

'Massive Victory for the Whole Internet' as California Passes Nation's Strongest Net Neutrality Bill



"We did it. We passed the strongest net neutrality standards in the nation," Democratic state Senator Scott Wiener, the primary author of SB 822, said in a statement. (Photo: Fight for the Future)

[By Jake Johnson, staff writer](#) | [Common Dreams](#)

In a major victory for the open internet that could have ripple effects throughout the United States, the California Senate on Friday thwarted aggressive lobbying by the telecom industry and passed the strongest, most comprehensive net neutrality bill in the nation.

"The passage of SB 822 in California has huge implications for

our fight to restore neutrality nationwide,” declared the advocacy group Fight for the Future (FFTF) following Friday’s vote. “We also need to harness the momentum from this huge victory to put pressure on our elected officials in Congress.”

“Finally,” FFTF added, “y’all should be really proud of yourselves. Giant telcos like AT&T and Comcast spent enormous amounts of money lobbying to kill SB 822. They almost succeeded more than once, but we fought back. We drove phone calls, tweets, crowdfunded billboards, attended meetings.”\

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Having cleared both houses of California’s legislature, SB 822 will now head to Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown’s desk for a signature.

Brown, who has 30 days to sign the measure, is already [facing pressure](#) from the telecom industry to veto the bill, so open internet advocates are warning Californians to remain vigilant and keep up the pressure.

If SB 822 is ultimately signed into law, it would restore the net neutrality protections repealed by the Republican-controlled FCC last December and implement even stronger rules by [establishing](#) “an outright ban on zero-rating—the practice of offering free data, potentially to the advantage of some companies over others—of specific apps.”

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“We did it,” Democratic state Senator Scott Wiener, the primary author of SB 822, said in a [statement](#). “We passed the strongest net neutrality standards in the nation. The internet is at the heart of 21st century life—our economy, our public safety and health systems, and our democracy. So when Donald Trump’s FCC decided to take a wrecking ball to net neutrality protections, we knew that California had to step in to ensure our residents have access to a free and open internet.”

As the fight for strong net neutrality protections gains steam at the state level, open internet advocates are hoping the resulting energy and momentum will translate into action in Congress, where the House is [working to assemble enough votes](#) to pass a Congressional Review Act resolution to undo the FCC's deeply unpopular repeal.

Evan Greer, deputy director of Fight for the Future, argued that lawmakers who don't support net neutrality will feel the wrath of voters in the upcoming midterm elections and beyond.

"Internet users are still royally pissed off about the FCC's repeal," Greer said in a [statement](#) following Friday's vote. "They're still paying attention. And they're not going to let their elected officials get away with it if they sell out their constituents by siding with big telecom companies."

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