

Congressman Steve Scalise
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
“Protecting the Internet and Consumers Through Congressional Action”
January 21, 2015

Statement for the Record

The importance of today's hearing and the issue before us cannot be overstated. Simply put, the Internet has positively changed the world and transformed our economy in ways previously unimagined. How we communicate, work, get our news, shop or even watch television have all changed, and improved drastically in just a few years.

Even President Obama stated the "Internet has been one of the greatest gifts our economy – and our society – has ever known." That is why I continued to be baffled by this president's belief that the Federal government needs to now swoop in and “fix” the Internet.

Last night the president talked about infrastructure. Well, mobile and fixed broadband networks are the infrastructure of the 21st century. They are the keys to the future of our economy and the ability of individuals to improve their economic well-being.

But apparently the president and the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) believe our 21st century infrastructure must be “fixed” by applying outdated laws and regulations from the 1930s.

Reclassifying broadband under Title II represents a complete paradigm shift in how our government treats the Internet. The long-standing and successful “light touch” regulatory model has ensured the Internet’s success.

Why would we want to introduce *more* government regulation and bureaucratic micromanagement from Washington that would harm a vibrant, successful, well-functioning global set of networks? It makes no sense.

Since its inception, the Internet has been driven by market forces. Consumers have picked winners and losers, and innovators have thrived. My fear is that under Title II, the government - specifically the FCC - would be in the driver's seat dictating the market while consumers – and innovation – suffer.

The impacts of Title II will be profound, and the imminent regulatory uncertainty under reclassification will drag on for years and kill billions of dollars in private investment. We must proceed deliberately. I urge the FCC to do the same and to take its direction from Congress rather than bow to political pressure from the White House.

I commend Chairmen Walden and Upton for putting forward this bill. I urge Chairman Wheeler and the other FCC Commissioners to work with Congress on a broadband policy framework that works for hard-working taxpayers and innovators and ensures a vibrant Internet for generations to come. We do not need the Federal government to “fix” the Internet!