administration’s Federal Communication Commission’s wrongheaded decision and restore net neutrality protections. Another way of saying it is that net neutrality is nondiscrimination online. That is what it is. It is the principle of nondiscrimination online so that large companies just can’t discriminate against smaller voices, smaller companies, and startups.

In the Senate, we have already successfully passed the same proposal last year. In April of 2018, my Congressional Review Act resolution passed in the Senate on a bipartisan vote of 52 to 47. In April 2018, on a bipartisan basis, we debated net neutrality and the Senate decided to join the majority of Americans and support a free and open internet.

In that vote we sent a message to President Trump about what that means: an internet, free of corporate control and open to all who want to communicate, engage, and innovate. We made it clear that Congress will not fall for President Trump’s special interest agenda and his broadband baron allies who just want to block, slow down, or discriminate against content online just to charge Americans more on their cable bills.

Unfortunately, the rules for the Congressional Review Act that allow just 30 Senators to force the majority to schedule a vote is not an option in this

Congress. So, instead, on this, the 1-year anniversary of President Trump’s net neutrality repeal going into effect, we will call for an immediate vote on the Save the Internet Act. Unfortunately, our Republican colleagues are failing to listen to the voices of their constituents and plan to block the vote from happening.

Let’s be clear. Net neutrality is just another way in which the Republican Party refuses to side with the ordinary people in our country—regular families, small businesses, and startup software companies. How do they get access to the internet in a way in which they cannot feel that corporate pressure restricting their ability to use this incredible invention to further the democratization of access to opportunity or, at the same time, to innovate in a way which continues to change not only our own country but our own world?

We can’t let big companies discriminate against individual consumers. We can’t let big companies stifle speech. Once you pay your monthly internet service bill, you can go anywhere you want on the internet without your provider slowing down or blocking your path to a website of your choosing.

This is a fight. It is a fight for innovation, for entrepreneurialism, for the American economy, and a fight for free speech—the cornerstone of our democracy—and a fight for the most powerful platform for commerce and communications in the history of the planet. The Save the Internet Act does exactly what the American people want. It restores the rules that ensure that families aren’t subject to higher prices, slower internet speeds, and even blocked websites because the big broadband providers want to pump up their profits.

Under Senator McCONNELL’s leadership, the Republicans are trying to bury this bill in a legislative graveyard. Instead of acting on legislation, which, again, passed the Senate a year ago—it just passed in the House in April of this year—Leader McCONNELL has been doing little but confirming unqualified, extreme-right nominees for the Trump administration.

Just listen to the bills the Senate Republicans refuse to act on: the Violence Against Women Act, no votes out here on the Senate floor; voting on democracy reform, no votes out here on the Senate floor; gun background checks, passed in the House but no vote here in the Senate; paycheck fairness; the Paris climate agreement—no, no, no.

But the Senate majority leader and his Republican colleagues can keep populating the legislative graveyard at their political peril because this is the agenda that the American people want to see the Senate debating, and they want to see these laws put on the books to protect families in our country. That is because the issues they are blocking are enormously popular, most with strong bipartisan support.

Take net neutrality. Now, 86 percent of Americans do not approve of the

Federal Communication Commission's action to repeal net neutrality rules, including 82 percent of Republicans, and we are not going to have a vote out here on the Senate floor.

On background checks for gun purchases, 97 percent of Americans support requiring background checks for all gun buyers, but we are not going to have a vote out here on the Senate floor.

On staying in the Paris climate agreement, nearly 70 percent of registered voters believe the United States should keep its promise and stay in that historic agreement to combat climate change, but the Republicans will not allow us to even have a vote on that out here on the Senate floor.

The only place where these issues don't have Republican support is in Senator MCCONNELL's office. Across the country, there are huge bipartisan numbers on each and every one of those issues. It is time that we do right by the American people, and we can start with the Save the Internet Act to protect the internet as we know it.

More than 100 outside advocacy organizations wrote to Senate leadership today urging a vote on the net neutrality legislation. They want action now, and Democrats are committed to fighting on their behalf.

I am joined today by some of our greatest fighters for net neutrality in the Senate and across our country. The ranking member of the Commerce Committee, MARIA CANTWELL from Washington State, will be out here in a few minutes, but now I am joined by Senator RON WYDEN of Oregon.

Senator WYDEN and I introduced net neutrality legislation 15 years ago in the House and in the Senate. Nobody understands this issue better than Senator WYDEN does. Partnering with Senator CANTWELL, we are going to continue this battle. Whether it is on the floor of the Senate or in the House or whether it is in the courts, we will not stop fighting until net neutrality is restored.

So, from my perspective, right from the very beginning, Senator WYDEN and I have been on the right side of history. We have been fighting for an issue that has overwhelming public support, and we are not going to give up until we have won this fight.

At this point, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I am pleased to be able to join my friend Senator MARKEY here today. It has been exactly 1 year since the Trump FCC engineered the repeal of net neutrality, and I am going to spend the next few minutes making sure people understand what the effect of that has been. I want to begin by picking up on a point Senator MARKEY made with respect to what this is all about.

