



February 8, 2018

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Hans Kaiser, Moore Information
RE: Maine Voters – Net Neutrality

In a representative telephone survey of 500 likely Maine voters, Moore Information sought to understand public interests and concerns regarding a number of internet-related issues. The poll was conducted on behalf of the Center for Individual Freedom, and all calls were made from January 27 through January 30, 2018. Both land line and cell phone interviews were conducted by live interviewers and the potential sampling error is plus or minus 4% at the 95% confidence level.

Survey Highlights

Fully 94% of all respondents use the internet, with communication, social media (51%), and research (43%) registering as respondents' primary activities, followed by shopping (23%), financial transactions (19%), and real-time news updates (16%). Furthermore, 76% say they primarily access the internet either at home or work and another 14% say they primarily access it through a mobile device. We also find that respondents currently believe the internet is working well, with fully 81% of respondents believing that it is.

However, when asked whether they have become more concerned or less concerned than they were "a few years ago" about a series of internet-related issues, a plurality say they are less concerned about the speed of their internet access (39% more vs. 47% less) while they are more concerned over their ability to access the services and information they choose (45% more vs. 41% less) and the ability to freely express their opinion on the internet (44% more vs. 39% less). Significantly, these are the types of issues that are broadly defined as "net neutrality."

Given the exceptionally high level of media attention and political activism regarding "net neutrality" in the past few months, it is not surprising that a majority of Maine voters (62%) say they are "very" or "somewhat" familiar with the term. Among that group, 61% say they "strongly" or "somewhat" favor it.

More noteworthy, 82% of the respondents say they have become more concerned about the privacy of their information on the internet. They are also more concerned about censorship (68%) and reliability of information (68%) they get online.

In line with those sentiments, after being read a definition of what "net neutrality" is and being presented with the question of what Congress should do to protect their interests on the internet, respondents are much more interested in having Congress pass new consumer protection legislation that ensures consumers are protected in several specific areas and treated fairly by all internet companies. When given the choice between Congress reinstating the FCC's 2015 net neutrality rules that apply only to ISPs, or Congress passing legislation that both puts the tenets of net neutrality into law and ensures that they are treated in a fair and neutral manner by all internet companies (including on privacy), they prefer the latter by a 57-23% margin.

In the initial support/oppose net neutrality question, there are distinct partisan differences, but those differences disappear when respondents are asked whether they support legislation to create broader consumer protections on the internet. Only 13% of those initially favoring net neutrality are Republicans while 47% are Democrats and 36% are Independents. By contrast, support for a new consumer protection law that would apply to all companies on the internet shows no partisan difference whatsoever -- fully 57% of Democrats, 57% of Republicans and 56% of Independents support it.

This is a significant finding. While Maine voters think net neutrality is important, their concerns about privacy, censorship and trust on the internet go beyond what their ISPs do. Voters feel strongly that all Internet companies -- ISPs, search engines and social media companies -- should be governed by the same consumer protection rules.

Comprehensive consumer-focused legislation, dedicated to ensuring that consumers are protected no matter what they are doing on the internet, and no matter which companies they are dealing with, is extremely popular.

There was near-universal support for legislation that applies the "guiding principles" of neutrality, transparency and privacy protections to all internet companies.

Specifically:

- * 89% - Every Internet Service Provider would need to disclose accurate and relevant information in plain language regarding the price, performance, and network management practices of its services. (70% strongly).
- * 88% - Social media sites and apps, and search engines would be required to fully disclose their practices on censorship, child protection and prohibiting the use of their services for illegal activities. (71% strongly)
- * 88% - Internet Service Providers, social media sites and apps, and search engines would all have to follow the same rules to protect your privacy and the security of your data. (71% strongly)
- * 87% - Consumers would have the freedom to use the personal devices and apps they want. (64% strongly)
- * 84% - Internet Service Providers could not block or slow down websites or services that consumers access on the internet. (72% strongly)
- * 84% - To ensure a level playing field for all competitors, there would be one set of rules that apply to all internet companies. (62% strongly)

When respondents were read these guiding principles and asked if they would support legislation including these principles, support for broad consumer protection legislation grew to 70%, dwarfing the 13% who believe "net neutrality" legislation alone would address their concerns.

When asked, 44% of respondents said they would feel more favorable toward their Members of Congress if they would support new legislation applying to all companies on the internet. Only 18% said they would feel more favorable toward those who only support reinstating the FCC's ISP-only rules.

In short, when Maine voters learn more about "net neutrality," they prefer more comprehensive consumer protection legislation to protect all their internet interests, rather than congressional action that simply reinstates the FCC's old "net neutrality" rules.