

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 28, 2017

The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai,

We write to convey our strong opposition to your recent effort to undermine the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) broadband privacy rules.

Internet Service Providers (ISPs) serve as gatekeepers that control the infrastructure that Americans depend on to access vital applications and services. ISPs can use this privileged position to collect, use, and share sensitive information about subscribers' finances, religious affiliations, family and numerous other pieces of personal data by mining their web and app usage history and geolocation. Yet, many consumers have limited choice for broadband service and cannot necessarily change ISPs if their privacy protections are not transparent or robust.


This unique carrier-customer relationship is why the FCC wisely chose to promulgate broadband privacy rules that ensure consumers, not ISPs, have control over their information. The rules give consumers, who already pay their ISP for internet access, more power to choose if their sensitive information can be used or shared by ISPs and require ISPs to adopt data security protections and notify consumers if a breach occurs. Further, these protections promote transparency by mandating that ISPs disclose what they collect about consumers.

We support these responsible privacy protections and strongly encourage you not to take any actions that weaken these rules. Regrettably, the FCC's Office of Media Relations' recent announcement states that you intend to stop the implementation of the data security protections, which are to go into effect on March 2, 2017. Your proposal comes despite the mounting number of data breaches impacting consumers throughout the country. We oppose your efforts and believe it would make subscribers' sensitive information more vulnerable to breaches and unauthorized use.

As other key portions of the broadband privacy rules begin to go into effect, we strongly urge you not to weaken other parts of the rules. Privacy protections and data security simply cannot be put on hold. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,


Edward J. Markey
United States Senator


Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Al Franken
United States Senator