

January 25, 2011

Senator Maria Cantwell
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell:

Public Knowledge is pleased to endorse the Internet Freedom, Broadband Promotion, and Consumer Protection Act of 2011. Your legislation would firmly cement the democratic principles affirmed by an open Internet and ensure that the Internet remains the marketplace of ideas where no central authority, public or private, has the power to pick winners and losers.

As additional vital services migrate to the broadband market, broadband access providers have more incentive to interfere with the Internet's history of openness for profit. Such anti-competitive behavior is not rooted solely in speculation, but rather is established fact supported by an extensive public record that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) created after soliciting public comments for over a year. As the FCC noted, broadband providers have been found to outright block or create barriers to competitive Voice over Internet Protocol services, lawful peer-to-peer file sharing, non-harmful third-party devices, and lawful applications over wireless networks.

While the FCC agreed to some basic protections for preserving an open Internet last year, the rules fell short on certain aspects of broadband access that your legislation seeks to resolve. Specifically, your legislation would rectify the bifurcation of the broadband access market the current FCC rules created between wireless and wire broadband access. This separation of consumer protections for broadband access services will disadvantage communities of color and the poor, who disproportionately depend on wireless broadband access providers as their sole source connection to the Internet. Enacting your legislation into law or updating the FCC rules will ensure equal protection for all broadband consumers and would guarantee to all Americans that the Internet will remain open to competition, free speech, and innovation.

We applaud your leadership on this issue and look forward to working with you in the future to protect and preserve an open Internet.

Sincerely,



Gigi B. Sohn
President