

Letter: Time to pay attention to net-neutrality

To the community,

Comcast, my father's Internet provider, has illegally slowed Internet speeds to chosen users. Net-neutrality may sound boring, but it's not. Soon you may be the target of discrimination, too. How often are you online? Our way of life depends on it.

Concerned about these and other developments the Internet industry, I wrote to Congressman [Tom] McClintock, I asked him to support proposed FCC rule changes that would regulate the Internet more like a public utility. I want the Internet managed not solely for a profit, but as an essential public good. My daughter's future depends on it.

Mr. McClintock responded that he strongly opposes government regulation that limits markets.

That argument sounds principled and traditionally all-American, but it isn't. Our government was an innovation founded explicitly to support the power of people to stand against the tyranny of concentrated power. If commercial profits were the only worthy goal, we would not today have the free and open communication, education or transportation systems that underpin the American way of life.

Frustrated with McClintock's extremist position, I did a little (Internet) research.

This year, Internet companies have donated nearly \$9 million to Congress. In the last election, it cost, on average, \$1.6 million to win a House seat. Rep. McClintock spent \$5.69 per vote in our area, and the computer/Internet sector was one of Mr. McClintock's top donors.

This experience illustrates two important points:

1. The Internet is fundamental to our access to information – and so power – and it must be regulated as a public good. Express your American values. Show your support for a fair and open Internet.

2. Rep. McClintock is up for re-election this fall. Though congressional approval ratings are down to 9 percent, we are likely to do what we always do – re-elect the (monied) incumbent. Do your research. Then vote your real interests.

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