

One year ago, President Trump [designated](#) Ajit Pai as chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Today we review Pai's first year as chair, which was marked by a radical agenda that rolled back consumer protections and rubber-stamped corporate wish lists.

## 1. REPEALED NET NEUTRALITY

- Repealed the 2015 Open Internet Order, dismantling rules that had protected consumers from harmful practices by their internet service providers. The repeal gave big broadband companies such as Comcast, Verizon, and AT&T the power to charge new fees and pick winners and losers in the online marketplace.
- Ignored widespread complaints of identity fraud and alleged DDoS attacks that prevented Americans from submitting comments about net neutrality.
- Stonewalled numerous requests to publicly disclose documents related to net neutrality.
- Exempted most broadband providers from the 2015 Open Internet Order's transparency rule, leaving millions of customers in the dark about their providers' policies.
- Pulled the plug on the FCC's investigation of "[zero-rating](#)" plans, leaving no cop on the beat to monitor whether broadband companies are using zero rating to violate net neutrality.

## 2. ABANDONED CONSUMER PRIVACY

- Supported a Congressional Review Act resolution to [repeal](#) the FCC's broadband privacy rules. Congress repealed the rules in March despite widespread public outcry.
- Blocked a data security rule that would have required broadband providers like AT&T and Comcast to take "reasonable measures" to secure their customers' data.

## 3. PUT INDUSTRY AHEAD OF CONSUMERS

- Killed a proceeding to reform the badly broken [set-top box market](#), ensuring that consumers will continue to be forced to pay exorbitant fees for inefficient cable equipment.
- Abandoned his predecessor's pledge to address mandatory arbitration clauses, which are rampant in telecom contracts and extremely anti-consumer.
- Spearheaded an order to eliminate price caps in much of the business data services (BDS) market, thereby allowing broadband providers to price-gouge hospitals, schools, libraries, police departments, and other BDS customers.
- Directed FCC lawyers not to defend a 2015 order capping the intrastate rates of prison calling services. A court later overturned the order, allowing monopolist phone providers to price-gouge inmates and their families with charges of up to \$14 per minute.
- Stacked the FCC's Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee with telecom industry officials, resulting in a report that heavily favored corporate monopolies over local interests.

## **4. EXACERBATED THE DIGITAL DIVIDE**

- Launched a proceeding to drastically alter Lifeline, a 32-year-old program that helps provide affordable phone and internet service to low-income Americans. The changes would all but destroy the program, destabilize the market for low-income services, and abandon many Americans who are on the wrong side of the digital divide.
- Blocked 9 broadband providers from offering Lifeline subsidies to low-income Americans.
- Delayed [administrative approvals](#) for the Lifeline Modernization Order, which undercut efforts to combat fraudulent and wasteful spending like the National Eligibility Verifier.
- Refused to defend the FCC's Lifeline Modernization Order in court.
- Refused to commit to maintaining E-Rate's funding level despite the program's well-documented success in connecting K-12 schools and libraries to the internet.
- Quashed an FCC staff report showing the E-Rate program has driven down the cost of broadband service for schools and libraries and more than doubled the number of school districts with robust connectivity.

## **5. STOKED MERGERS & STIFLED COMPETITION**

- Helped Sinclair Broadcasting strengthen its grip on American local news by reviving the outdated and obsolete "UHF discount," a radical move that facilitates Sinclair's takeover of Tribune Media. The merged broadcasting company would reach 72 percent of U.S. households—nearly double the 39 percent national ownership cap.
- Repealed media ownership rules that encouraged localism and diversity in journalism.
- Eliminated the "main studio rule" that required local broadcast stations to maintain a physical presence within their communities. Without the rule, all "local" news can be created by non-local reporters at national corporate headquarters, far from the community.
- Repealed a 2016 order that required Charter to expand service to 1 million households already being served by another provider, which would have given consumers more broadband choices and increased competition.
- Allowed AT&T to use a procedural gimmick to avoid FCC review of the company's proposed acquisition of Time Warner—a deal so anti-consumer the Trump DOJ has sued to block it.
- Approved a report that underplayed the consolidation of the wireless market, which could facilitate government approval of future mergers in the wireless industry.

## **6. KEPT THE PUBLIC IN THE DARK**

- Held secret meetings with Congressional Republicans, despite telling reporters he hadn't talked to Congress. The meetings became public when his calendar was leaked to Politico.
- Briefed Republicans on his plans to repeal net neutrality but rejected Democratic requests for a briefing until weeks later after negative press coverage.
- Held secret meetings about net neutrality with Silicon Valley executives, raising concerns about compliance with the FCC's disclosure rules for meetings on active proceedings.
- Failed to meaningfully consult and notify Tribal nations about his plans to abruptly damage the Lifeline program, which provides critical subsidies to Indian Country.