



# PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

## NET NEUTRALITY

- QUESTIONNAIRE -

February 2022

**Fielded by:** Nielsen Scarborough  
**Sample Size:** 2,702 Registered Voters

**Field Dates:** January 27 - February 28, 2022  
**Margin of Error:** +/- 1.9%

### [Introduction]

In this survey, we'd like your opinions about some current issues. There are no right or wrong answers, so please answer the questions based on what seems right to you. If at any time you find that you do not want to answer a question, feel free to skip it and move on to the next one.

*[Q1 – Q14 and Q 31-34 Released Separately]*

### [Net Neutrality]

Another proposal we would like you to consider calls for changing the regulations for Internet Service Providers. Internet Service Providers (or ISPs) are companies like Verizon or Comcast that give customers' access to the internet.

The proposal is to reinstate previous regulations intended to protect 'net neutrality'. This refers to a set of regulations that were established in 2015 by the Federal Communications Commission.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) passed a set of regulations to prohibit those behaviors and ensure that all data moving through the internet is treated equally. These regulations prohibited ISPs from doing the following:

- For websites and applications: creating an internet "fast lane" with faster download speeds for users of websites and applications that pay more, and a "slow lane" for those that don't
- Providing faster speeds to the ISP's own applications and slower speeds to their competitors' applications
- Blocking or intentionally slowing down specific websites or applications (unless it is providing illegal content or applications)
- For customers: slowing down the speed of transmission of data below the normal speeds for the plan they have purchased, unless it is for only a brief period of time in order to keep the network stable

In 2017, the FCC, under new leadership, repealed the net neutrality regulations. However, ISPs are still required to report to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) any instances when they engage in any of the behaviors mentioned above.

Since then, ISPs have resumed some of the slowing and blocking activities that had been prohibited. There is currently a debate over whether the net neutrality regulations should be reinstated.

Here is an argument *in favor* of reinstating net neutrality regulations:

Q15. The repeal of net neutrality regulations has given ISPs a license to steal from consumers. Since its repeal, ISPs have been slowing internet speeds to certain customers, websites and applications, and then trying to get them to pay more just to increase speeds back to what they had originally paid for. They even did this to a fire department in California while they were battling wildfires. Furthermore, charging ever-higher fees to websites creates unfair markets: it tips the scales in favor of bigger website companies who can afford to buy higher speeds, driving out smaller competitors. It is also unfair competition: ISPs can slow down or block

access to any of their competitors' applications, like a TV streaming service or a video chat application. All this corrupts free market competition and reduces innovation. Reinstating net neutrality will benefit customers and level the playing field for businesses.

| Q15.                    | Very Convincing | Somewhat Convincing | Total Convincing | Somewhat Unconvincing | Very Unconvincing | Total Unconvincing | Refused / DK |
|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| <b>National</b>         | 52.6%           | 25.9%               | <b>78.5%</b>     | 12.3%                 | 5.6%              | <b>17.9%</b>       | 3.6%         |
| Republicans             | 46.2%           | 28.2%               | <b>74.4%</b>     | 14.1%                 | 6.8%              | <b>20.9%</b>       | 4.7%         |
| Democrats               | 62.0%           | 24.1%               | <b>86.1%</b>     | 8.3%                  | 2.7%              | <b>11.0%</b>       | 2.9%         |
| Independents            | 46.4%           | 24.1%               | <b>70.5%</b>     | 17.6%                 | 9.5%              | <b>27.1%</b>       | 2.4%         |
| <b>Cook's PVI (D-R)</b> |                 |                     |                  |                       |                   |                    |              |
| Very red                | 50.3%           | 24.3%               | <b>74.6%</b>     | 15.4%                 | 4.5%              | <b>19.9%</b>       | 5.6%         |
| Somewhat red            | 53.7%           | 26.1%               | <b>79.8%</b>     | 11.4%                 | 6.9%              | <b>18.3%</b>       | 1.9%         |
| Lean red                | 53.1%           | 25.3%               | <b>78.4%</b>     | 12.5%                 | 4.9%              | <b>17.4%</b>       | 4.2%         |
| Lean blue               | 54.4%           | 25.2%               | <b>79.6%</b>     | 12.0%                 | 5.1%              | <b>17.1%</b>       | 3.3%         |
| Somewhat blue           | 54.0%           | 25.8%               | <b>79.8%</b>     | 9.4%                  | 6.6%              | <b>16.0%</b>       | 4.2%         |
| Very blue               | 49.4%           | 29.2%               | <b>78.6%</b>     | 12.8%                 | 5.7%              | <b>18.5%</b>       | 3.0%         |

Here is a counter argument:

Q16. Net neutrality rules are unnecessarily heavy-handed and stifle innovation. There is little evidence that restrictive rules are required, but there is evidence that they hold back the development of the internet in the United States, which is lagging behind other developed countries. Under net neutrality regulations, companies with websites would not have access to the cutting-edge download speeds that could upgrade the quality of their services. We need to keep ISPs free from this regulation so they can bring internet service in the US to a whole new level. When ISPs can do this, they can also provide lower cost internet service for other consumers and provide internet service to more areas. As long as ISPs are required to disclose any variation in download speeds or website blocking—as they are now—the market will make sure that the ISPs do not overreach.

