

Office of the Chairman

RESTORING INTERNET FREEDOM FOR ALL AMERICANS

This week, FCC Chairman Ajit Pai announced his proposal to roll back the last Administration’s regulation of the Internet. Specifically, Chairman Pai proposes to repeal heavy-handed “Title II” regulations and return the U.S. to the bipartisan, light-touch framework that preserved a free and open Internet for almost 20 years. This will be accomplished through a transparent process, with public input.

Brief Background on Internet Regulation

- In 1996, President Clinton and a Republican Congress passed the Telecommunications Act of 1996, stating that the U.S. would “preserve the vibrant and competitive free market that presently exists for the Internet . . . unfettered by Federal or State regulation.”
- This bipartisan approach was tremendously successful. The private sector invested about \$1.5 trillion, connecting hundreds of millions of Americans. Consumers were protected and benefited from innovation. And America’s Internet economy became the envy of the world.
- Two years ago, the FCC suddenly changed course—even though there was no problem that the agency needed to solve. On a party-line vote, it applied Title II, or utility-style regulation, to the Internet. This established government control of the Internet.
- The prior Administration’s Title II solution has failed:
 - Investment in broadband networks declined.
 - Plans to deploy new and upgraded broadband infrastructure were shelved.
 - Thousands of good-paying jobs were lost due to lower infrastructure investment.
 - Americans’ online privacy was weakened because Title II completely stripped the FTC of its authority over broadband providers’ privacy and data security practices.

A New Approach

- Chairman Pai is now setting the FCC on a course to fix the problems that the prior FCC created. His plan to restore Internet Freedom by repealing Obama-era Internet regulations will benefit all Americans. Here’s how:
 - It will spur broadband deployment throughout the country and thus bring better, faster Internet service to more Americans.
 - It will create jobs by putting Americans to work deploying broadband networks and by creating the networks and online opportunities necessary for additional job growth and economic opportunity.
 - It will boost competition and choice in the broadband marketplace.
 - It will secure online privacy by putting the FTC—the nation’s premier consumer protection agency—back in charge of broadband providers’ privacy practices.
 - It will restore Internet Freedom by ending government micromanagement and returning to the bipartisan regulatory framework that worked well for decades.
- The entire text of Chairman Pai’s proposal will be made available for the public’s review long before the FCC votes. In 2015, by contrast, the FCC kept the text of its 313-page regulatory plan secret until *after* the Commission had voted.