

Conservatives, Main Street Businesses and Tech Companies form New Alliance to Find Net Neutrality Solution

Group to engage the FCC and Congress in taking a free market approach to an Open Internet

WASHINGTON D.C. – New D.C. based group, the **Internet Freedom Business Alliance** (IFBA) launched today to continue the fight for an open Internet that serves the needs of citizens and small businesses around the country. Founding and steering committee members of IFBA include **COMPTEL** led by former **Republican Congressman Chip Pickering**, **National Association of Realtors® (NAR)**, **Tumblr** and **Etsy**.

The alliance will push for a solution that allows the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to take the most legally sound and simplest path to ensure Internet access to Americans. IFBA will also actively engage and educate members of Congress to underscore how only a free market approach will enable entrepreneurs to continue to thrive and help the U.S. economy grow.

“As the leading association of competitive communications service providers, we know firsthand that solid open Internet protections will promote, not hinder, broadband investment and innovation,” said COMPTEL, CEO Chip Pickering.

“Internet openness enables a self-reinforcing cycle of investment and innovation – and we’re ready to take this message to bipartisan policymakers with our new alliance of conservatives, Main Street, small businesses and technology companies.”

Steve Brown, the President of the NAR, said, “The Internet is central to the home buying process in today’s real estate market with nine out of 10 buyers searching for properties online and most Realtors® using websites to market listings. For all of NAR’s more than one million Realtors®, and especially the hundreds of thousands of independent Realtor®-owned businesses, access to the Internet and the dynamic marketing tools it enables are paramount to success. NAR has called on the FCC to keep the Internet open and will serve on the steering committee of the IFBA to advocate for a smart solution that protects our industry.”

“An open Internet is one where anyone can create something online that did not exist before. Tumblr, for example, was able to quickly scale its platform and become the company it is today because we could host and deliver content across a worldwide network and grow our audience organically,” said Tumblr General Counsel, Ari Shahdadi. “We have over 200 million Tumblr blogs on our network, many of which represent the world’s most innovative online creators and curators. Only bright-line rules that can prevent fast lanes and traffic discrimination will continue to foster free expression and ensure that aspiring entrepreneurs can innovate simply with great ideas and the ability to execute against them.”

“Last year alone, Etsy sellers had more than \$1.35 billion in sales. We understand how valuable an open Internet is to innovation, and a free market with no fast or slow lanes is what allows Etsy sellers to compete with much bigger, more established brands,” said Etsy Director of Public Policy Althea Erickson. “In September, we called on the business community to stand up to protect an open Internet. Forming this alliance is one more action we’re taking to make sure the voices of our one

million micro-businesses, that touch nearly every Congressional district, are heard.”

IFBA Executive Director Andrew Shore said “This new alliance gives one voice to a free market driven coalition, and the citizens and businesses it represents, on Capitol Hill fighting to keep the Internet open for business and the future of the American economy.”

Marvin Ammori, counsel to the IFBA said, “Almost every business and industry today relies on the Internet—from payments giants to educational institutions to craftsmen. The greater business community opposes the giant cable and phones companies’ plans to put some businesses in Internet slow lanes, making it harder for people to start and grow businesses and create more jobs. We support a strong open Internet policy that will provide the necessary protections for a growing and thriving Internet economy.”

Steering Committee (in alphabetical order)

- CCIA (computer and communications association for open networks)
- COMPTEL (competitive communications providers)
- Engine (advocates for startups, 600 members)
- National Association of Realtors (1 million members, mainly small businesses)

Founding Members (in alphabetical order)

- Automattic/WordPress.com
- Codecademy
- CodeCombat
- Cogent
- Contextly
- Distinc.tt
- Dwolla
- Etsy
- Fandor
- General Assembly
- Imgur
- Kickstarter
- Lyft
- Meetup
- OpenCurriculum
- Opera Software
- reddit
- Tumblr
- Twillio
- Vimeo