



Center for Women & Enterprise
Your Vision. Our Mission.

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Dear Senate Committee Members,

On behalf of the Center for Women & Enterprise (CWE), thank you for this opportunity to share our thoughts on what the repeal of net neutrality could mean for our constituents.

CWE has been part of the small business resource landscape in New Hampshire since 2015. We operate the U.S. Small Business Administration Women's Business Center. Our services include comprehensive training, resources, counseling and networking opportunities for women (and men).

Many of our clients are from underserved populations whether that be from a demographic, economic or geographical standpoint. We provide resources and services to our clients that might otherwise be out of reach. CWE works hard to ensure that all clients and potential clients, regardless of their economic status, are provided access to our programs and services.

One place that everyone can operate on equal footing is the internet. It has been the great "equalizer." Small businesses depend on the open nature of the Internet to compete against the vast resources of enterprise rivals. The end of net neutrality gives us concern for our clients and all small business for a variety of reasons.

- Internet service providers like Comcast and Verizon may soon be free to block content, slow video-streaming services from rivals, and offer "fast lanes" to preferred partners. There is no way small and micro business can compete.
- All internet traffic needs to be treated as equal so that small business has access to the same resources as the big companies. This is especially important for small startups.
- The end of net neutrality could affect business that uses online services. For instance, free online services such as Skype could have to start charging to provide the same level of service—or go out of business. Small businesses rely on free online services to help run their companies. Raising prices for many of the services small businesses use would negatively affect already small profit margins.

- In rural New Hampshire, small businesses rely on internet sales as well as search engine optimization to grow sales and increase revenue. Inequity online would have a disastrous effect on small business in rural counties such as Cheshire, Sullivan, Grafton, Carroll and Coos.

The bottom line is that in New Hampshire, small businesses rely on the equalizing force of the Internet to level the playing field, giving them access to equal opportunity to succeed, regardless of size or access to capital.