April 9, 2013

The Honorable Fred Upton
2183 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden
2182 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Upton & Congressman Walden,

On behalf of Americans for Tax Reform, I write in support of legislation to affirm the policy of the United States regarding Internet governance.

Before the December 2012 World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT), the House unanimously expressed its desire for a free and open Internet by passing H. Con. Res. 127, which supported the multi-stakeholder model and opposed international attempts to regulate the Internet by a vote of 414-0.

In the 113th Congress, the House Energy and Commerce Committee held a joint hearing addressing the results of the December 2012 World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT). At the hearing, Democrats, Republicans, and witnesses were united in their opposition to the expansion of Internet regulation in the updated International Telecommunications Regulations (ITRs). All emphasized their commitment to fighting for the preservation of the free and open Internet as perhaps the single greatest agent of economic and social advancement around the globe.

The Internet is the engine of growth not only in the United States but also around the world; its interconnection capability underlies nearly every sector of our economy. Placing restrictions and burdensome regulations on the Internet will only backfire and result in a massive loss of freedom for everyone. Putting limits on aspiring entrepreneurs and developing countries is not something the United States government or any entity should be in the business of doing.

This mark-up is another step in the ongoing process of protecting a free and open Internet from over zealous regulators. Making the language from H. Con. Res. 127 official United States policy, would demonstrate to the world the United States’ unwavering commitment to a free and open Internet.

Sincerely,

Grover Norquist
President
Americans for Tax Reform
AT&T Statement on Internet Governance Legislation

The following statement may be attributed to AT&T’s Executive Vice President of Federal Relations Tim McKone:

“AT&T has long recognized the Internet as an essential medium for free expression, economic development and social welfare. For the Internet to continue to prosper, it is essential that the current multi-stakeholder model for the governance of the global Internet is protected.

“Last year, we supported bipartisan resolutions in the U.S. House and Senate concerning these issues at the World Conference on International Telecommunications. And, we do so again today in support of efforts by Committee Chairman Upton and Subcommittee Chairman Walden to maintain the resounding success of the multi-stakeholder governance model for the global Internet. We look forward to working with the Committee, Members of Congress and the Administration to preserve and promote the values of openness and opportunity, free of government control, for the global Internet.”

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April 9, 2013

The Honorable Fred Upton  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy & Commerce  
2183 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Communications & Technology  
2182 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Chairman Walden:

On behalf of CTIA – The Wireless Association®, I commend you for your commitment to the promotion of policies that will keep the Internet free from government control and safeguard the multi-stakeholder governance model that has allowed the Internet to flourish. When combined with wireless connectivity that now reaches most of the planet’s citizens, the Internet is a powerful medium for commerce, political discourse, education and the delivery of health care.

When last year’s World Conference on International Telecommunications in Dubai broke down over divisions related to whether the International Telecommunications Union should have authority to regulate the Internet, CTIA supported the U.S. Ambassador’s decision not to sign the agreement. The free market and a commitment to a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach to governance have helped to produce a vibrant and dynamic Internet ecosystem that is central to economic growth and political freedom. The United States was and is right to support policies that advance these interests.

Thankfully, in addition to Ambassador Kramer’s refusal to embrace ITU authority to regulate the Internet at the WCIT, National Telecommunications and Information Administration Administrator Larry Strickling recently affirmed that the multi-stakeholder governance model for the Internet “has promoted freedom of expression, both online and off,” and “ensured the Internet is a robust, open platform for innovation, investment, economic growth and the creation of wealth throughout the world, including in developing countries.” I urge Congress to speak to this same subject, because when America speaks in a unified voice, policymakers around the world listen.

Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Steve Largent

cc: The Hon. Henry Waxman  
The Hon. Anna Eshoo
Strong, United Voices for Internet Freedom

Wednesday, April 10, 2013 at 12:05 PM ET
Posted by Susan Molinari, Vice President, Public Policy and Government Relations

Remember the ITU? It might seem like a long time ago, but it was only last December at a closed-door meeting of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) in Dubai when some governments proposed measures to censor and regulate the web. We joined millions of individuals and thousands of organizations from all over the world in speaking up against this.

The fight to keep the Internet free and open isn’t over.

Eighty-nine countries signed onto the treaty that came out of the ITU conference. We continue to stand with the countries that refuse to sign. For all of us who believe in pushing back the tide of censorship online, it’s very important to remain vigilant and reaffirm our commitment to an open web.

