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Democrats Call on Attorney General to Challenge FCC Decision to Repeal Obama Era Regulation that Protected Internet Equality

MADISON - State Senator **Dave Hansen** (D-Green Bay) announced that he and 34 Democratic legislators sent a letter today to Attorney General Brad Schimel asking him to join Attorneys General from other states in challenging the FCC's decision to repeal internet equality rules that were put in place under President Obama.



"The internet is as essential to American life as the telephone was in earlier times. People can't do without it. It's needed to apply for jobs, to run small businesses, for kids to do schoolwork and for their parents to communicate with their schools," said Hansen.

"Unfortunately, like the controversial tax bill working through Congress by President Trump and Republicans this decision is nothing more than another attempt to increase profits for corporations at the expense of consumers, small businesses and entrepreneurs."

The FCC's decision to repeal these crucial consumer protections comes amid serious questions as to allegations of fraud with respect to the public comment process. Among those allegations are that thousands of "fake or automated" comments rendered the public comment process and resulting decision process unfair. An investigation by the New York State's Attorney General's

office found hundreds of thousands of submissions may have been made in the names of New York citizens without their permission or who are deceased, a violation of law. Attorneys General from 18 states believe there may be two million or more comments filed using stolen identities.

“The entire process for this decision looks to be rigged in favor of the giant communications companies at the expense of average Americans. If the President and Republicans in Congress are truly interested in draining the swamp they could start with their own FCC.”

Beyond the questions surrounding the public comment process are even graver concerns with the impact the FCC’s decision will have on internet access for consumers, the free exchange of speech and ideas and on those websites with which the government and corporate providers disagree or find to be a competitive threat.

“The FCC’s decision coincides with a pattern that exists within the current administration and Congress that favors corporations and the wealthy at the expense of average Americans.”

As a result of the FCC’s ruling consumers will likely see higher prices and fewer choices, and efforts to extend access to low-income families and residents living in rural areas of our state will be endangered. Additionally, the FCC’s decision could have a harmful effect on small businesses, startups and others who cannot afford to pay Internet Services Providers higher fees for faster internet access that will in turn hurt our economy.

“When people asked for change they didn’t mean at their expense. The FCC’s decision will hurt Wisconsin consumers, families, small businesses, entrepreneurs and our economy. Hopefully, the Attorney General will stand up to the FCC and join in challenging their decision.”