



To Lead, Advocate and Connect as the Voice of Business

House Bill 141: Commercial Law - Internet Privacy and Net Neutrality

Economic Matters

February 6, 2019

OPPOSE

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce (MCCC) accelerates the success of our over 400 members by advocating for increased business opportunities, strategic investment in infrastructure, and balanced tax reform to advance Metro Maryland as a regional, national, and global location for business success. Established in 1959, MCCC is an independent non-profit membership organization and is proud to be a Montgomery County Green Certified Business.

House Bill 141 would require Maryland state government to regulate the Internet by imposing certain conditions to be met by Internet Service Providers (ISP's) in order to qualify for state contracts. The issue of internet regulation, or 'Net Neutrality' is one that has been contentious and debated at the Federal level for many years. The internet itself is an interstate service carrying commercial and other traffic that is constantly crossing all local and state jurisdictional boundaries every hour of every day.

We consider proposals that attempt to regulate the internet on a state by state basis to be impractical and preempted by recent Federal Communications Commission's ('FCC') rulings and federal law. Indeed, the Federal Trade Commission ('FTC') already has authority to ensure ISP's protect consumers' online privacy and data security making this bill unnecessary.

State-by-state regulation of the internet will harm consumers and businesses by creating confusing and conflicting rules on an interstate service, which will discourage investment in broadband infrastructure and new technologies in Maryland that are critical to a new and vital economy. There should instead be a comprehensive, common-sense approach at the federal level to address these issues. As we have seen in other states, attempts to regulate the internet on a state-by-state level will lead to costly and time-consuming litigation.

For these reasons, we request an **unfavorable report on House Bill 141.**