

White House threatens veto over net neutrality

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US President Barack Obama walks to the Oval Office as he returns to the White House in Washington, DC. The White House warned on Tuesday that Obama would veto a resolution introduced in the Senate that seeks to overturn "net neutrality" rules aimed at ensuring an open Internet.

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The House of Representatives approved a Republican-backed resolution in April that seeks to block the rules approved in December of last year by the [Federal Communications Commission](#) (FCC).

The Senate is considering a similar resolution this week and the White House said Obama would use his veto power if it is passed and reaches

his desk.

"The administration strongly opposes Senate passage of (the resolution), which would undermine a fundamental part of the nation's [Open Internet](#) and innovation strategy," the White House said in a statement.

"The United States leads the world in the development of new Internet-based services and applications," it said.

"An important element of this leadership is that the open Internet enables entrepreneurs to create new services without fear of undue discrimination by network providers," the White House said.

"It would be ill-advised to threaten the very foundations of innovation in the Internet economy and the democratic spirit that has made the Internet a force for [social progress](#) around the world," it added.

The five-member, Democratic-controlled FCC, in a vote split on party lines, agreed to the rules aimed at safeguarding "[network neutrality](#)" -- the principle that lawful Web traffic should be treated equally.

The rules are a balancing act by the FCC between support for consumers and the cable and telephone companies that are the main Internet service providers in the United States.

The rules would prevent fixed broadband providers from blocking lawful content, applications or services or providing their own video content at a faster speed, for example, than that of a rival.

Wireless providers may not block access to lawful websites or applications that compete directly with their own voice or video telephony services but they could potentially block other applications or services.

Fixed broadband providers can also charge consumers according to usage, a metered pricing practice already used by some wireless carriers.

The issue has taken on greater urgency with the emergence of streaming video from companies such as Netflix, which uses large amounts of bandwidth.

Cable and Internet firms could in theory downgrade the quality of those feeds and favor their own content, say backers of [net neutrality](#).

Opponents of the rules have decried them as unnecessary government intervention.

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