

**Reuters**  
**White House**  
**says net**  
**neutrality**  
**legislation**  
**not needed**

**Washington**  
**Times**  
**Is the FCC**  
**unlawful?**

**Forbes**  
**FCC**  
**Chairman**  
**Wheeler's**  
**Latest Net**  
**Neutrality**  
**Flip Flop**

**USA Today**  
**Dish and Fox**  
**agree on a**  
**new carriage**  
**contract**

**New York**  
**Post**  
**With no deal**  
**in place,**  
**Discovery**  
**pulling shows**  
**off Netflix**

**MediaPost**  
**NBCUniversal**  
**Unveils**  
**Audience**  
**Targeting**  
**Platform For**  
**TV**

**Bloomberg**  
**YouTube Will**  
**Produce Its**  
**Own Super**  
**Bowl Halftime**  
**Show**

**Los Angeles**  
**Times**  
**Getting**  
**Dodgers'**  
**SportsNet LA**  
**to new**  
**viewers**  
**affected by**

Missouri has become the latest state to jump on the anti-municipal broadband bandwagon with the introduction of a new bill that would create barriers for local towns and cities that want to build their own broadband networks.

Led by Missouri Republican state Rep. Rocky Miller, House Bill 437 bars communities from offering their own services even if the local cable or telco incumbent provides inferior services. Although the bill does not specifically focus on broadband, it looks like it does target Internet services. Miller's bill includes a provision that would require a town or city to make a majority vote to offer a "competitive service." If residents voted to build a community network, the municipality would not be able to use the revenue from other services like water and sewer to pay for the buildout of the network and services, which would create a challenge in being able to pay for the initial construction costs to extend services to homes and businesses.

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laws in place restricting the buildout of municipal broadband networks. There are currently about 19 states that have anti-municipal broadband laws on the books. The emergence of the Missouri bill comes as President Barack Obama yesterday visited

However, the bill does allow local municipalities to offer broadband without having to vote on it if no other traditional service providers are preset or if the service has a financial impact of less than \$100,000. The bill also excludes cities and towns that currently offer broadband services. "This bill is about fairness," Miller said, according to a report in *Ars Technica*. "This bill is meant to even the playing field and eliminate socialized/non-commercial services provided by municipalities. I simply want to vote to allow for my city to provide a service if that service is already being provided by another company. Also this bill eliminates subsidizing city provided services and does not allow unfair competition. However, at the end of the day, municipalities can provide these services as long as their constituents want them to."

Missouri is just one of several states that have either proposed laws or have

media  
mergers

Cedar Falls, Iowa, a town that has been delivering 1 Gbps data services over its own fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) network. Obama delivered a speech protesting anti-municipal broadband laws. Like FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler, Obama is also keen on finding ways to overturn the existing laws prohibiting municipally owned broadband networks.

At the same time, the White House issued a [report](#) outlining community-based broadband solutions and how consumers can benefit from local competition. – *Fierce Cable*

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Republicans in Congress are doing a 180 on net neutrality as the Federal Communications Commission prepares to issue new rules within weeks. For years, GOP lawmakers have adamantly opposed any rules requiring Internet service providers to treat all Web traffic equally, calling them unnecessary and an example of Washington overreach.

But now that the FCC is moving toward issuing a tough net neutrality order that would subject broadband to utility-style regulation — an approach endorsed by President Barack Obama — top Republicans in both chambers are making plans to legislate their own rules to ensure the agency doesn't go too far. "Times have changed," Rep. Greg Walden (R-Ore.), the chairman of the House telecom subcommittee, said when asked about the evolving GOP position on net neutrality. "The administration has latched onto this [utility-style regulation], and the FCC's independence is nominal at best."

According to Walden, the Republican bill — which "is ready" and will be released in the coming days — "gives the protections that the president and FCC say they want, and does it in a legally sustainable way." Walden and Senate Commerce Committee Chairman John Thune (R-S.D.) announced late Wednesday that they plan to hold double-header hearings on net neutrality next week, and Thune laid out set of principles that will guide them as they craft the legislation.

The language Republicans are using to talk about their proposed bill illustrates just how far the GOP has come on the issue. The principles embrace and even bolster ideas that were once controversial in Republican circles, like banning "paid prioritization," the practice of charging content companies for an online fast lane.

Thune's principles also include bans on blocking or throttling Web traffic and extending net neutrality protections to wireless networks, an idea put forward by Obama and congressional Democrats. At the same time, the GOP measure would tie the FCC's hands, prohibiting it from reclassifying broadband as a utility under Title II of the Communications Act, or using other sections of the law to create new rules. Still, the fact that Republicans are even talking about legislating net neutrality marks a stark departure from their past position.

