



MINNESOTA LIBRARY
ASSOCIATION

February 16, 2024

Rep. Zack Stephenson
Chair, House Commerce Finance and Policy Committee
449 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for Net Neutrality

Chair Stephenson and members of the House Commerce Finance and Policy Committee,

The Minnesota Library Association (MLA) supports net neutrality and its critical role in ensuring equitable access to ideas and information, supporting intellectual freedom, and protection against censorship. Today, most libraries (99% of MN public libraries) provide internet access for individuals to achieve important goals for themselves and their communities. For many, this access is their primary link to the internet, facilitating engagement with news and culture, education, job opportunities, civic dialogue, and more. Net neutrality ensures that all content is accessible without discrimination, preserving a diverse range of ideas in our society. As such, MLA urges support for HF2021.

Libraries are community anchor institutions supporting equitable access to information; this increasingly means support for broadband-enabled services. Today, the internet is no longer a "nice to have" but an essential service. Net neutrality guarantees equal treatment of all "digital speech," irrespective of origin, content, or purpose. The internet without net neutrality threatens equality of access, hindering the free flow of ideas. Without the protections of net neutrality, tiered access and prioritized content based on financial interests leads to censorship, restricting access to diverse information sources. Minnesota libraries believe in the importance of equitable access to information for libraries and users to safeguard intellectual freedom.

MLA strongly urges the House Commerce Finance and Policy Committee to support net neutrality principles represented in HF2021.

Sincerely,

Jodi Grebinoski
MLA President
Library Director
Virginia Public Library

Sarah Hawkins
MLA Legislative Co-Chair
Assistant Director
Anoka County Library

Liz Lynch
MLA Legislative Co-Chair
Executive Director
Lake Agassiz Regional Library