

What's Next for Net Neutrality?

Article

California is blazing a trail for restoring net neutrality.

On August 31, California state lawmakers **passed a bill** preventing internet service providers (ISPs) from blocking traffic or providing so-called fast lanes. For the bill to become law, California Gov. Jerry Brown has to sign the bill by the end of September.

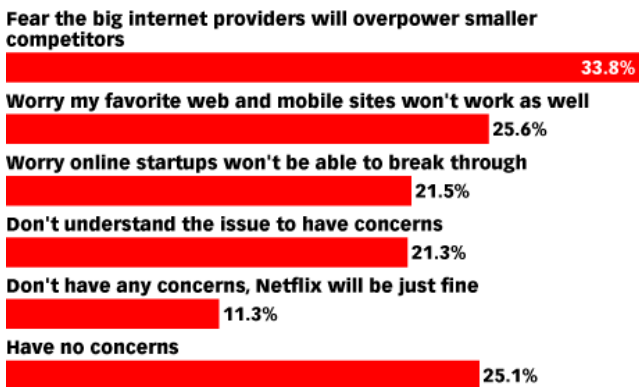
The California bill comes after the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) repealed net neutrality in December 2017, effectively giving ISPs more control over their consumers. A recent study by researchers at Northeastern University and the University of Massachusetts

Amherst found that from January-May 2018, ISPs **were slowing traffic** to video services like Netflix and YouTube. Before this study was published, the repeal of net neutrality was already being met with much consternation.

Of the 1,077 US registered voters polled by the University of Maryland in December 2017, more than 80% of respondents said they **wanted to keep net neutrality**. And in a February 2018 survey of 1,117 adult US internet users conducted by **Instart** (formerly called Instart Logic) and **Propeller Insights**, the most popular concern respondents had about net neutrality was that it would allow big ISPs to overpower smaller competitors.

Concerns about Net Neutrality Among US Internet Users, Jan 2018

% of respondents



Note: ages 18+

Source: Instart Logic survey conducted by Propeller Insights, Feb 14, 2018

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California is not the first state to suggest that net neutrality protections should be restored. In March 2018, Washington state **passed net neutrality legislation**. And back in January, **attorneys general from 22 states filed a lawsuit** to block the FCC's repeal of net neutrality. But California's bill is significant because it's the most populous state in the country and home to many of the world's biggest tech companies.

With various states passing piecemeal legislation aimed at bringing back net neutrality protections, data privacy **advocates are paying close attention** to how US Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh answers questions regarding broadband regulation during his Senate hearing.

"The future of net neutrality will be influenced by developments in three different arenas: state legislature, federal courts, and national politics," said Fred Lane, an attorney and author who

writes about emerging technology. “There is a lot of activism to pass legislation at the state level to restore the net neutrality provisions that the FCC scuttled.”