

that they are as up-to-date with the latest science as possible. Thanks to the efforts of Senator ISAKSON and Senator CASEY, this bill we will vote on this afternoon will help accomplish that by updating the over-the-counter monograph system for the first time in decades. I know how important this bill has been to Senator ISAKSON and how he has worked so hard on it for many years. I want to tell him how grateful I am. I want him to know that I am particularly grateful for his commitment to getting this done for families back in Georgia and across the country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 682

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, today I rise in defense of net neutrality. This week marks the 2-year anniversary of the Trump FCC's wrongheaded decision to repeal net neutrality.

First, let's be clear about what we are discussing today. Net neutrality is just another way of saying nondiscrimination. That is what it is all about. It is just another way of saying that big companies online can't discriminate against individual consumers; that large companies can't discriminate against smaller companies and startups; that corporations can't stifle speech online; that once you pay your monthly internet service bill, you can go anywhere you want on the internet without Charter or Comcast or AT&T or Verizon slowing down or blocking your path to a website of your choosing.

Despite all this, 2 years ago this week, the Trump Federal Communications Commission voted to throw out net neutrality at the behest of the broadband barons. Since then, we have watched as countless citizens, companies, and activists have continued to stand up and demand that net neutrality be restored.

This spring, the House of Representatives took an important step in passing the Save the Internet Act. My legislation in the Senate would overturn the Trump administration FCC's decision and restore net neutrality protections. In the Senate, we have already successfully passed the same proposal on a bipartisan basis.

In April of 2018, my Congressional Review Act resolution passed in the Senate by a bipartisan vote of 52 to 47. 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 it means to have an internet free of corporate control and open to all who want to communicate, engage, and innovate. We made clear that this Congress won't fall for President Trump's special interest agenda that just wants to block, slow down, or discriminate against content online just to charge Americans more on their cable and internet bills.

Unfortunately, the rules for a Congressional Review Act that allow just 30 Senators to force the majority to schedule a vote is not an option in this Congress because the right to bring a Congressional Review Act resolution to the floor has a time limit on it, which has now expired. So, instead, today we once again call for an immediate vote on the Save the Internet Act.

Already, in June, our Republican colleagues failed to listen to the voices of their constituents and blocked a vote from happening. Sadly, the Republicans plan to stonewall us again and to block this vote. This is yet another example of the Republican Party refusing to side with the ordinary people in our country—families, small businesses, startups, entrepreneurs, anyone with an idea who needs the internet to get it off the ground.

Under Senator MCCONNELL's leadership, the Republicans have buried this bill in their legislative graveyard. Instead of passing legislation, instead of acting on legislation which already passed in the Senate in 2018 and which passed the House of Representatives this April, Leader MCCONNELL has done little but confirm unqualified, extreme-right nominees for the Trump administration.

Just listen to some of the bills that Senate Republicans refuse to act on that have already moved through the House of Representatives this year: the Violence Against Women's Act, voting and democracy reform, gun background checks, paycheck fairness, and the Paris climate agreement. The answer from the Republican leadership is no, no, no. That is what continues to happen. Net neutrality is part of that chorus of "noes" that the Republicans aim at legislation the American people want and need to have passed here in the Senate.

But the Senate majority leader and his Republican colleagues can keep populating the legislative graveyard at their political peril because this is the agenda the American people want to see the Senate debating. They want to see these laws put on the books to protect families in this country. The issues they are blocking are enormously popular, and most have bipartisan support. Net neutrality is one of those issues.

The Save the Internet Act—the bill we are debating today—does exactly what the American people want. It restores the rules that ensure families aren't subjected to higher prices, slower internet speeds, and even blocked websites because the big internet providers want to pump up their profits. That is what today's fight is all about. It is a fight for innovation; for entrepreneurialism; for the American economy; a fight for free speech, which is the cornerstone of our democracy; and a fight for the most powerful platform for commerce and communications in the history of the planet.

Some will argue that since the Trump FCC ripped away the net neu-

trality rules, everything has been just fine, but we are not falling for that. As the legal challenges over this issue have taken place over the last 2 years, internet providers have had every incentive to keep a low profile, to keep things as they were. But ultimately, the question before the Senate today is whether consumers trust their internet companies to do the right thing without being told they have to. We know that consumers rightfully don't trust the broadband barons.

