

# FOUR THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

Why *Everyone* Has a Stake in Protecting a Free and Open Internet

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## 1. An Open Internet Is Vital to America.

High-speed Internet access is no longer a luxury; it's a lifeline for every American. The Internet has fueled economic growth and engaged millions in our democracy. No other tool in history has held such promise. When we block citizens from getting online or accessing the content or applications of their choice, we undermine the Internet's vital democratic potential. We must make sure that every American can benefit from access to a fast, open and affordable Internet. We all should be free to connect to others without censorship or discrimination.

## 2. Consumers Don't Have Real Broadband Choice.

The cable and phone duopoly now controls more than 95 percent of the residential broadband market in America. Moreover, a significant portion of the country has only one broadband provider to choose from — or none at all. As a result, America has fallen behind other developed nations in high-speed Internet services. A recent survey by the International Telecommunications Union shows the United States slipping to 16th in the world in broadband penetration (down from fourth in 2001). American consumers now pay far more for slower speeds than consumers in Japan, France, Denmark, South Korea and other countries. Americans must no longer be held captive by a lack of choice.

## 3. Phone and Cable Companies Plan to Block, Degrade and Filter Web Content.

The top executives of nearly every major telecom company have stated that they intend to start manipulating content on the Internet. Some are already carrying out these plans: In 2007, Comcast blocked competing content-sharing applications; Verizon blocked text messages sent by NARAL Pro-Choice America to its own members; and AT&T launched plans to filter all Web traffic for possible copyright infringements. For years, Net Neutrality prevented network operators from interfering with and discriminating against Web traffic in this way. But a 2005 FCC decision — pushed by industry lobbyists — stripped away this protection. Now it's up to citizens to confront this rising threat and safeguard a free-flowing Internet.

## 4. You Can Make a Difference.

In 2006, more than 1.5 million Americans urged Congress to take a stand against Internet gatekeepers, stopping legislation that would have gutted Net Neutrality protections. Now, Reps. Ed Markey and Chip Pickering have introduced the bipartisan "Internet Freedom Preservation Act" (HR 5353), a major step toward a forward-thinking communications policy. It ensures that Net Neutrality protections apply to new broadband services. It guarantees that economic innovation and free speech will continue to flourish on the Internet by stopping would-be gatekeepers from discriminatory blocking or interfering. It also calls for a nationwide series of public hearings. By taking the debate beyond the Beltway, we have a rare opportunity to make certain that phone and cable lobbyists no longer set the agenda. Support this important bill by visiting [SavetheInternet.com](http://SavetheInternet.com).

Join the fight for a free and open Internet at [SavetheInternet.com](http://SavetheInternet.com)

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