

## NEWS RELEASE



# Hon. Doris O. Matsui

## Member of Congress

*Doris O. Matsui*

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Serving California's 6<sup>th</sup> District

### **EMBARGOED UNTIL**

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## **Congresswoman Matsui Remarks at Congressional Forum on Net Neutrality in Sacramento, California**

**SACRAMENTO, CA** – Today Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D-CA), a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, held a Congressional forum on net neutrality in Sacramento, California. Her opening remarks, as prepared for delivery, were:

“Good morning! I would like to welcome everyone today to this congressional forum on net neutrality. It is great to be here at the State Capitol. I would like to thank those of you in the audience for coming to hear this important discussion on the future of the Internet. I would also like to welcome those of you watching this online.

“The debate happening right now in Washington over net neutrality is critically important, but it should not be confined to the halls of federal bureaucracy alone. That is one of the central reasons I have brought this hearing to my congressional district of Sacramento, the capital of our great state of California.

“This hearing will be part of the House Energy and Commerce Committee record, thanks to Ranking Member, Congressman Henry Waxman of California. This format will be the same as our committee hearings in Congress.

“For the last few months, I have been calling on the FCC to take the net neutrality show on the road and listen to and engage with Americans on the impact that the current net neutrality proposal put forth by Chairman Wheeler will have on consumers, entrepreneurs, small businesses, and other stakeholders.

“To that point, I am very pleased that we have two FCC Commissioners with us today, Commissioner Mignon Clyburn and Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel.

“These two accomplished Commissioners have a reputation of making thoughtful and fair-minded decisions on the policy challenges facing our innovation economy - whether it's expanding

broadband to lower-income communities, schools, and libraries, or unleashing more spectrum and ensuring interoperability so our mobile devices can perform nationwide - Commissioners Clyburn and Rosenworcel have championed a diverse set of critical communications issues in the public interest.

“Recently, both Commissioners were named by National Journal as leading women in the country who shape technology policy. We are fortunate that they traveled from Washington to be here today to share their views and engage on this important topic.

“We all know that the Internet is a very personal thing to Americans.

“We use the Internet for just about everything these days; reading the news, applying for a job, taking educational classes, streaming a TV show or starting a business. The digital economy is an integral part of our lives.

“So when it seems like the Internet as we know it today may change and not for the better, Americans speak up.

“That is what we are seeing now.

“Earlier this year, the D.C. Circuit Court struck down two of the FCC’s 2010 open Internet rules which maintained a basic level of protection for consumers and innovators on the Internet. In response, Chairman Wheeler presented a proposal to restore these protections that has received a lot of attention across the country.

“Over 3.7 million comments have been filed with the Commission, which is a record-setting number for a FCC proceeding. I have personally heard from hundreds of my constituents here in Sacramento about the importance of preserving an open Internet.

“I have heard from Liam who wrote to me that Chairman Wheeler’s proposal to allow Internet fast lanes would cripple people's ability to get the content they need for everything from building a small business to strengthening community involvement.

“Gage wrote to me saying that net neutrality was the most important free speech issue today and that competition between businesses on the Internet was possible because major companies all offered access to the same connection speeds.

“Sean says ‘I grew up in the Internet generation with free and open access to information across the world. The ability to communicate with anyone at anytime is something I would never give up.’

“Matt wrote ‘as Californians, our tech-based economy needs an open and fast internet or we will not be able to keep up with other nations.’

“And I heard from Edmund, who summed up much of what I was hearing. He simply wrote, ‘I grew up with an open Internet. And I want to leave one for my children.’

“These are only several of the hundreds of emails and calls I’ve received in response to Chairman Wheeler’s current net neutrality proposal

“I agree with many of my constituents that the current net neutrality proposal by Chairman Wheeler is severely flawed. It would upend a basic principle that has guided the Internet’s growth since its inception; all data should be treated equally.

“Specifically, I believe that the practice of paid prioritization by broadband providers would dramatically reshuffle the digital deck. It would alter the public’s unfettered ability to access content online and threaten competition and innovation.

“Paid prioritization would allow a broadband provider the ability to offer preferential treatment to one content provider over another for a fee. If the final FCC proposal allows this to become reality, consumer choice would be at the mercy of the highest bidder, and it would create a two-tiered Internet leading to fast lanes for some, and slow lanes for others.

“In a nutshell, paid prioritization is a ‘tax on innovation and consumer choice.’

“In fact, the only certainty that paid prioritization would bring to the Internet ecosystem is that it would stifle creativity, investment and squeeze out new competitors. It could prevent the next Google or Amazon from hitting the digital economy.

“Americans are not standing for that, and I am not standing for that.

“That is why I, along with Senator Pat Leahy, introduced the Online Competition and Consumer Choice Act, which requires the FCC to exercise its legal authority to ban paid prioritization agreements, or so-called “Internet Fast Lanes,” between ISPs and content providers on the last mile Internet connection to residential consumer or small business.

“I am hopeful that the FCC will ultimately propose a set of rules later this year that preserves net neutrality and spurs innovation and consumer choice. There needs to be transparency. There needs to be openness on the Internet.

“I am also hopeful that the Chairman’s final net neutrality proposal will prevent paid prioritization agreements from entering the marketplace. There is no room in our economy for this sort of anti-competitive practice.

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