



Representative Scott Jiu Wo Kawasaki

Alaska State Legislature

District 1 Fairbanks

House Joint Resolution 31 Sponsor Statement

“Urging the United State Congress to overturn the Federal Communication Commission’s order ending net neutrality.”

In December 2017, the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) adopted an order to reverse regulations that had established a federal broadband policy of net neutrality and attempted to preempt states from imposing regulations on Internet Service Providers (ISPs).

Net neutrality protects an individual’s ability to access and transmit information on a free and open internet. Without net neutrality, ISPs can lawfully slow down and block access to sites and charge customers higher rates to access certain websites, download music or watch videos. The FCC’s order to repeal net neutrality risks making the internet into an unfair pay-to-play system for small businesses and individual users.

The FCC’s decision is extremely unpopular with the American public. A survey conducted by the University of Maryland found that 83 percent of Americans opposed repealing net neutrality. Furthermore, the FCC’s public commenting process was flawed. Of the more than 22 million comments that were received, 2 million were linked to stolen identities and nearly 500,000 were generated from Russian email address, including at least 139 cases of individual Alaskans that submitted more than 100 comments to the FCC. Governor Bill Walker and other state lawmakers wrote to the FCC requesting to delay its repeal vote until the integrity of the public process was adequately investigated, which the FCC ignored.

Alaska’s isolation from the Lower 48 means our citizens rely heavily on the internet for communication, commerce and emergencies. Many Alaskan communities already struggle to obtain stable, affordable internet access. Alaskans First Amendment rights of free speech, free press and free association are also at risk without a net neutral environment enabling the free and open flow of thoughts, ideas and concerns over the internet.

The Congressional Review Act, which grants Congress authority to nullify any regulatory rules issued by federal agencies with a simple majority vote, is the best chance at reversing the FCCs decision on net neutrality and must be submitted within 60 legislative days of finalization of the agency’s action.

Upon approval, this resolution would urge the United States Congress to exercise its authority under the Congressional Review Act to overturn the Federal Communication Commission’s regulatory decision to reverse net neutrality protections.

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