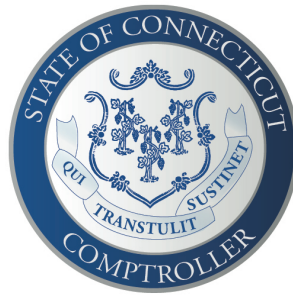


KEVIN LEMBO
STATE COMPTROLLER



MARTHA CARLSON
DEPUTY COMPTROLLER



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE *of the* STATE COMPTROLLER
55 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106

**Written Testimony
Comptroller Kevin Lembo
March 5, 2018**

**Concerning
H.B. 5260: AN ACT REQUIRING STATE CONTRACTORS TO ADOPT A NET NEUTRALITY POLICY.**

Good morning Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, Senator McLachlan, Representative Devlin, and Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

As you know, in December of last year, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted to overturn protections for a free and open internet. The rule, recently published, will allow telecommunication companies to potentially block content, extort fees from users and shrink economic opportunities for Connecticut businesses and residents. While the FCC has attempted to preempt states from overriding the ill-advised new rule, Connecticut's government can use its market power as a consumer to guarantee taxpayer dollars are not being directed to internet providers who do not meet our commonly held values.

House Bill 5260 establishes free and open internet requirements to state procurement regulations for internet service and I write today to urge its passage.

Currently, state government gives tens of millions of dollars per year to internet service providers. The state contracts for direct service, provides economic assistance and makes available an array of tax credits. Those taxpayer dollars should only be granted to internet service providers that treat all online content equally, and withheld from any service provider that has paid prioritization agreements in place.

House Bill 5260 will ensure that companies entering into contract with state government follow the fundamental principles shared by Connecticut and its citizens: inclusion, fairness and opportunity. A free and open internet is a goal consistent with the shared values of our state.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.