



PRESS RELEASE

OREGON HOUSE MAJORITY

For Immediate Release
Feb. 26, 2018

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Oregon House Votes to Protect Net Neutrality *Legislation seeks to protect the free speech rights of Oregonians*

SALEM – With the Trump Administration set to rollback essential net neutrality protections, the Oregon House of Representatives today passed [House Bill 4155](#), using the state’s purchasing power to protect a free and open internet for Oregon consumers.

House Bill 4155, which has more than 25 sponsors, requires state divisions or subdivisions to only purchase broadband access from internet providers who are in full compliance with the net neutrality provisions. That means transparency in network management practices, full access to all websites and equal traffic speeds. The legislation puts the Public Utility Commission in position to determine whether or not state contractors are meeting net neutrality requirements.

“Net neutrality is one of the biggest free speech issues of our time,” said Rep. Jennifer Williamson (D-Portland), the chief sponsor of the legislation. “The internet should create, encourage and grow opportunity, and it should allow us to develop the potential of all our citizens. Internet access cannot just be for the wealthy.”

“We are committed to doing everything we can to make sure every Oregonian has equal access to a free and open internet,” Rep. Williamson added.

Net neutrality protections, instituted by the Federal Communications Commission in 2015, provided consumers with assurances that internet content would not be discriminated against, and that the flow of data would not be slowed. In November 2017, the FCC voted to undo the essential net neutrality provisions for consumers in Oregon and across the nation.

Oregon’s United States Senators, Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, strong proponents of a federal response to net neutrality, support state-level action while the Trump Administration refuses to act.

“We often talk about the Oregon way,” Rep. Paul Evans (D-Monmouth) said. “And I am proud, as an Oregonian, that throughout our history we have been at the forefront of so many things. Net neutrality offers us another opportunity to be at the forefront of fighting for a more just and equal state.”

Rep. Brian Clem (D-Salem) spoke on the floor about the importance of net neutrality, not only for the free flow of information, but as a driver of economic growth in Oregon.

“The fight over net neutrality protections is about a number of key values,” Rep. Clem said. “One of those should be whether we want to foster an environment where small businesses and tech startups are able to grow. Ultimately, this legislation is not only beneficial for an individual but beneficial for Oregon’s economy.”

Rep. Susan McLain (D-Forest Grove) said this is an important issue for future generations. In fact, her 15-year-old grandson as well as a speech and debate class have been lobbying her to ensure protections are maintained.

“Net neutrality protections are, I believe, about maintaining the integrity of the internet as a place for free expression,” Rep. McLain said. “As a career educator, parent and grandparent, I believe this source of information and access to a wider world should be kept free and open.”

The legislation has received a wide range of support, including from Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum, Luke Kanies, founder of Puppet Labs, and young activists from Mt. Tabor Middle School.

Oregon House Democrats seek to protect internet freedom, private information, and personal data.

House Bill 4155, which passed 40 to 17, now goes to the Oregon Senate for consideration.

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