| Q16.                    | Very Convincing | Somewhat Convincing | Total Convincing | Somewhat Unconvincing | Very Unconvincing | Total Unconvincing | Refused / DK |
|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| <b>National</b>         | 12.4%           | 26.9%               | <b>39.3%</b>     | 32.6%                 | 27.0%             | <b>59.6%</b>       | 1.0%         |
| Republicans             | 15.5%           | 30.9%               | <b>46.4%</b>     | 34.0%                 | 18.6%             | <b>52.6%</b>       | 1.0%         |
| Democrats               | 9.1%            | 22.2%               | <b>31.3%</b>     | 32.3%                 | 35.1%             | <b>67.4%</b>       | 1.3%         |
| Independents            | 12.6%           | 28.4%               | <b>41.0%</b>     | 29.8%                 | 28.8%             | <b>58.6%</b>       | 0.4%         |
| <b>Cook's PVI (D-R)</b> |                 |                     |                  |                       |                   |                    |              |
| Very red                | 12.9%           | 24.3%               | <b>37.2%</b>     | 34.0%                 | 27.5%             | <b>61.5%</b>       | 1.3%         |
| Somewhat red            | 15.8%           | 28.2%               | <b>44.0%</b>     | 30.2%                 | 25.0%             | <b>55.2%</b>       | 0.7%         |
| Lean red                | 13.2%           | 25.6%               | <b>38.8%</b>     | 32.1%                 | 27.7%             | <b>59.8%</b>       | 1.4%         |
| Lean blue               | 8.7%            | 28.9%               | <b>37.6%</b>     | 32.3%                 | 28.5%             | <b>60.8%</b>       | 1.6%         |
| Somewhat blue           | 14.2%           | 25.6%               | <b>39.8%</b>     | 35.6%                 | 24.0%             | <b>59.6%</b>       | 0.5%         |
| Very blue               | 10.5%           | 26.8%               | <b>37.3%</b>     | 32.2%                 | 30.1%             | <b>62.3%</b>       | 0.4%         |

Here is an argument *against* reinstating net neutrality regulations:

Q17. Concerns about the repeal of net neutrality have been overblown and failed to recognize a key fact: that is, once the FCC repealed the net neutrality regulations, it reverted to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to take responsibility for ensuring that ISPs do not engage in anti-competitive and unfair practices. The FTC requires that any changes in the service they provide will be fully and publicly disclosed. With these protections, we will be able to count on the competitive forces of the market to ensure that ISPs provide the service that consumers want.

| Q17.                    | Very Convincing | Somewhat Convincing | Total Convincing | Somewhat Unconvincing | Very Unconvincing | Total Unconvincing | Refused / DK |
|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| <b>National</b>         | 13.8%           | 36.9%               | <b>50.7%</b>     | 31.2%                 | 15.2%             | <b>46.4%</b>       | 2.9%         |
| Republicans             | 15.3%           | 41.5%               | <b>56.8%</b>     | 29.4%                 | 10.7%             | <b>40.1%</b>       | 3.1%         |
| Democrats               | 10.8%           | 34.4%               | <b>45.2%</b>     | 32.7%                 | 19.3%             | <b>52.0%</b>       | 2.9%         |
| Independents            | 17.2%           | 31.3%               | <b>48.5%</b>     | 32.1%                 | 17.1%             | <b>49.2%</b>       | 2.3%         |
| <b>Cook's PVI (D-R)</b> |                 |                     |                  |                       |                   |                    |              |
| Very red                | 13.3%           | 34.8%               | <b>48.1%</b>     | 33.4%                 | 14.1%             | <b>47.5%</b>       | 4.4%         |
| Somewhat red            | 18.1%           | 39.8%               | <b>57.9%</b>     | 27.9%                 | 11.5%             | <b>39.4%</b>       | 2.7%         |
| Lean red                | 14.6%           | 35.8%               | <b>50.4%</b>     | 30.9%                 | 16.6%             | <b>47.5%</b>       | 2.2%         |
| Lean blue               | 10.7%           | 36.7%               | <b>47.4%</b>     | 32.4%                 | 16.7%             | <b>49.1%</b>       | 3.4%         |
| Somewhat blue           | 12.9%           | 39.8%               | <b>52.7%</b>     | 31.0%                 | 13.7%             | <b>44.7%</b>       | 2.6%         |
| Very blue               | 13.4%           | 34.3%               | <b>47.7%</b>     | 31.0%                 | 18.8%             | <b>49.8%</b>       | 2.4%         |

Here is a counter argument:

Q18. Giving the FTC jurisdiction over ISPs has not prevented them from slowing down internet speeds and charging customers and websites more to get them back to normal. It only requires that they disclose their actions. Further, the FTC cannot police the long-standing carriers like Verizon and AT&T. Last, as we've seen, we cannot count on market competition to ensure that customers get what they want--many American households only have access to one high-speed broadband ISP and, thus, there is no competition. Even when there is more than one ISP, it is unlikely they will voluntarily forego the right to charge for access to certain websites.

