



MISSISSIPPI CENTER FOR  
**PUBLIC POLICY**



*John Locke*  
FOUNDATION

The JAMES  
MADISON  
INSTITUTE  
*Trusted Solutions for a Better Florida*



\* FREEDOM  
FOUNDATION  
OF MINNESOTA \*

WASHINGTON  
POLICY CENTER  
*Improving lives through market solutions*



CIVITAS  
INSTITUTE

April 17, 2020

To The Wireline Competition Bureau:

The following groups represent a broad swath of non-profit, nonpartisan, research organizations, who work to educate the public and policy makers about technology issues that are important for the future of this country. These groups have also long been advocates of the light touch to technology regulation that has made the United States a hub of innovation for decades. It is with that in mind that we submit the following comments related to the Restoring Internet Freedom and Lifeline proceeding in light of the D.C. Circuit's Mozilla decision.

Although the FCC is seeking comments on the three facets of the ruling, we will only be commenting on the public safety aspect remanded by the court.

The Restoring Internet Freedom Order was an important and correct step in returning the internet to the light touch it was regulated under for its previous existence. Additionally, the DC Circuit Court was correct to uphold the FCC's ability to pass this order.

An internet free from heavy handed government regulation has seen impressive growth not only in the number of people who have been connected, but also the speeds that are available to users. Private firms have invested more than \$660 billion in the [past decade](#) with \$80 billion being invested in 2018 alone. These massive investments have increased connectivity which has allowed both the traditional web economy and the app economy to grow dramatically, adding billions of dollars in economic activity.

Regulating the internet under Title II threatened to slow this impressive investment which would ultimately leave consumers with slower speeds over the long term.

Apart from the consumer and economic benefit, Title II regulations of the internet potentially threatened public safety, while we believe repealing these regulations would help ensure it.

We submit these comments during extraordinary times. The COVID-19 virus has spread across the world and forced many people into quarantine within their own homes. Yet, even with these massive disruptions to our everyday lives, many can continue to work, go to school, and communicate with our friends and family during this troubling time. This is only possible due to the massive increase in broadband infrastructure mentioned above. There is no doubt the disruption to our lives would have been worse had COVID-19 come about even a decade earlier.

People being locked in their homes puts extra strain on the network infrastructure. While normal circumstances require that companies only need worry about peak usage, networks are currently being strained like never before. Both Netflix and YouTube and currently decreasing the quality of their videos in Europe, for example. However, U.S. providers are not as worried. In fact, they are opening up free access to the internet to ensure people acquire the digital connectivity they need.

These networks are increasingly being used for important lifesaving activities, such as telemedicine. States are quickly adopting policies to allow for more telemedicine usage, and they are unlikely to implement the previous restrictions. Telemedicine only works over a strong connection. Networks would be right to prioritize this lifesaving treatment over streaming services or social media use, something that would be illegal under Title II regulations.

Furthermore, the FCC has continued to work with the private sector providers to boost service speeds, lift data caps, and keep consumers connected to service. This shows that the private sector can work with government during times of public safety crisis without the need for more government mandates.

The Restoring Internet Freedom Order has shown itself to be an asset in time of a public safety crisis, not a liability. The FCC should keep this order in place and continue to foster the innovation which has proven so important during this crisis.

Sincerely,

Daniel Erspamer, CEO  
Pelican Institute for Public Policy, Louisiana

Amy Cooke, CEO  
John Locke Foundation, North Carolina

Annette Meeks, CEO  
Freedom Foundation of Minnesota

Donald Bryson, President and CEO  
Civitas Institute, North Carolina

Ron Shultis, Director of Policy and Research  
Beacon Center of Tennessee

Dann Mead Smith, President  
Washington Policy Center

Connor Boyack, President  
Libertas Institute, Utah

Dr. Bob McClure, President and CEO  
James Madison Institute, Florida

Jameson Taylor, Ph.D, Vice President for Policy  
Mississippi Center for Public Policy

