

Statement for the Record of Rep. Anna G. Eshoo
House Energy and Commerce Committee
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
“Oversight of the Federal Communications Commission”
2123 Rayburn House Office Building
July 25, 2018

Madame Chairwoman, thank you for holding this hearing today, and welcome to the full Commission.

As Commissioner Rosenworcel pointed out in her testimony, it’s been nine months to the day since the FCC last testified before this Committee. A lot can happen in nine months, especially in the critically important and rapidly evolving tech sector.

I want to set the record straight on a few things. It was stated today by the Chairman of the full Committee that it’s fiction that the Republican majority has done great harm to the Internet and the consumers who rely on it. Each of us can hold an opinion, but we’re not entitled to our own facts.

Here *are* the facts: the FCC’s majority spent the last year gutting communications consumer protections across the board. On December 14, 2017, the Commission voted to upend the net neutrality rules that had been tested in the Court twice. Those rules were supported on a bipartisan basis by the American people and businesses, but they were rescinded by the FCC.

Similarly, in March 2017, a CRA swept through this Committee, authored by Chairwoman Blackburn, and then spread like a prairie fire through the rest of Congress, which removed all privacy protections on the Internet.

The majority has done this harm not only by revoking high-profile policies like net neutrality, but also through quieter actions such as roll-backs of multiple media ownership rules and reducing eligibility for Lifeline beneficiaries at the behest of incumbent corporate interests.

With each rollback of consumer protections, we’ve seen providers announce more mergers, increased price hikes, and more limited choices. Where choice does exist, consumers must rely on increasingly consolidated incumbent companies. And ultimately, consumers will pay the price.

I believe, as many of my colleagues do, that recent actions by the FCC have prioritized corporations over consumers, undermining the fundamental public interest mission of the FCC.

Congress has oversight jurisdiction of the Federal Communications Commission, pursuant to the Communications Act, which is an Act of Congress. This is an FCC oversight hearing which means that as Members of Congress, we must ensure that the Commission is doing its job -- and that job first and foremost is to advance the public interest.

Is Chairman Pai’s FCC advancing the public interest of the United States of America? I believe that is the question that should be at the forefront of today’s hearing.