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January 24, 2011

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell:

I write to express the strong support of Free Press for your introduction of the *Internet Freedom, Broadband Promotion, and Consumer Protection Act of 2011*.

Since its inception, the Internet has been defined by principles of openness, choice and freedom to innovate. Unfortunately, these principles are currently under assault by Internet service providers that are working to thwart competition online and restrict consumer choice.

In an effort to monetize and control the explosion of innovation and competition that the Internet has created, Internet service providers have introduced schemes that would limit how, when and even if consumers have access to the content of their choice online. Providers like Comcast and AT&T have prevented consumers from downloading lawful files, from making online phone calls through competing firms, and from attaching non-harmful devices to the Internet.

The Federal Communications Commission attempted to address these threats by adopting new "Open Internet Rules" in December, 2010. Unfortunately these new rules are riddled with loopholes ripe for exploitation by monied special interests and their well-funded lobbyists, and therefore cannot provide consumers and entrepreneurs with the long-term protections and certainty they deserve. This could undermine the social and economic value this country has come to expect from an open Internet.

Furthermore, the Internet service provider industry has made clear its intent to overturn even the weak rules recently adopted. In the recently filed lawsuit in opposition to the FCC's rules, Verizon has expressed its position that the Commission can not protect Internet users against even the most blatant harms. Other companies have also demonstrated their support for anti-consumer, anti-oversight legislation designed to overturn the FCC's rules and bar the Commission from monitoring this important marketplace at all.

Strong industry-wide protections are needed to prevent the interests of a few large companies from corroding the value the Internet holds for all of us. Your legislation provides a responsible long-term solution to the shortcomings of the Commission's rules and is necessary to protect the Internet against the threats it faces.

The Internet Freedom, Broadband Promotion, and Consumer Protection Act of 2011 would prohibit anti-consumer practices online and protect the level playing field that has allowed competition between businesses large and small to flourish.

We look forward to working with you and your staff in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joel Kelsey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent loop at the end of the name.

Joel Kelsey