| Q18.                    | Very Convincing | Somewhat Convincing | Total Convincing | Somewhat Unconvincing | Very Unconvincing | Total Unconvincing | Refused / DK |
|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| <b>National</b>         | 27.0%           | 39.8%               | <b>66.8%</b>     | 23.6%                 | 7.8%              | <b>31.4%</b>       | 1.7%         |
| Republicans             | 21.2%           | 40.7%               | <b>61.9%</b>     | 27.0%                 | 8.9%              | <b>35.9%</b>       | 2.2%         |
| Democrats               | 33.5%           | 40.5%               | <b>74.0%</b>     | 18.6%                 | 6.0%              | <b>24.6%</b>       | 1.5%         |
| Independents            | 26.3%           | 35.7%               | <b>62.0%</b>     | 27.1%                 | 9.8%              | <b>36.9%</b>       | 1.1%         |
| <b>Cook's PVI (D-R)</b> |                 |                     |                  |                       |                   |                    |              |
| Very red                | 24.0%           | 41.6%               | <b>65.6%</b>     | 25.2%                 | 7.1%              | <b>32.3%</b>       | 2.0%         |
| Somewhat red            | 24.2%           | 36.2%               | <b>60.4%</b>     | 26.5%                 | 11.8%             | <b>38.3%</b>       | 1.4%         |
| Lean red                | 30.4%           | 40.2%               | <b>70.6%</b>     | 20.2%                 | 7.7%              | <b>27.9%</b>       | 1.5%         |
| Lean blue               | 30.7%           | 39.9%               | <b>70.6%</b>     | 19.9%                 | 6.3%              | <b>26.2%</b>       | 3.2%         |
| Somewhat blue           | 25.7%           | 39.5%               | <b>65.2%</b>     | 28.1%                 | 5.8%              | <b>33.9%</b>       | 1.0%         |
| Very blue               | 24.7%           | 41.3%               | <b>66.0%</b>     | 23.7%                 | 9.2%              | <b>32.9%</b>       | 1.1%         |

Q19. So, how acceptable would you find a proposal to reinstate net neutrality regulations? These regulations would prohibit ISPs from doing the following:

- For websites and applications: creating an internet "fast lane" with faster download speeds for those that pay more, and a "slow lane" for those who don't
- Providing faster speeds to the ISP's own services and slower speeds to their competitors' services
- Blocking or intentionally slowing down any website or application (unless it is providing illegal content or services)
- For customers: slowing down the speed of transmission of data below the normal speeds for the plan they have purchased

| <b>Q19.</b>             | <b>Unacceptable<br/>(0-4)</b> | <b>Just Tolerable<br/>(5)</b> | <b>Acceptable<br/>(6-10)</b> | <b>Refused /<br/>Don't Know</b> |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>National</b>         | 34.2%                         | 9.9%                          | 54.5%                        | 1.4%                            |
| Republicans             | 39.7%                         | 11.0%                         | 47.3%                        | 2.0%                            |
| Democrats               | 26.2%                         | 7.6%                          | 65.0%                        | 1.2%                            |
| Independents            | 39.5%                         | 12.4%                         | 47.4%                        | 0.6%                            |
| <b>Cook's PVI (D-R)</b> |                               |                               |                              |                                 |
| Very red                | 36.0%                         | 7.9%                          | 54.0%                        | 2.1%                            |
| Somewhat red            | 33.5%                         | 9.6%                          | 56.4%                        | 0.5%                            |
| Lean red                | 37.0%                         | 9.0%                          | 53.1%                        | 1.0%                            |
| Lean blue               | 33.9%                         | 9.3%                          | 53.8%                        | 3.0%                            |
| Somewhat blue           | 32.2%                         | 10.5%                         | 56.0%                        | 1.3%                            |
| Very blue               | 30.7%                         | 12.6%                         | 56.1%                        | 0.6%                            |

Q20. In conclusion, do you favor or oppose reinstating net neutrality regulations?

| <b>Q20.</b>             | <b>Favor</b> | <b>Oppose</b> | <b>Refused /<br/>Don't Know</b> |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>National</b>         | 72.5%        | 25.7%         | 1.8%                            |
| Republicans             | 65.4%        | 32.2%         | 2.4%                            |
| Democrats               | 82.0%        | 16.9%         | 1.2%                            |
| Independents            | 67.5%        | 30.9%         | 1.6%                            |
| <b>Cook's PVI (D-R)</b> |              |               |                                 |
| Very red                | 68.1%        | 28.4%         | 3.5%                            |
| Somewhat red            | 69.2%        | 29.5%         | 1.3%                            |
| Lean red                | 74.6%        | 23.5%         | 1.8%                            |
| Lean blue               | 75.5%        | 22.5%         | 2.1%                            |
| Somewhat blue           | 73.3%        | 25.9%         | 0.8%                            |
| Very blue               | 74.0%        | 24.8%         | 1.2%                            |

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