

CDT & OTI urge Congress to reject bill on Internet governance

April 10, 2013

Washington – Today, the Center for Democracy & Technology joins the New America Foundation’s Open Technology Institute in a letter urging Congress to reject the current text of a House bill on Internet governance and rethink their approach to defending the existing model of Internet governance. The House Energy & Commerce Committee Subcommittee on Communications and Technology will consider a bill today on U.S. policy toward Internet governance. The bill would codify language from last year’s H.Con.Res. 127, a unanimous resolution the House passed in anticipation of the International Telecommunication Union’s (ITU) treaty conference, the World Conference on International Telecommunication (WCIT).

The bill’s broad language about a “global Internet free from government control” could inadvertently weaken the existing legal and regulatory framework that protects users’ rights.

“It’s heartening to see Congress’s continued support of a decentralized system of Internet governance that relies on participation from human rights advocates, technical experts, and other non-governmental stakeholders,” said Emma Llansó, Policy Counsel for CDT. “But last year’s resolution was drafted in response to concerns that an international intergovernmental body might try to exert top-down control over global governance and national Internet policy development. When applied broadly, language about an Internet ‘free from government control’ could undermine existing consumer protection laws and net neutrality regulations, and could pose a barrier to achieving comprehensive consumer privacy legislation.”

“The U.S. should absolutely have a policy against ‘government control’ in the form of censorship or surveillance, but it should not foreclose the possibility that targeted, narrowly-defined government action, developed through a democratic process and reviewable by the courts, may have a role in domestic Internet policy,” said Leslie Harris, CDT’s President and CEO.

The joint letter is available [here](#) [1].

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