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NET NEUTRALITY TESTIMONY

Alan Kennedy-Shaffer

Thank you, [Mr./Madam Chair]. My name is Alan Kennedy-Shaffer, and I am a soldier, teacher, PhD student, and civil rights lawyer. I spoke at last year's net neutrality rally, alongside Congresswoman DeGette and many in this room. I am here with a simple message: **Keep the Internet free.**

Four score and four years ago, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, recognizing the need to keep access to communications free and open, persuaded Congress to create the Federal Communications Commission.

For 84 years, the FCC stood as a bulwark against corporate limits on the American public's right to use our common carriers freely and openly. President Barack Obama reaffirmed this in 2015 through net neutrality.

President Trump and Trump-appointed FCC chairman Ajit Pai, last year undid 83 years of progress, taking us back to the Dark Ages of intellectual thought, so that a few corporations can control what we read, what we say, what we think. We are here because of this: **Keep the Internet free.**

FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel tried to sound the alarm. The Trump administration's elimination of net neutrality – ignoring millions of outraged public comments submitted by you and me – “hands broadband providers power to decide what voices to amplify, which sites we visit, what connections we make, and what communities we create.”

Our country has over 50 million grade school students and over 20 million college students who rely on the Internet to learn. As an educator, I know how important it is for students I taught at Abraham Lincoln High School to have free and open access to real news and ideas. We must fight back.

As a civil rights lawyer, I sued Trump last year on immigration – and won. Then I sued Trump again to protect access to birth control. Net neutrality made it possible for a Libyan international student and a school teacher to take on the President – and win. We can't afford to have a President who routinely violates the Constitution control the tools of our freedom.

Join over 30 other legislatures and 20 state attorney generals defending net neutrality. Our democracy depends on it. **Keep the Internet free.**