

MCLU Applauds Ground-Breaking Senate Vote on Net Neutrality Maine Poised to Lead the Way on Net Neutrality

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Contact: Shenna Bellows, 776-5404 (cell)

Augusta- Today the Maine State Senate took a stand for net neutrality when it approved a resolution stating the importance of internet non-discrimination principles to Mainers and directing the Maine Public Advocate to study what this state can do to protect net neutrality. If passed by the House and enacted by the Senate, this resolution will be the first of its kind in the nation.

“Mainers, not large corporate ISPs, should determine what websites we visit, what services we utilize, and what content we distribute,” said Shenna Bellows, Executive Director of Maine Civil Liberties Union. “The Maine legislature took an important first step today in protecting the First Amendment of the Internet.”

As a result of a 2005 decision by the Federal Communications Commission net neutrality principles, which had been in place since the inception of the internet, were put in jeopardy. Since then, Maine Senator Olympia Snowe proposed legislation to reinstate net neutrality at the federal level. Maine’s resolution emphasizes the importance of net neutrality to Snowe’s home state and could provide the impetus for her to reassert leadership on the issue.

Net neutrality is good for local business because it allows small companies to compete online with large corporations that can afford to pay high premiums to have their content load properly.

“The development and continued enhancement of the Internet is vital to economic development in this state,” said Fletcher Kittredge, Founder and CEO of GWI. “This resolution helps ensure that investing in an expanding infrastructure will benefit everyone in Maine, not just the big telecommunications companies.”

Stating that “full, fair, nondiscriminatory, and unfettered access to the Internet is critical to the ability of Maine consumers to participate in the information economy” and that “the interests of the State of Maine and its citizens must be vigorously protected,” the committee approved an amended version of LD 1675, which was sponsored by Senator Ethan Strimling and originally titled “An Act to Protect Network Neutrality.” The resolution will now go on to additional votes in the House and Senate.

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Shenna Bellows
Executive Director
Maine Civil Liberties Union
401 Cumberland Ave., Suite 105
Portland, ME 04101
(207) 774-5444

www.mclu.org