



COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY & COMMERCE
DEMOCRATS
RANKING MEMBER FRANK PALLONE, JR.

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Pallone's Remarks at Paid Prioritization Hearing

"I encourage any of my colleagues who support real net neutrality to sign on to Ranking Member Doyle's CRA"

Washington, D.C. – *Energy and Commerce Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) delivered the following opening remarks today at a Subcommittee on Communications and Technology hearing on "From Core to Edge: Perspective on Internet Prioritization."*

The internet is a powerful engine of economic growth and a potent platform for free speech. With a working broadband connection, anyone can work from home, sell their own products online, and connect with companies a world away. And in the past few years, we have seen how the internet can help everyday people launch a worldwide political movement.

But the power of the internet is rooted in the principles of net neutrality. These principles are simple and well understood: broadband companies cannot pick internet winners and losers by blocking, or slowing down content or charging extra for fast lanes. It's a question of fairness, and there are no loopholes.

Until the Trump Administration took over the FCC, even the broadband providers themselves supported these principles, including a flat ban on fast lanes. The largest providers told us time and again that they agreed that paid prioritization should be prohibited. They said that they had no intention of charging anyone extra for faster speeds. But recently, those voices have gone silent, and that silence presents a real threat to small businesses and speech online.

Where there was once agreement on a prohibition on fast lanes, some now want to add loopholes to net neutrality. The reasoning is convoluted and confusing—they argue that somehow allowing broadband providers to charge small companies extra for internet fast lanes is good for small business.

This makes no sense and no one is buying it.

Small businesses oppose having to pay extra for fast lanes. So do telemedicine companies, disabled veterans groups, self-driving car companies, churches, non-profits, and the list goes on.

Net neutrality advocates have spoken loud and clear: we want everyone to have a faster internet, not just the chosen few who can afford to pay extra. That's why Democrats on this Committee introduced the LIFT America Act to bring faster broadband to everyone.

The only ones who want broadband providers to charge more for fast lanes are the broadband providers.

Despite these latest attempts to muddy the water and create confusion, banning paid prioritization is not a new issue.

The FCC solved this problem when it passed net neutrality in 2015. At that time, the FCC correctly banned these fast lanes, with the exception of certain specialized services like healthcare. The FCC got it right in 2015 and the Trump FCC got it wrong when it killed net neutrality last year.

That's why I support the legislation introduced by Ranking Member Doyle that would restore the well-crafted and balanced 2015 protections. And I encourage any of my colleagues who support real net neutrality to sign on to Ranking Member Doyle's CRA as well. This CRA is the best way to put net neutrality back in place and support small businesses.

Thank you.

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