Among the many voices who spoke up against the closed negotiations at the ITU were those of virtually every Member of the United States Congress. Indeed, in a resolution adopted last year by both the Senate and the House of Representatives without a single dissenting vote, Congress called for the web to remain free from government control and emphasized its support for the multistakeholder model that has allowed the Internet to flourish.

This week, the House Energy and Commerce Committee is once more considering a call for the Internet to remain free and open. We’re glad Congress remains focused on the ways the ITU proposals threaten the web we have today.

Speaking with one voice in Dubai enabled the United States to lead in defense of Internet freedom. We look forward to supporting policy makers’ efforts to ensure the web keeps fueling economic growth, innovation, and the vibrant exchange of information.
The Internet Association’s Statement on Markup of H.R. ____, A Bill to Affirm the Policy of the United States Regarding Internet Governance

Millions of people across the globe have rejected the proposed U.N. takeover of the Internet. Last year, the U.S. Congress in a strong bipartisan manner, voted to unanimously oppose the ITU’s intervention in the governance of the Internet.

The Internet is one of the greatest engines for economic growth, freedom and prosperity the world has ever known. The unique nature of the Internet – free from government control and governed by multiple stakeholders – has unleashed unprecedented entrepreneurialism, creativity, innovation, and freedom far beyond imagination. Preserving a free Internet for all people is essential to the preservation of political and economic liberty.

The Internet Association is strongly opposed to ITU efforts to regulate the Internet and asks Congress to stand together on this important issue. We urge the Internet community to join together to stop this threat to Internet freedom.

We support efforts to protect the Internet’s multi-stakeholder and decentralized model, which has allowed it to flourish as a powerful economic driver. We will seek to work with Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle on this important issue.
April 10, 2013

The Honorable Fred Upton  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy & Commerce  
2183 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC  20515

The Honorable Greg Walden  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Communications & Technology  
2182 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC  20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Chairman Walden:

Last year, the National Cable & Telecommunications Association (NCTA) strongly supported the Congressional resolution sending a clear message to the United Nations and International Telecommunications Union to avoid taking steps that would assert and impose unprecedented governmental regulation over the Internet. We agreed with you and your colleagues that our representatives to these bodies should clearly articulate the consistent and unequivocal policy of the United States to promote a global Internet free from government control and preserve and advance the successful multi-stakeholder model that governs the Internet today.

NCTA continues to support this important objective and your efforts to advance legislation that would accomplish this worthy goal. Cable’s private sector investment in infrastructure of more than $200 billion since 1996 has fueled America’s rapid expansion of broadband services. Cable’s robust fiber-rich broadband networks are available to 93 percent of all American households and 82 percent of U.S. homes are passed by cable technology capable of supporting broadband speeds of 100 Mbps or higher. As history demonstrates, the success of the Internet is firmly rooted in its current multi-stakeholder governance model which incents private investment, consciously avoids government controls, and yields innovative new ways of increasing consumer welfare around the globe.

So that the other nations clearly understand our commitment to an Internet free from unwarranted government intrusion, we support the enactment of legislation again in this Congress that expresses this important goal.

Sincerely,

Michael K. Powell

cc: The Hon. Henry Waxman  
The Hon. Anna Eshoo
April 5, 2013

The Honorable Fred Upton  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy & Commerce  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Communications & Technology  
Committee on Energy & Commerce  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Chairman Walden:

The United States Telecom Association represents the nation’s leading broadband service providers — companies that offer a wide range of voice, data, and video services on both a fixed and mobile basis. Our member companies serve markets that are both urban and rural, and range in size from some of the country’s largest publicly traded corporations to small family-owned companies and rural cooperatives. Our diverse membership is united in its support for the multi-stakeholder cooperative model to Internet governance that exists today.

Therefore, on behalf of USTelecom, I want to express our support for your legislation to affirm our nation’s policy with respect to Internet governance. That policy, to promote a global Internet free from government control and to preserve and advance the multi-stakeholder governance model, has allowed the Internet to thrive globally as an engine for economic growth and democratic freedom.

