

House Judiciary passes Net-neutrality bill

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The House Judiciary Committee passed a bill Thursday, 20-13, that would amend the Clayton anti-trust act to include Net neutrality.

The Internet Freedom and Nondiscrimination Act of 2006 introduced by House Judiciary Committee Chairman F. James Sensenbrenner Jr., R-Wis., and ranking member John Conyers Jr., D-Mich., last week seeks to prohibit broadband providers from favoring one provider's Web traffic or their own content over another's by ensuring faster downloads to companies that pay a tax, thus creating a two-tier system.

"This legislation is a necessary step to protect consumers and other Internet users from possible anti-competitive and discriminatory conduct by broadband providers," Sensenbrenner said last week in a statement. "The FCC recently reported that 98 percent of American consumers get their high speed broadband from either a cable company or a DSL provider. This virtual duopoly creates an environment that is ripe for anti-competitive abuses, and for which a clear antitrust remedy is urgently needed."

Specifically, the bipartisan bill amends the Clayton Act to require network providers to run on a nondiscriminatory basis, making it a violation for a provider to refuse to interconnect with other broadband providers and block or interfere with another's services or content, among other things.

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