
The Fight to Protect Internet Freedom: What Congress is Saying

- *"Charging ahead with the transition now could undermine Internet freedom."*
-Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah)

- *"The Internet is a powerful tool for communication and commerce that allows for greater innovation and connectivity. The oversight and stewardship of the Internet is too important to hand over to entities that may not value freedom and transparency like America. I will continue to try to stop this Internet giveaway because there is too much at stake."*
-Senator James Lankford (R-Oklahoma)

- *"We are all at risk of losing freedom of expression on the Internet if Internet governance is transitioned to a model that might permit authoritarian governments to censor or hijack the Internet. This is simply unacceptable. That is why I am asking the Department of Commerce to follow current law and renew the Internet governance contract, while Congress ensures that the Internet continues to act as an open forum of ideas, speech, and commerce."*
-Senator Mike Lee (R-Utah)

- *"The administration's deadline is 'arbitrary.' The transition should not move forward until our many concerns have been addressed. There won't be a second chance to get this right."*
-Senator Jerry Moran (R-Kansas)

- *"The transition should be delayed until the proposed changes can be properly tested and we know there will be real accountability. It would be a mistake to end U.S. oversight of the internet prematurely and transfer key controls over to countries who may not be as committed to keeping the internet free and open for all."*
-Senator Marco Rubio (R-Florida)

- *"I don't think the foundation has been appropriately laid for this. Some members are adamantly opposed to transition, period, and a lot of them just think now is not the time, and it really just hasn't been vetted, and it's not ready yet."*
- Senator John Thune (R-South Dakota)

- *"As Americans, we value our Constitutional right of freedom of speech and have promoted this value throughout the world. We should not give up our stewardship of the Internet so that the United Nations or countries like China or Russia, that do not hold free speech in the same regard, can have the opportunity to take control."*
- Representative Sean Duffy (R-Wisconsin)

- *"While I can understand that the U.S. Government envisioned having a temporary role in the IANA functions, I am not certain that now is the time for this type of transition. I am not convinced that ICANN is yet ready to develop a credible plan, and I believe that Congressional oversight is needed. I would rather have a better understanding of the realities of the multi-stakeholder model before taking the risky move of simply allowing it to move forward."*
- Representative Joe Barton (R-Texas)

- *"We cannot allow control for Russia or China over U.S. free speech."*
-Representative Marsha Blackburn (R-Tennessee)

- *“The Obama Administration is acting recklessly in its blatant ignorance for the serious consequences of an Internet giveaway. A contract lapse with ICANN would place the United States’ sovereignty and security at great risk. Handing over U.S. oversight of the IANA functions to foreign stakeholders, that could include foreign governments, is absolutely unacceptable. The fundamental ideals of freedom of expression and association, which made the Internet what it is today, would be threatened by stakeholders who may not share those values. The people, economy, and government of the United States rely on these values to maintain the free flow of goods and ideas.”*

-Representative Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

- *“I intend to enforce the prohibition in my bill by using every legislative tool available to me, including objecting to Department of Commerce requests to move around money.”*

- Representative John Culberson (R-Texas)

- *“The Internet plays a vital role in driving America's economy, innovation, and jobs. President Obama's plan to relinquish control of the Internet is irresponsible and could have devastating effects on the free speech of hardworking Americans. We should not be surrendering oversight of the Internet to countries like China, Russia and Iran. It is important that the United States continue to protect an open and free Internet.”*

- Representative Bill Flores (R-Texas)

- *“I remain extremely concerned about the Obama Administration’s efforts to relinquish stewardship of key Internet functions in light of unanswered legal, constitutional and human rights questions. The U.S. has served as a critical and responsible backstop against censorship and threats to openness and free speech on the Internet. As a result, the Internet has thrived. We must ensure that these principles remain intact for all Internet users across the globe. The future of the Internet as a medium for free speech, the flow of ideas and global commerce is at stake, and must be protected.”*

- Representative Bob Goodlatte (R-Virginia)

- *“If we want the Internet to remain free, it’s important that the leader of the free world remain in control. Allowing a U.N.-type body to oversee ICANN puts the free speech rights of people around the world at risk. It is American oversight and respect for free speech that helps protect this right online in many countries. If an international body becomes ICANN’s overseer, then it’s only a matter of time before bad actors begin forcing ICANN to limit access to disruptive content in their countries.”*

- Representative Jim Jordan (R-Ohio)

- *“As a nation, we have a duty to preserve Internet freedom for Americans and for the world. As a governing body, we have a duty to uphold our Constitution’s separation of powers and to protect our own ‘power of the purse’ as intended by our founders, as well as our sole power to dispose of federal property... Such a rushed transition puts the Internet at serious risk of falling under the influence of bad actors abroad who despise the free flow of information. The American people’s Congress has prohibited this hasty surrender in law and the administration must follow it.”*

-Representative Mike Kelly (R-Pennsylvania)

- *“The right to free speech is one of our core constitutional values, and the internet is perhaps the purest example of that freedom in the United States. Indeed, it allows Americans to speak their minds. To transfer responsibility here to other countries that censor free speech and punish differing political ideas is, at best, dangerous. At worst, it’s unconstitutional.”*

-Representative Mark Sanford (R-South Carolina)