It is time we do the right thing for the American people. We can start with passing the Save the Internet Act and protecting the internet as we know it. The American people want action now. The Democrats are committed to fighting on their behalf. Net neutrality just stands for nondiscrimination online. You can't be biased against a smaller voice, a smaller company, a startup; it is not allowed. That is what net neutrality says to all the big broadband giants—you cannot discriminate. Net neutrality is something that is at the heart of what the 21st century should stand for in this internet age.

I urge my colleagues to support this motion.

I yield to the great leader of the State of Washington, Senator CANTWELL.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleague from Massachusetts, who has been a leader on this important issue of net neutrality. I want to speak and back up what he said today about why it is so important and that we need to fight to protect a free and open internet, before I do, I would just like to mention that yesterday we filed a bill dealing with trade enforcement.

The reason I bring that up is because today there is going to be a lot of discussion about trade writ large. It is very important that in the trade discussion, we also have trade enforcement. Much of what we filed yesterday is what we hope to see in an agreement that is now being unveiled, and this builds on capacity building, which is very important. We want to make sure we have the enforcement capabilities at USTR and now the capacity and enforcement in Mexico to make these agreements work in the future. I look forward to discussing that with my colleagues.

I am really here to talk about how 2 years ago, the Trump administration, basically, with the FCC at the helm, repealed net neutrality and put Big Cable in charge of our internet future. Despite 83 percent of all Americans and a majority of Independents, Democrats, and Republicans supporting a free and open internet—that means making sure they weren't charged excessive rates—the FCC chose to side with cable companies.

Not long after, Verizon throttled the broadband service of Santa Clara firefighters in California when they were in the midst of fighting the massive Mendocino Complex Fire in 2018. Despite firefighters' urgent pleas to stop

the throttling, Verizon refused to do so.

For those who don't understand what throttling is, we are always concerned that without rules of the road, companies would slow down some access to internet sites. This is so important because we don't want an internet that is based on how much you pay for faster broadband access.

We think that to slow down important sites like public service sites or any sites or to base an internet on how much you pay is the wrong direction. More importantly, we need to make sure we are policing this. Even today, as we have no Federal agency with clear authority to adopt hard and fast rules to keep that situation from happening again, we need to keep fighting.

Another example is that wireless carriers have been accused of potentially throttling subscribers to Netflix, YouTube, and Sprint and allegedly interfering with Skype services. Again, that is another example of why we have to keep our message about a free and open internet no matter where we look, where we live, or where we are accessing the internet.

It is long past time for the Senate to vote on the Save the Internet Act—something on which our colleague from Massachusetts has been a leader.

Our bill would restore the protections for a free and open internet that were had by the Obama FCC in 2015, which would mean no blocking, throttling, or paid prioritization would be allowed. The FCC would have the flexible legal standards by which to address concerns that would arise from these big cable companies' threats to a free and open internet.

Again, I thank the Senator from Massachusetts for his leadership—persistent both in the House and the Senate—in stressing how important this is.

As my colleagues know, these issues are going to be very important in the future, not just with regard to privacy, which the Senator has also been a leader on—and I very much appreciate that the hometown newspaper wrote a glowing endorsement of the legislation he and I have just recently introduced on privacy—but in understanding that in the information age, you have to give consumers rights, that you have to give them the right to privacy, and that you have to give them the right to a free and open internet that is not controlled in speed and that is not controlled by one's saying, If you pay us more, we will give you access. This is going to be a key communication tool for the 21st century, and it needs to be open.

I thank my colleague for raising this important issue, and I will continue to work with him and our other colleagues to make it the law of the land.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, our ranking member on the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transpor-

tation has always framed the issue of net neutrality and consumer rights appropriately.

I am going to speak for just a few minutes. Then, on behalf of our side—on behalf of the Democratic caucus—Senator MARKEY, our friend from Massachusetts, will propound a unanimous consent request. I note that the chairman of the committee is here, and we will have a bit of discussion.

Let me give a bit of history on this.

Senator MARKEY introduced the first net neutrality bill as a Member of the other Chamber, and I introduced the first net neutrality bill in the U.S. Senate. Right out of the gate, I think it is important for people to understand what this issue is all about. Real net neutrality empowers consumers. After they pay their internet access fees, they get to go where they want, when they want, and how they want. What Ajit Pai and Donald Trump want is something very different. They want an internet policy that lets Big Cable get what it wants, when Big Cable wants it, and how Big Cable wants it. That is the difference here.

Who is in the driver's seat?

