

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Sponsor Statement

Senate Joint Resolution - Urging the United States 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 to preempt states from imposing regulations on internet service providers.

Net neutrality protects an individual's ability to access and transmit information on the internet, requiring internet service providers (ISPs) to treat all websites equally, regardless of their content or business relationships. Without net neutrality ISPs can lawfully charge customers higher rates to access certain websites, download music, and watch videos, and the ISPs would be able to slow down or block access to sites altogether.

The FCC's decision was extremely unpopular with the American public and a survey conducted by the University of Maryland found that 83% 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 addresses.

Alaska's isolation from the lower 48 means our citizens rely heavily on the internet to connect to one another, keep in touch with family, work, and for educational purposes. 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 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 FCC's 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 end net neutrality protections.