

Written Statement of

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Before the

Congressional Forum on Net Neutrality

Hosted by Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui

Congresswoman Matsui, thank you for the opportunity to come before you today at this congressional forum on net neutrality. I also appreciate Commissioners Mignon Clyburn and Jessica Rosenworcel for participating in this important forum.

The story of the internet is the story of being able to reach millions of people – and to have millions of people choose to reach you – with ease and low cost. It has inspired thousands upon thousands of people young and old to take entrepreneurial chances that seem irrational at the time they are made but end up transforming the world for the better. The paid prioritization that was not just possible but nearly explicitly endorsed and put forth by Chairman Wheeler in his latest Net Neutrality proposal will rapidly destroy that story and threaten our economy.

We are hearing from the technology industry with a single voice, both from small upstarts and those who have now built companies seen as cash cows who can "afford to pay" by some telecommunications providers, that a real commitment to net neutrality is critical to the future of American innovation. Facebook, the company that I have the most direct experience through my service in a variety of roles from 2005-2009, including as General Counsel, Chief Privacy Officer, and Head of Global Public Policy, would have been unlikely to grow from its college roots without the de facto net neutrality that has prevailed to this point and must continue to prevail in the future.

While Facebook, Google, eBay, Netflix and the other targets of irresponsible telecommunications providers seeking to double dip by charging at both ends of their internet plumbing may be able to survive, the up-and-coming upstarts that are critical to Silicon Valley's, Sacramento's and our nation's future would be deeply harmed by the innovation tax that is paid prioritization.

Please assure the American people, more than 3.7 million who have taken moments out of their days on what seems like an obscure technical issue, that the FCC will stand firmly with consumers, with the kid in a dorm room or the high school student working from her parents' house with a better idea for how the internet should work, and with the internet industry as a whole.

I have happily reinvested in the internet industry, helping to build film innovator Fandor, fee-free financial services provider LOYAL3 that is helping broaden ownership in American companies, and many other apps and services that simplify peoples' lives. Reaching people easily and quickly through the internet, without having to pay an innovation tax for delivery, is critical to the success of all of these businesses. Abrogation of net neutrality will allow irresponsible providers to choke innovation and further entrench incumbents and their consumer-hostile visions of the internet's future. As an investor in the Internet ecosystem, paid prioritization schemes would no doubt stifle precious capital and investment in the digital economy. We cannot allow that to happen.

It is not just the technology industry but some responsible telecommunications providers endorsing the principles we seek to protect. We are thankful that some are making explicit commitments and endorsing a meaningful and active FCC regulatory response in this area.

As Washington found out when it tried to jam through SOPA and PIPA without due consideration, Silicon Valley and the internet industry as a whole are ready and willing to engage in the public discourse once they understand the stakes.

As a veteran of the Clinton Administration who made his way back home to Silicon Valley, I often have been frustrated about our Valley's lack of focus on the policymaking process. But when that policymaking process becomes captive to entrenched interests, we have now learned to rise up quickly and effectively. I have no doubt that the poor public reaction to Chairman Wheeler's proposed plan on net neutrality has driven the record 3.7 million public comments.

Silicon Valley is ready to ensure net neutrality is the law of the land, and we hope that the FCC's final rules later this year will see its way back to this position again sooner rather than later. Again, thank you for inviting me to participate at this forum and I look forward to working with you to protect American innovation and our economy.