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Dozens of major online firms launched protests against Republican efforts to roll back Obama-era net-neutrality rules, in an escalation of tensions over Washington's proper role in the internet.

"Protect Internet Freedom. Defend Net Neutrality," a [banner](#) on Netflix Inc.'s home page said, offering users a link to submit comments to the GOP-led Federal Communications Commission, which is considering the rollback plan. Protesters argue the rollback could allow internet providers to block websites or force them into slow lanes unless they pay. "The internet's less fun when your favorite sites load slowly, isn't it?" said a message that slowly typed out on Reddit, an aggregation site.

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page where users could send comments to the FCC.

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg said in a posting to his followers that Facebook "strongly" supports the current rules but also is "open to working with members of Congress" on new legislation to protect net neutrality, something Republicans have sought in recent years but haven't achieved because of partisan strife.

Blake Irving, GoDaddy Inc.'s chief executive officer, said [in a prominently displayed blog post](#) that "nothing less than our long-term economic well-being is at stake." But the protests appeared to be causing little real disruption Wednesday. And some big players, including Alphabet Inc. unit Google, were content with relatively low-key efforts.

Google posted an item on its public-policy blog supporting the current net-neutrality rules that it also sent out as an email to people on its "Take Action" list. Its main search page made no mention of the protest, however, and featured a Doodle honoring the late Japanese artist and costume designer Eiko Ishioka, whose birthday is July 12. Amazon.com Inc. placed a box on its home page saying, "Net neutrality? Learn more." It linked to a

[Judge accused of watching porn in chambers](#)

[Bucks County Courier Times Editorial: With budget in chaos, Republicans go home](#)

On Tuesday, a day ahead of the protest, Republican House leadership staff held a meeting with high-tech representatives that, according to one person familiar with the matter, was confrontational at times. Another person familiar with the meeting said the companies weren't being chastised, and described it as a "broad discussion" about the scope of companies' planned participation in the day of protest. The meeting involved several big internet platforms, including Google and Facebook, as well as a high-tech trade group, the Internet Association.

Republicans generally have sided with internet providers such as AT&T Inc. and Verizon Communications Inc., who regard the rules as an overreach that could hurt investment and innovation. The rules had reclassified broadband as a utility-type service subject to potentially stringent regulation. Aides to House Speaker Paul Ryan (R., Wis.), Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R., Calif.), Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R., La.) and others attended the meeting, according to one person familiar with the matter. A spokesman for the Internet Association, Noah Theran, said in a statement: "Net neutrality is a bipartisan issue, and Internet Association remains committed to working with all stakeholders to protect and preserve strong rules."

The protests were said by organizers [to involve tens of thousands of people, websites and organizations](#), are aimed at highlighting public support for the rules adopted in 2015. Net neutrality is essential to ensuring the survival of the next wave of innovative startup companies, said Michal Rosenn, general counsel at Brooklyn-based Kickstarter. "Like most internet companies, we started off small," Ms. Rosenn said. "We know that we depended on a level playing field to get Kickstarter up and running to become the company we are today."

The GOP-led FCC approved a plan [in May](#) to substantially overhaul and narrow the rules. Supporters of the current rules face an uphill fight. Big telecommunications firms were trying to sound conciliatory Wednesday, and AT&T Inc. went so far as to join the "day of action." But other firms sounded frustrated by the protests. "The day of action isn't designed to educate consumers about sensible policies, rather its goal is to scare them into thinking their internet experience will somehow suddenly be degraded if the FCC restores light touch regulation," [said the NCTA](#), a cable trade group, in a blog post. "Don't believe the hype."

The Trump administration is siding with the FCC. "The Trump administration supports the FCC's efforts to roll back burdensome, monopoly-era regulations," an administration official said in a statement. "We all believe in fair rules of the road for everyone—consumers, [internet providers] and website providers, and we believe that legislation is the best way to provide a stable, predictable environment for growth and innovation by the entire internet ecosystem." – *Wall Street Journal*

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Nearly all of the major satellite, local cable and telco TV providers in the country appear to be on board for deep integration into Apple's groundbreaking TV app come fall, according to a beta of the iOS 11 operating system that Apple provided Monday to developers.

Dish Network, DirecTV and a handful of local cable companies are already on board with Apple's system-level feature called Single Sign-On that launched in December 2016 and allows iPhone, iPad and Apple TV users to automatically authenticate to a long list of TV Everywhere apps. The feature turns Apple's TV app, which also launched in December 2016, into a one-stop shop for keeping up with and launching TV shows.

The new beta of Apple's iPhone and iPad operating system — called iOS 11 beta 3 — that Apple provided to app developers on Monday lists a slew of new TV providers, including AT&T U-verse, Cable One, CenturyLink, Charter Spectrum, Comcast Xfinity, Cox, Mediacom, TWC Spectrum and Verizon Fios. The new beta for the Apple TV operating system — called tvOS beta 3 — also launched on Monday, but it's not clear yet whether the new providers are included in that beta.

System-level authentication with Single Sign-On is the killer feature of Apple's TV app for iPhone, iPad and Apple TV. The app, which was bug-ridden and only worked with 20 or so apps at launch, is now running smoothly and works with a long list of broadcast (ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX, The CW and PBS), cable (AMC, HGTV, FX, etc.), premium (HBO, Showtime and STARZ) and streaming (Netflix, Hulu, Crackle, etc.) apps. The TV app presents all of the shows you're watching from different apps onto a single screen and lets you know when new episodes are available.

Apple announced at its Worldwide Developers Conference in June that Amazon Prime Video, which was already available on iPhone and iPad but is the only major SVOD service that does not have an Apple TV app, would come to Apple TV [sometime this fall](#) and hinted at the conference that it would have more TV-related announcements in the fall. – *Decider*

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Prison time for abuse of office should mean permanent disgrace, but it doesn't in the State of Corruption. Some ex-lawmakers with criminal records are lobbying in Harrisburg — a practice that deserves a long, hard look by the Legislature.

Pennsylvania law requires one year's wait before those who leave the state payroll can lobby. Interest groups, which have a right to lobby, value ex-lawmakers' knowledge. And even convicted ex-lawmakers have a right to seek employment once they've paid their debt to society. But should those convicted of abuse-of-office felonies continue influencing, as lobbyists, the business of the public, whose trust they violated so egregiously?

Former House Speakers Bill DeWeese, D-Greene County, and John Perzel, R-Philadelphia, former House Democratic Whip Mike Veon of Beaver County and former Senate Majority Leader Joe Loeper, R-Delaware County, are all convicted ex-lawmakers turned lobbyists. In their clients' eyes, their insider connections apparently outweigh their baggage. But their lobbying blunts the deterrent effect that their convictions should have on sitting lawmakers. And it doesn't ease voters' suspicions about the Legislature and influence-peddling in its orbit.

Past calls to ban Harrisburg lobbying by felonious ex-lawmakers have gone nowhere. The time has come to reconsider this practice, which reinforces Pennsylvania's status as the State of Corruption. — ***Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* editorial**

