



American Council on Education
Office of the President

May 19, 2006

Representative Dennis Hastert
Speaker of the House
235 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Nancy Pelosi
House Minority Leader
2371 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Hastert and Minority Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the American Council on Education and the associations listed below, I would like to request that you include a strong and enforceable net neutrality provision in the telecommunications reform legislation currently under consideration. Our colleges and universities helped create the Internet and developed the basic principles that make it such an engine for innovation, productivity, and economic growth. Net neutrality is one of those principles.

In the past few decades the Internet has become central to our mission as educators. We depend on it for teaching, research, and outreach to our communities. In order to provide first class distance education for our students, telehealth for our medical schools, and advanced applications for our researchers, we must have an Internet that is open to all persons, all applications, and all lawful content on a nondiscriminatory basis.

However, recent policy changes have eliminated this basic nondiscrimination safeguard, giving broadband providers permission to block or control Internet content. In an environment where 94 percent of Americans have little choice in their broadband provider, some companies may prefer their own content and place limits on universities' access to the Internet. We have considered this matter carefully and realize the complexity of the issue. We conclude, therefore, that Congress should restore the original, enforceable policy that protects the openness of the Internet so that colleges and universities can meet their educational goals in the future. Additionally, we would hope any telecommunications reform legislation would include appropriate anti-redlining protections so that every community can share in the benefits and opportunities these technologies provide.

We support Congress' effort to promote the development of broadband networks and achieve fast, secure, and affordable communications for all citizens. We feel network neutrality is critically important if the United States is to maintain its leadership not only in higher education, but in the global economy as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Ward", written over a thin red vertical line.

David Ward
President

DW/mmm

On behalf of:

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
American Indian Higher Education Consortium
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges