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Comcast managed to grab the biggest share of the U.S. national advertising market during the first half of 2018, according to Standard Media Index. The firm said that Comcast generated 12% of all advertising revenue from national marketers. That figure was good enough to beat out digital giant Google, which claimed 10% of all national advertising revenue.

Comcast's NBCUniversal has already played host to two of the biggest TV advertising programs of the year. The network aired the 2018 Winter Olympics and Super Bowl LII. Comcast/NBCUniversal's second-quarter results for its cable networks, content licensing and broadcast television divisions all saw revenue increases due in part to strong advertising performance.

Overall, Standard Media Index said that 63% of advertising revenue from national marketers went to traditional media while 37% went to digital. Of the advertising revenue earned by video publishers, 89% was for linear video and 11% was for digital video. During the second quarter, SMI said that Comcast was the largest TV network group by entertainment programming advertising revenue, grabbing a 19% share.

Comcast also got an advertising boost from Telemundo's airing of the 2018 World Cup. But SMI said that, after factoring out the World Cup effect, national television advertising revenues fell 1% during the second quarter. "As upfront season comes to a close, the industry now needs to quickly move its attention to the scatter market," said James Fennessy, CEO of Standard Media Index, in a statement. "In Q2, revenue from the scatter market grew by 11% YoY while revenue from upfronts fell -4% and direct response advertising remained flat." – [Fierce Video](#)

A group of 22 state attorneys general and the District of Columbia late Monday asked a U.S. appeals court to reinstate the Obama administration's 2015 landmark net neutrality rules and reject the Trump administration's efforts to preempt states from imposing their own rules guaranteeing an open internet.

The states, led by New York Attorney General Barbara Underwood, filed a lawsuit in January after the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted in December along party lines to reverse

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Washington Times
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rules that barred internet service providers from blocking or throttling traffic or offering paid fast lanes, also known as paid prioritization.

Several internet companies filed a separate legal challenge on Monday to overturn the FCC ruling, including Mozilla Corp, Vimeo Inc, Etsy Inc, and numerous media and technology advocacy groups. The FCC handed sweeping new powers to internet providers to recast how Americans use the internet -- as long as they disclose any changes. The new rules took effect in early June but major providers have made no changes in internet access.

The states argue the FCC reversal will harm consumers. The states also suggested the FCC failed to identify any "valid authority" for preempting state and local laws that would protect net neutrality. Governors in six states have signed executive orders on net neutrality, while three states have enacted net neutrality legislation.

FCC Chairman Ajit Pai has repeatedly said he believes the rules will be upheld and will encourage additional investment by providers. A spokesman for Pai did not immediately comment late Monday. The revised rules were a win for internet service providers, like Comcast Corp, AT&T Inc and Verizon Communications Inc, whose practices faced significant government oversight and FCC investigations under the 2015 order, but the rules were opposed by internet firms like Facebook Inc, Amazon.com Inc and Alphabet Inc.

The FCC failed to offer a "meaningful defense of its decision to uncritically accept industry promises that are untethered to any enforcement mechanism," the states said. The U.S. Senate voted in May to keep the Obama-era internet rules, but the measure is unlikely to be approved by the House of Representatives or the White House.

The state attorney generals suing represent states with 165 million people -- more than half the United States population -- and include California, Illinois, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Virginia. The states argue the FCC action could harm public safety, citing electrical grids as an example. They argue "the absence of open internet rules jeopardizes the ability to reduce load in times of extreme energy grid stress. Consequently, the order threatens the reliability of the electric grid." – **Reuters**

Political divisions may be fierce, but there is at least one issue that most Americans agree on: net neutrality. That's the simple idea that internet service providers should not control or influence what we do online. Net neutrality rules ensure an equal playing field on the web for everyone, from the start-up to the tech giant.

According to a 2017 poll conducted by the University of Maryland, 83 percent of Americans opposed the dismantling of these rules by the Federal Communications Commission. Nevertheless, the FCC repealed the regulations in December. The changes took effect in June. Following the rollback, the California Legislature stepped in to reestablish net neutrality in our state. State Senate Bill 822 would restore all the core protections. It's up for a vote in the state Assembly later this month.

Not surprisingly, big telecom companies are fighting hard against SB 822. They've enlisted an army of lobbyists and special-interest groups

to spread misinformation about the bill. For instance, the companies are telling lawmakers that they won't have the incentive or money to build out networks if they can't prioritize internet traffic for businesses and consumers who pay extra fees.

That's simply not true. Under the previous net neutrality rules, which banned such fees, telecom companies did better than fine. AT&T Mobile's profit margin was nearly 50 percent. And Comcast was able to buy back more than \$15 billion of its own stock over the last three years. Telecom companies also are making dubious claims to defend certain strategies for favoring their own services and content over that of their competitors. It's often done through a practice known as zero-rating, in which companies do not count the use of certain apps and content against a customer's monthly data cap.

Although zero-rating is not always harmful, it can be in certain circumstances because it gives the companies control over which services users can afford to access. The practice is becoming increasingly problematic as telecom companies continue to blur the lines between service provider and content provider.

SB 822 would prohibit anti-competitive forms of zero-rating. The telecom companies do not like this, so they are claiming that zero-rating plans benefit low-income communities. They say the selective free data, paid for by sponsorships, is a consumer perk. This is not true. People with low incomes are disproportionately dependent on smartphones for internet access, according to the Pew Research Center.

As has been observed in other countries, when zero-rating schemes are banned, ISPs raise caps and lower the price of data for everyone. For many families, higher data caps make the difference between children being able to do their school homework or not. The telecom companies also are trying to claim that SB 822's prohibition on certain kinds of zero-rating goes further than our previous net neutrality rules did. But the FCC itself reported in 2017 that these plans violated net neutrality.

Big ISPs appear to believe they can use money, muscle and misinformation to kill SB 822, just as they were able to repeal net neutrality protections. That's not going to work. The U.S. Senate already has passed a bipartisan measure to undo the FCC's repeal. The fight is now in the House, where there is a bipartisan effort to force a vote on a companion to the Senate's measure.

On so many issues, California leads the country. We can lead on net neutrality too by passing SB 822 without loopholes or amendments that weaken the bill. Californians should contact their state legislators. The internet belongs to all of us, not big telecom. Now more than ever, we need open and equal access to the most democratic communications system ever invented. – **Op-ed by Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA) in *Los Angeles Times***



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