When a federal appeals court last year threw out the FCC's previous attempt at net neutrality rules, Walden and House Energy and Commerce Chairman Fred Upton (R-Mich.) called the court decision "a victory for jobs and innovation ... by keeping the government's hands off the Internet" and preventing the government "from playing the role of traffic cop." Even those furthest to the right on net neutrality appear to be open to working on legislation. In an interview last week, Thune said all his committee members are ready to work on a measure. "Obviously, not everybody is in lock step, and we haven't shown a bill yet, but in terms of general principles, I think everybody is pretty much in the same place," he said.

Thune's committee includes Sen. Ted Cruz, who in November called net neutrality "Obamacare for the Internet." Now, Cruz "looks forward to having a vigorous discussion on how we can best ensure the Internet remains a forum for freedom and innovation" as the FCC eyes stricter regulations, according to a Cruz spokesman.

Clearly, a lot has changed in the Internet policy debate in the past year, shifting the political calculus. For months, the FCC was inundated with millions of comments asking

for stronger net neutrality rules, and Obama electrified the debate in November, calling on the agency to reclassify broadband as a utility — the strongest regulatory approach. While Hill Republicans now have the votes in both chambers to pass a resolution of disapproval or a bill to strip the FCC's power, an anti-net neutrality measure would almost certainly face a veto threat from the president.

Public interest groups say Republicans are responding to the building pressure. "Millions of people and businesses have stood up and once again made clear that they want to keep the same rights they've always had," said Matt Wood, policy director of Free Press. "Self-identified conservatives, just like everyone else, overwhelmingly support keeping the rules that have kept the Internet open." Still, it's unclear whether the lawmakers are putting forward "a legitimate effort to at long last listen to their constituents, or just a cynical cable-backed ploy to stall the FCC," Wood said.

But Walden insists the two parties aren't that far apart. "The whole world is being turned on its head right now, and yet we all share what appear to be common principles and goals," Walden said, adding that net neutrality needn't be a partisan issue. "I'm not looking at this as whether Republicans win or Democrats lose. It's what's best for [broadband] investment." — *Politico*

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State Sen. Mike Stack III, who will be sworn in as lieutenant governor Tuesday, is pushing longtime friend and political ally John Del Ricci as the Democratic candidate for a March 24 special election to fill the vacant 170th state House seat in Northeast Philly. That seat is vacant because Brendan Boyle moved to the U.S. House this month.

Boyle and his brother, state Rep. Kevin Boyle, want Seth Kaplan for the 170th seat. Stack is in the driver's seat here. The district covers the 58th, 66A and 66B wards in the city's most northeastern reaches. Stack, leader of the 58th Ward, has the most divisions in the 170th District so he has a majority vote over the other two ward leaders, one of whom works for him. Del Ricci works for the state Turnpike Commission during the day and for Councilman Jim Kenney part time at night. Kaplan, who works for Kevin Boyle, said he is seriously considering an independent bid for the seat if Stack picks Del Ricci.

The numbers are interesting. The Republicans have picked Martina White, a financial adviser, for the special election. While Democrats have a 7-1 voter-registration advantage on Republicans citywide, that drops to 2-1 in the 170th District, a place where voters are known to cross partisan lines at the ballot box.

So a special election, usually a slam-dunk for Democrats, could be a jump ball in a three-way race. State House Speaker Mike Turzai, an Allegheny County Republican, must like his chances. Why else would he call a special election 56 days before the May 19 primary election? The state, which picks up the tab, reimbursed the city \$168,558 to hold a similar special election in 2011 for a House seat. — *Philadelphia Daily News*

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Fans of former Pa. Sen. Rick Santorum will be happy to know that the Republican conservative who finished second in the 2012 GOP primary race is ready to formally reunite with a major donor of his last campaign. *The Washington Post* reports Santorum heads to Arizona this weekend for a private meeting with biz execs hosted by Foster Stephen Friess, a 74-year old multimillionaire whose money kept Santorum running last time around. Friess, a self-identified born-again evangelical Christian, made his money in investments. He has long supported conservative Republicans. He tells *The Post* he was invited this year to the inaugurations of 20 GOP governors, including one or two who could run for president, but that, "I am clearly in the Santorum camp."

***The Post* says** this weekend's meeting is to allow Santorum to lay out his strategy for 2016 and, I imagine, secure financial commitments to back it. This comes as other candidates appealing to the tea-party wing of the GOP are lining up for potential runs, including Mike

Huckabee, Ted Cruz, Ben Carson and Rand Paul. So it could get crowded over there on the right to far-right.

Santorum, 56, was ousted from the Senate, where he held a leadership post, in 2006 when he was crushed by Democrat Bob Casey despite outspending Casey by \$8 million. Casey won by 18 points. Since 2012, Santorum has been involved in his conservative group, Patriot Voices, making films with Christian themes and writing a book, "Blue Collar Conservatives." So as Jeb Bush and maybe (yet again) Mitt Romney seek to circle a broad coalition of GOP support, it looks like the party is (yet again) getting ready for a rumble on the right. – *philly.com*



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