

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
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**Opening Statement of Rep. Anna G. Eshoo**  
**Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Communications and Technology**  
**House Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**“Network Neutrality and Internet Regulation: Warranted or More Economic Harm than Good?”**  
**2322 Rayburn House Office Building**  
**February 16, 2011**

Good morning Mr. Chairman and welcome to the FCC Commissioners.

I commend Chairman Walden for calling the Commissioners before us early in this Congress. It's vitally important that we hear from the full Commission to help Members make informed decisions on key telecommunications issues.

Today's hearing is intended to examine the FCC's action to preserve an open Internet and a proposed mechanism to unravel these rules. Since being elected to the House in 1992, I've witnessed my District lead a technology revolution and the nation has prospered. This success has come in large part due to the Internet's growth – an open forum where companies compete online, and consumers have a choice in the content they consume.

In only a few years, innovative companies like Netflix, Skype and eBay have flourished. These companies have created tens of thousands of jobs and new competition in areas like telephone service, video and online shopping, not just in my District, but across the nation. By one estimate, the open Internet ecosystem has resulted in more than 3 million new U.S. jobs over the past 15 years. To promote the next Google or Facebook, we must preserve these essential qualities and ensure the Internet remains free and open.

While the FCC's open Internet rules are not perfect, a view I've made very clear, they are an important step forward. Without some clear rules of the road, large corporations can carve up the Internet into fast and slow lanes, charging a toll for content, and blocking innovators from entering the information superhighway. I believe consumers, not corporations, should be in the driver's seat to pick the content they view, listen and watch over the Internet.

We're now faced with at least two legal challenges and the use of legislative maneuvers like the Congressional Review Act (CRA) to overturn the FCC's work. These actions will inevitably create market uncertainty and delay future innovation in broadband technology.

Each Member of this Subcommittee has made it clear where they stand on the issue and I don't expect this hearing to change those views. What's important to remember is what the FCC agreed to is a compromise, reflecting the views of both sides of the issue, with more than 100,000 comments from more than 2 million people, 90 percent of whom were in favor of open Internet rules.

There is broad agreement for the adoption of these rules. Comcast, the nation's largest broadband provider, voluntarily agreed to abide by open Internet conditions for the next seven years as part of its joint venture with NBC Universal. AT&T has said it will not engage in efforts to overturn the FCC's order. If these common sense rules are good enough for the nation's two largest broadband providers, then I think it's time we refocus our efforts on the next steps needed to promote jobs, broadband deployment and new investment.

It's time to look forward and focus on what we can work on together in a bipartisan way. We're faced with important issues like universal service reform, spectrum reform and ensuring that our country's first responders have a nationwide, interoperable public safety network. By tackling these issues, we have an opportunity to create jobs and grow the economy –a platform we can all agree on.

I look forward to hearing the Chairman and the Commissioners' thoughts on how we can ensure the Internet remains a vital resource to improve the lives of Americans and everyone around the world for generations to come.