Senator MARKEY, Senator CANTWELL, and I say that this is what the beauty of the internet has always been about, which is really simple. The consumer is in the driver's seat. We don't have an information aristocracy with lanes and all kinds of favoritism for the powerful and the influential. It is where the student, the small business, and the person without power and clout gets the same fair shake as everybody else.

What we have said is we want to keep the consumer in the driver's seat, and Mr. Pai and Donald Trump want a different notion of internet freedom. What they really want to say is that internet freedom is Big Cable freedom. That is their idea about how we ought to approach the internet. At the end of the day, if the policy here is about letting Big Cable rig the internet in favor of those who can afford to pay more and shake down everybody else, people will have a choice to do that, but that is not the choice Senator MARKEY and I are going to make.

Cable companies are already tricking people into buying so-called unlimited service plans that limit their service. People have uncovered the way they have throttled service for particular users, including for first responders in times of emergency. Megamergers that involve telecom and entertainment companies also limit competition and threaten to balkanize the internet.

We are talking about fracturing the internet into small bundles that cost big money. That is the vision the cable companies have—not net neutrality—by which you head in a direction whereby consumers pay a lot more for entertainment and information and small businesses scratch their heads and ask: How in the world am I going to compete with the big guys online? Fortunately, the courts recently said the Trump administration can't overrule States on net neutrality.

I look forward to being in my home State of Oregon in a couple of days and having town meetings. What I like the most is when people speak up on issues like fairness and net neutrality, and I am going to hear about it this weekend. Other States have policies like Oregon's as well.

Here in Congress, on this side of the aisle—and you will see it when Senator MARKEY offers his proposal in a moment—we are going to keep up the fight to protect consumers from Ajit Pai and the Trump FCC. We still have that vision of the original internet that Senator MARKEY and I talked about when he offered the first proposal in the House and I offered the first proposal in the Senate. What could be more simple than putting the consumer in the driver's seat? You can say where you want to go, when you want, and how you want. Now we are talking today—years later—about the cable companies being able to say they are going to decide those very issues.

I am very pleased—and I think it is very appropriate—that after years of leadership on this issue in both the other body and in the U.S. Senate that Senator MARKEY is going to speak for our caucus on this issue and call for the Senate to pass his legislation so as to have a truly free and open internet for the entire country.

If you don't get the Markey proposal, what you are going to see are big cable companies that will, bit by bit, little by little, keep ratcheting up the cost of internet access. By the way, their strategy is to do that little by little because they are hoping nobody will ever complain and that nobody will notice. Senator MARKEY and I and our caucus have figured out that the cable companies are trying to disguise price hikes and data limits in the end by flashing discounts on bundles of content. What the cable people are talking about is a bad deal for consumers, and it is a bad deal because Ajit Pai and Donald Trump want to put Big Cable profits over the interests of the typical American.

With my full support, I appreciate Senator MARKEY's offering this legislation today. In going forward, we are going to be working with him to keep up this fight, and I look forward to the discussion.

I notice that my colleague from the end of the alphabet and my friend, the chairman of the committee, is here, and we will have a little back-and-forth.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I agree with every word Senator WYDEN has just spoken on the Senate floor, and I thank him for his leadership in going back to 2006, which was when we first introduced into the U.S. Congress legislation on net neutrality. We did it then because it was important, and we are doing it today because it is critically important.

The question is really whether the internet is going to be free and open or whether it is going to have the principles of nondiscrimination. Smaller voices, smaller companies, startup companies, and individuals in our society must be protected on the internet in the future. That is what net neutrality is all about.

We are on the right side of history on this issue. Every day that goes by further instructs us as to how central the internet is in our country and on the planet. Ultimately, it has to be open, and it has to be free. It cannot have nondiscrimination built into it because a small handful of huge companies decide they have a right to discriminate.

I thank the Senator from Oregon, and I thank our leader on the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, Senator CANTWELL of Washington State, for their great leadership on this issue.

Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be discharged from further consideration of S. 682; further, that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration, the bill be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, in reserving the right to object, let me disagree fundamentally with my friends on the other side of the aisle about who is on the right side of history.

I would simply offer to my distinguished colleagues and to other Members of the body that we need only to look at what has happened during the past 2 years under the Ajit Pai-Donald Trump FCC and compare it to what happened to the internet under the approach being advocated by my colleagues today.