Net neutrality may still be a term that some people aren't familiar with, but what it is all about is a free and open internet. It means, in simple

English, that after you pay your internet access fee, you get to go where you want, when you want, and how you want. That is what net neutrality is all about, and that is the essence of a free and open internet. As Senator MARKEY said, we wish we had had this policy embedded once and for all in Federal law. We wish it had happened eons ago, because we have been working both in the Senate and in the House to do it.

Now, if you are just picking up on this, you probably want to know: Well, the Senators are saying how the Trump FCC changed things in the last year; exactly what has happened? I am not sure the sky is falling and the like. So what I am going to do for a few minutes is to talk about actually what has happened over the last year.

Suffice it to say that the big cable companies are counting on making these changes. As for these changes, which are going to hurt consumers in a steady, creeping way, my sense is that the American people ought to know, for example, what these changes are doing to them and their service and what they pay for it.

There is one example that you have already seen. The big carriers are selling so-called unlimited data plans that totally throw away the definition of the word "unlimited." To understand the complicated limits on internet access in these kind of new, newfangled unlimited plans, you almost need a degree in big-cable legal jargon. Consumers might be forced to swallow hard and accept it, but that doesn't make it acceptable.

Big cable companies and the entertainment giants are also reshaping their industries through megamergers. As big carriers merge, there is less competition and consumers have fewer choices. Some of those new megacorporations also own the content they distribute, and they want to reach as many consumers as possible. That means that what is happening now is that the internet is starting to fracture.

Sign up for internet service with one company, and you will be able to see their preferred bundle of content in high definition at top speeds. If you want to go outside their bundle of websites and streaming services, plan to pay a whole lot more.

That is a bad deal for the American consumer. American consumers ought to be able to access what they want and when they want to. As Senator MARKEY and I and Senator CANTWELL have talked about, it is also a nightmare for the startup companies, the engines of innovation in America that will not be able to afford special treatment and will not be able to compete with these behemoths.

Now, the Trump FCC repealed net neutrality—and I will close with this—by making some very farfetched promises. They said, for example, that there would be new innovation. They can produce new innovation, Senator MARKEY, without any regulation. That hadn't happened.

The Trump FCC said the level of private investment in telecom would boom. We are still waiting on that one too. The Trump FCC spun a tale about voluntary net neutrality. We could all do this voluntarily—claiming that the big cable companies would do the right thing on their own. That doesn't even pass the smell test.

By the way, colleagues, if the companies were fine with net neutrality, why would we need to get rid of it? They sure put a lot of effort into getting rid of this altogether.

The bottom line is, the Trump FCC has put consumers, from sea to shining sea—from Oregon, all the way across the country—basically at the hands of Big Cable. That is what they did when they repealed net neutrality.

I want to take some time to outline the changes we have seen in just the last year because not all of these changes are going to come at once. In fact, I think it is fair to say the big cable companies are counting on Americans not noticing sometimes when the terms of their contracts get worse, but, bit by bit, people are going to notice when their prices start rising. The fractures in the internet—I guess the big cable companies will try to figure out a way to say that, too, was a good deal for consumers, a discount on the content within one bundle rather than a price increase and data limits on everything else.

I will close with just one final point. That last example violates everything that Senator MARKEY, Senator CANTWELL, and I have stood for, which is an open and free internet after you pay your internet access fee. I say this today, as Senator CANTWELL gets ready to close this for us, we still envision what Senator MARKEY and I proposed, as I call it, eons ago. We still have made it clear that we are going to be out here fighting to embed, once and for all, in Federal law, an open and free internet. That means, after you pay your access fee, you get to go where you want, when you want, and how you want, and nothing less—nothing less—keeps pace with the American consumer.

I thank my colleagues, Senator MARKEY, for his leadership on this, and Senator CANTWELL, our leader on the Commerce Committee, and I look forward to working with both of them.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor to join my colleague, the Senator from Oregon, who has been a long proponent of a very strong internet economy and privacy rights. I very much appreciate his leadership on so many of these technology issues. He and I represent a very strong technology economy in the Pacific Northwest, and we want to fight to keep that innovation.

He and I actually held a summit in our adjoining communities just about the app economy. This was several years ago—probably 7 or 8 years ago

now. He and I worked together to formulate, with our colleges, Washington State University and Oregon, literally just the app economy.

I think about the applications we saw 7 years ago. Some of them were for hiking trails, some of them were for solutions for our law enforcement to have better information, and some of them were just pure business applications. I think about how much we have grown that app economy in the last 7 to 10 years and how much it will be impacted by an internet that is not an open internet and universal in giving people access to service. I say this because those new startups know more than anybody else that if they are not the big behemoth in the market and they are a new interest competing against an existing business or if they have a new idea and they don't have the clout to have fast internet speeds, they are not going to reach consumers; they are not going to reach their clients; and they are not going to have a business model that is successful.