Several of USTelecom’s member companies participated in last year’s World Conference on International Telecommunications, serving as part of the stakeholder team working against harmful changes to the International Telecommunications Union regulations. Like you, we were disappointed by the conference’s outcome and supported U.S. Ambassador Terry Kramer’s refusal to sign the treaty. We remain committed to the fight against government or multi-government institutions replacing the successful multi-stakeholder process in place today. The legislation that you intend to bring before the committee is an important statement of America’s national resolve on this issue.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Walter B. McCormick, Jr.

cc: The Honorable Henry Waxman  
The Honorable Anna Eshoo
April 10, 2013

The Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman
Subcommittee on Communications & Technology
Committee on Energy & Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Walden:

The Internet has emerged as a key driver for civic engagement, economic growth and social progress worldwide, but powerful forces threaten to undercut these worthy and important goals. Last December, Verizon participated in the United States delegation to the World Conference on International Telecommunications ("WCIT") in Dubai. Verizon is grateful for your leadership in passing a bipartisan and bicameral resolution (S. Con. Res. 50) in preparation for WCIT expressing congressional opposition to government control of the Internet and support for the multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance. International Telecommunications Union (ITU) member states could not achieve consensus on whether and how the WCIT treaty should address Internet governance, and the United States government, guided by S. Con. Res. 50, did not to sign the WCIT treaty as it was inconsistent with U.S. policy. While 54 other countries also declined to sign the treaty, 89 countries signed, leading U.S. Ambassador to the WCIT, Terry Kramer, to note, "It is clear that the world community is at a crossroads in its collective view of the Internet and of the most optimal environment for the flourishing of the Internet in this century."

The conclusion of WCIT in stalemate does not end the threat of government control over the Internet, but is instead the beginning of a much longer, worldwide dialogue on the role of Internet governance. That dialogue will continue at the ITU on May 15-16 at the World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum in Geneva, in July at the ITU Global Symposium for Regulators in Poland, and finally in October 2014 at the ITU Plenipotentiary in Korea, which could determine the future role of the ITU vis a vis the Internet.

It is important that the United States Government remains vigilant in these forums and has clear guidance from Congress. We urge your Committee and the 113th Congress to reiterate the consistent and unequivocal policy of the United States to promote a global Internet free from government control and to preserve and advance the successful multistakeholder model that governs the Internet today.

Again, thank you for your leadership on this critical issue. We look forward to working with you throughout 2013-14 to preserve Internet freedom worldwide.

Sincerely,

cc: The Honorable Fred Upton
    The Honorable Henry Waxman
    The Honorable Anna Eshoo
April 9, 2013

Dear Chairman Walden:

On behalf of more than two million Americans for Prosperity activists in all 50 states, I write in strong support of legislation establishing the policy of the United States to promote a free and open global Internet that is not controlled by government.

One reason for the dramatic growth of the Internet is that it has been free from government control. We see in other industries that government regulation suffocates innovation, and Congress should take steps to ensure that this does not happen to the Internet. Attempts by the government to control the economy routinely fail in the off-line world—there’s no reason to believe that government will have a better track record with similar attempts to control the Internet. Government officials simply do not have the skills and knowledge necessary to plan the economy, whether offline or online; this is better left to entrepreneurs and consumers to figure out in the free market.

Not only would Internet regulation impact technology innovation, it would also impact free speech. Many foreign governments desire to control the Internet in order to regulate information and to carry out their own propaganda. Free speech and an informed citizenry are essential components of a free society.

Other governments see controlling the Internet as a means to generate revenue, proposing tariff-style protections; this approach is short-sighted and self-defeating. They overlook the fact that the unregulated Internet produces an unprecedented level of economic growth and job creation, bringing an even higher level of revenue in other forms tax collection.

With other nations threatening to undermine the Internet for their own purposes, Congress should demonstrate its commitment to keeping the internet free. Americans for Prosperity is proud to support the bill affirming that it is U.S. policy that the Internet should remain free and open from government control. I urge your colleagues to support internet freedom, and I look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

James Valvo
Director of Policy
Americans for Prosperity

Americans for Prosperity® (AFP) is a nationwide organization of citizen leaders committed to advancing every individual’s right to economic freedom and opportunity. AFP believes reducing the size and scope of government is the best safeguard to ensuring individual productivity and prosperity for all Americans. AFP educates and engages citizens in support of restraining state and federal government growth and returning government to its constitutional limits. AFP has more than 2 million members, including members in all 50 states, and 36 state chapters and affiliates. More than 90,000 Americans in all 50 states have made a financial investment in AFP or AFP Foundation. For more information, visit www.americansforprosperity.org. Americans for Prosperity does not support or oppose candidates for public office.