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[Bloomberg Almost No Cubans Have Broadband. Why Does Netflix Want to Stream There?](#)

[USA Today FCC chief delivers details on his net neutrality strategy](#)

[Hollywood Reporter Will Spying TVs Be the Next Frontier in a War Between Good and Evil Hackers?](#)

USA Today may call this an "opposing view," but I agree that we can and should enact strong new net neutrality rules to keep the Internet open and free. So does the entire broadband industry. The only area of difference is in *how* we enact those rules.

The Title II public utility approach, which President Obama recommended and the Federal Communications Commission is considering, is the worst possible way to do so. It would shackle the Internet in an outdated legal regime from the Ma Bell era that has nothing to do with net neutrality at all — opening the door to price regulation, new tax and fee increases, and a costly slowdown in investment and innovation.

We've seen where this approach leads in Europe, where under Title II-style rules broadband investment per household is half that of the U.S., and Internet speeds there, on average, are considerably slower. Even worse, by going down the legally risky road of Title II reclassification, we won't end the debate. We'll simply kick the problem to the courts (again), creating new uncertainties and leaving everyone who wants enforceable Internet rules in limbo. It also means that the decade-long debate about enacting net neutrality protections is likely to extend past the current administration and will be laid at the feet of the next FCC.

There is a better way. Congress has power to pass the strong, consensus net neutrality rules that would avoid protracted court battles and genuinely put this issue to rest. Free from the jurisdictional limits that have driven the FCC into the Title II morass, Congress can enact stable, simple rules that protect the open Internet and ban paid prioritization without any unintended consequences or the economic damage that would be wrought by public utility regulation.

America's Internet is thriving with lightning fast speeds, among the most affordable basic service in the world, and a seemingly unending stream of incredible new uses, applications and opportunities. The last thing we should do is put this at risk with a totally unnecessary and dangerous switch to the archaic Title II regime. — **USA Today** op-ed by former FCC chairman Michael Powell, now President & CEO of NCTA

Two congressional committees have launched investigations into whether the White House improperly influenced the net-neutrality proposal released last week by the head of the Federal Communications Commission.

On Monday, Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) asked FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler in a letter to explain his decision and produce documents related to communications and meetings involving the White House and agency officials concerning the issue. Johnson, chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, told Wheeler he was concerned that there was "apparent pressure exerted

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on you and your agency by the White House.”

Last week, Wheeler proposed strict new federal oversight of online traffic to ensure Internet providers don't give preference to video and other content from some websites over others. Wheeler's plan, circulated to his fellow commissioners ahead of a Feb. 26 vote, is much tougher than what he initially outlined early last year and closely follows the approach President Obama publicly called for in November. “The FCC’s new position on net neutrality is not only a monumental shift from Chairman Wheeler’s original net-neutrality proposal but also a large deviation from the light regulatory touch applied to broadband services since the Clinton administration,” Johnson said in releasing the letter. “The decision is wrong, and the process raises serious questions about the president’s inappropriate influence over what is supposed to be an independent agency that derives its authority from Congress and not the White House,” Johnson said.

His letter follows a similar one sent to Wheeler on Friday by Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah), chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. Most Republicans strongly oppose the FCC's approach, which would put Internet service providers in the same classification as highly regulated telephone companies. Although the president nominates the chairman and other FCC commissioners, the agency is independent and not supposed to be subject to White House control. Wheeler is a former lobbyist for the cable-TV and wireless industries and was a major fundraiser for Obama, who nominated him to head the FCC in 2013.

Republicans have charged that Obama unduly influenced Wheeler's proposal. Senate Commerce Committee Chairman John Thune (R-S.D.) said Wheeler “succumbed to the bully tactics of political activists and the president himself.” Rep. Fred Upton (R-Mich.), chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, said “the White House needs to get its hands off the FCC.” And Ajit Pai, one of two Republicans on the FCC, has called Wheeler's proposal, “President Obama's plan to regulate the Internet.”

Chaffetz said in a letter dated Friday that he was investigating reports indicating “views expressed by the White House potentially had an improper influence” on development of Wheeler's proposal. He and Johnson cited a Wall Street Journal article last week that reported that two White House aides led a “secretive effort” to build support from outside groups for tough net-neutrality regulations.

The article did not indicate that the aides, Obama or other White House officials directly pressured Wheeler to take the more aggressive approach. FCC spokeswoman Kim Hart said the agency had received the letters and was reviewing them. The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment Monday. Gigi Sohn, the FCC's special counsel for external affairs, said Friday that Wheeler's position on net-neutrality rules had been evolving before Obama made his public comments. “I think what the president’s statement did was, rather than force the chairman’s hand, was give him cover to do something he already was thinking about doing,” Sohn said in an appearance on C-Span's “The Communicators” series.

Last week, in discussing the new proposal, senior FCC officials said Wheeler had decided last summer that his original approach wouldn't work and that it was possible to classify Internet service as a public utility yet exempt companies from most utility-related rules, much as the agency has done with wireless service. Johnson asked Wheeler if the FCC was “aware of the 'unusual, secretive effort inside the White House' relating to net neutrality.” He and Chaffetz asked for “all documents and communications” between the FCC and the White House regarding the net-neutrality rules. Both chairmen want the documents before the Feb. 26 vote. – **Los Angeles Times**



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