So I thank Senator WYDEN for his leadership for decades on these important issues. I thank my colleague Senator MARKEY for organizing us this morning to say one thing loud and clear: After 1 year, we already know what is happening on the internet. One thing the Senate can do is protect consumers from big cable companies from overcharging them. That is why we are out here to say that we should have a vote to protect consumers, to protect companies that produce 20 percent of our economy over 377,000 jobs in my State. I guarantee you I will be here this morning to articulate why an internet service needs to be protected. We know we have to fight back against companies that want to gouge consumers or suppress competition.

It has been 1 year since the FCC decided to turn back protections for the internet. We are here today because we know we have already seen the inklings of what is more to come—companies that are doing things such as slowing down speeds or charging consumers more. We know more than 20 million people stood up and told the FCC they want strong internet protections, and they do not want to see large-scale companies overcharging or gouging them.

I don't even know how we can talk about getting broadband service if there are not going to be strong rules on the internet that protect consumers from being overcharged. The truth is, we know today that the internet is a great economy for us. It is helping us to research. It is helping us in life-saving healthcare. We had one of the FCC administrators out in the Northwest looking at healthcare applications, and they are phenomenal for helping everything from PTSD to looking at ways to deliver just-in-time healthcare for those who are in remote parts of our State.

We know the internet is a great equalizer. It is helping people from dif-

ferent backgrounds participate in the economy, and it is helping with economic empowerment, but innovative businesses in every small town and every city need to have an internet that is going to give them access to create jobs and move their local economies forward. Today, in the United States, three cable companies—just three cable companies—have control of internet access for 70 percent of Americans, and 80 percent of rural Americans still only have one choice for high-speed broadband for their homes and businesses. We are not likely to get competition where the consumer can just say: You are artificially slowing me down and charging me too much; I am just going to the competition. That is not likely to happen. That is why we need a strong FCC approach to protecting an open internet and saying they shouldn't block, throttle, and manipulate internet access. Without these protections, Big Cable can move faster in charging more. So I ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to say it is time to hold these companies accountable and put consumers ahead of these big cable profits.

I can guarantee that the American people know better. Literally, it doesn't matter what political affiliation you have, the majority of Americans all oppose repealing protections that make for an open internet. They know it is time for us to protect consumers and that this is only going to get more complex as our economy depends more and more on an open internet.

As my colleague from Oregon has said, the Trump FCC has given a green light to companies, basically, to keep doing whatever they want and to continue to take more out of consumers' pockets.

Today, on the Senate floor, we have an opportunity. My colleague from Massachusetts, who has been as much a great leader on these issues and has been working to protect an open internet for decades, has an opportunity to say where we stand in protecting the American consumer. Just last year, a bipartisan majority in the U.S. Senate—49 Democrats and 3 Republicans—joined together to overturn the FCC's repealing of internet protections. We were here together to say we want the internet protected.

Now the House of Representatives has done its job. It has basically protected the internet and taken an initiative. It is time for Leader MCCONNELL to put the big cable companies on notice and to allow debate on the Senate floor and hold them accountable so we can say we want an open internet, and this type of practice should be fought against.

I hope our colleagues will be given the opportunity for this debate, to look at why it is so important to protect consumers, the innovation economy, and a free and open internet.

Tomorrow there is an FCC hearing before the Senate Commerce Com-

mittee, and I hope we will be able to ask these important questions about why cable companies are continuing to gouge consumers in many areas.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I think Senator CANTWELL and Senator WYDEN have done an excellent job in laying out the parameters of the problems that exist if we do not have net neutrality enshrined as the law of the land.

We believe the principles of non-discrimination—the principles that ensure that the internet is open and accessible to the smallest voices as well as the largest voices. We need laws to protect the smallest voices. We need protections to ensure that they are going to be heard, that they can innovate, that they can take their entrepreneurial zeal, their insights into the additional changes that can be made in this longstanding—now a 20-year history of dynamic changes that have taken place in the online commercial world and that they will be able to innovate.

They should not have to get permission to innovate. They should not have to get permission to be able to change the way in which people communicate in our country. We shouldn't have to hire lawyers to negotiate with the lawyers of the biggest companies in the United States in order to ensure that investors aren't going to lose all their money as the small company gets tipped upside down and has all of their resources absolutely devastated by anticompetitive activity. That is what this is all about—democracy and capitalism, entrepreneurial spirit, the ability to innovate, the ability to be able to go to the marketplace.

In order for capitalism to work, it has to have a conscience. Capitalism without a conscience allows for unfettered large corporations to take advantage of small companies, startups, and individuals in our society. It has to have a conscience. Net neutrality is the conscience for the online world we live in. It ensures that there is fairness, openness, and it ensures that the apertures that are there cannot be narrowed just because of the corporate agenda of an individual huge company.

That is the essence of this whole debate. It is something we believe is at the heart of what this 21st century platform of commerce should include. It will be, in a lot of ways, the defining issue of whether this entire era is one that is characterized by fairness or one that is characterized by monopolistic or duopoly practices.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 1644

Mr. President, on behalf of Senator CANTWELL and Senator WYDEN and myself, I ask unanimous consent, as in legislative session, that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 74, H.R. 1644, a bill to restore the open internet order