In 2015, President Obama's FCC ordered the imposition of title II regulations to the internet. They called this net neutrality. Basically, what it amounted to was a Big Government, Depression-era set of regulations that gave bureaucrats control over virtually every aspect of the internet. They implemented this in 2015, and investment decreased dramatically during the next 2 years. This was the first time in the history of the internet that broadband investment decreased outside of the time of a recession. It was bad for the internet, bad for the public, and bad for small businesses and startups. I wonder if it is from this that the Save the Internet Act would save us. If they want to save us from innovation and growth, then perhaps the Save the Internet Act would get the job done, for we had no growth during that time and less innovation.

Two years ago, the new FCC came in and did away with some of these Big Government, Depression-era regula-

tions that scared off investment, particularly the Depression-era title II regulation, as if the internet were going to be governed like a utility company from the 1930s and 1940s. It did away with them.

Since that time—in the 2 years of America's operating under what my friends would end with this legislation—more Americans have been connected to the internet than ever before. We have faster internet speeds than ever before. Now, in States like my home State of Mississippi and all across the great heartland of America, more rural Americans get more internet at faster speeds.

We have two choices today—the one from 4 years ago that led to less growth and a recession in the growth of the internet or the one from the past 2 years, whereby we have been better off than ever before.

I will agree with my colleagues in one respect. We should have no discrimination online, and we don't have discrimination online today. There are no lanes, as my friends on the other side of the aisle have said. There is no favoritism in what we are doing. We just have prosperity and huge growth in the internet.

If my friends on the other side of the aisle want to join us in enacting a permanent statute so we don't go back and forth between a regime of Democratic-controlled FCCs and Republican-controlled FCCs, if they would like to help us in that regard, statutorily place nondiscrimination online in the law, free and open internet in the law outside of the regulation of something that we have imposed on another part of our economy half a century ago, then I hope they will join in the bipartisan effort that Senator SINEMA and I are participating in—the Senate Net Neutrality Bipartisan Working Group. I would hope they would want to join us in that regard.

We can make the statute better, but I would certainly offer to my colleagues the facts, and the facts are that the past 2 years have been a time of great growth of the internet. The previous 2 years, under depression-era rules, were a time of dramatically decreased investment.

For that reason, I do object to the unanimous consent request offered by the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). Objection is heard.

The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, what we just heard from the majority is, in fact, a false narrative that contends that we have to choose between broadband deployment and net neutrality, and if we don't put net neutrality back on the books, there will be internet fast and slow lanes. That is what is about to happen if we don't act out here on the Senate floor. Innovation will be stifled, consumers will have to pay higher prices, the internet will not be as we have known it in the past.

So I absolutely feel that what just happened is a disservice to consumers and innovators in our country; that they should be allowed to have net neutrality as their protection, and I think, again, that we are on the right side of history in propounding this legislation to be brought out here, and, ultimately, today history was not served well.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I would simply say in response to my good friend from Massachusetts: Where are the fast and slow lanes? They may happen sometimes. We have been warned for 2 years this is going to happen. It hasn't happened.

What has happened is the greatest growth in the internet that we have seen, as opposed to the stifled growth we had during the 2 years of title II regulation under the Obama administration.

I want to work with them on non-discrimination online. Everyone wants a fair and open internet, but I think everyone also wants the great growth we have had over the past 2 years, and we can have it with a bipartisan bill like the one Senator SINEMA and I are working on and unlike the idea of putting us under depression-era rules.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

OVER-THE-COUNTER MONOGRAPH SAFETY, INNOVATION, AND REFORM ACT

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, every year, Americans make nearly 3 billion trips to the drugstore, pharmacies, convenience stores to pick up over-the-counter products such as allergy medicines, children's cough syrup, or simple pain medicines such as aspirin.

As the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee was working on the 21st Century Cures Act in 2016, I asked Janet Woodcock, the Director of the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research at the Food and Drug Administration: Are there any changes that really need to be made in the FDA's law? This is a train—referring to the 21st century cures legislation—that is likely to get to the station. If you have something that really needs to be done for the benefit of American consumers that you haven't been able to get done, tell us what it is, and we will put it on the train.

Well, Ms. Woodcock, who has been at the FDA for a while, came back to me and said the over-the-counter monograph.

Now, what that means is these are the rules that govern how all drugs sold in pharmacies, other than prescription drugs, are approved—the allergy medicines, the cough syrups, the simple pain medicines. Those haven't been changed since the 1970s, nearly 50 years ago.

Today the Senate, after all that time, nearly a half century, will modernize these rules by passing legislation proposed by Senator ISAKSON and