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Letters to the Editor

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New net neutrality rules should be specific and necessary

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The Oct. 29 editorial, "Finally, some rules for the internet," correctly noted that the internet has not broken in the absence of Federal Communications Commission "net neutrality" regulations. U.S. broadband providers have invested nearly half a trillion dollars in U.S. networks since the FCC repealed these rules in 2017. As a result, the core arguments for "net neutrality," which were always questionable, have all but disappeared.

The FCC acknowledged this in its recent proposed rulemaking by piling on a kitchen sink of specious new justifications, including national security, for granting itself sweeping new authorities to manage how the internet operates. Broadband providers are in the business of connecting our communities. We agree that the internet should remain open. We also agree that the Telecommunications Act's archaic classifications are not "well-suited to the modern internet."

The FCC's proposal is nothing more than a regulatory land grab. This is an issue for Congress to resolve once and for all. Settling for imposing outdated rules that are "better than nothing" is not the right answer.

Jonathan Spalter, *Washington*

The writer is president and chief executive of USTelecom.

I was dismayed to read in the Oct. 29 editorial the statement, "What, exactly, net neutrality rules look like matters less than that there are meaningful rules for broadband more generally."

Contrary to this perspective, lawsuits against Meta from 41 states show that regulatory specifics matter. The internet has become an essential utility, like water or highways. The specific details of proposed net neutrality regulations will define how successfully and to what extent there is accountability for the public interest. The public interest is harmed by unequal tiers of internet services, with high bandwidth for some and lower bandwidth for others.

Internet regulation needs a detailed, probity-based approach to identify adverse business behaviors. A Facebook whistleblower's 2021 congressional testimony revealed the dangers of the absence of such probity about social media. This culminated in lawsuits being filed against Meta for allegedly harming minors. The testimony alleged that Meta put profits above the safety, mental health and well-being of its young users and our society. History demonstrates that absent detailed regulatory governance, corporate actors take profits at the expense of corporate responsibility.

Details are needed about exactly what aspects of net neutrality will require regulation. Can cable companies offer higher broadband upload and download speeds for customers who pay more? For net neutrality, "meaningful rules" means providing details about every specific policy scenario that can potentially protect the public interest.

Misha Speede, *Alexandria*

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