



NEWS

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20554

News media Information 202 / 418-0500
Fax-On-Demand 202 / 418-2830
TTY 202/418-2555
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>
<ftp.fcc.gov>

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NEWS MEDIA CONTACT
Brigid Calamis 202-418-2200
Brigid.calamis@fcc.gov

**STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER ROBERT M. McDOWELL
REGARDING TODAY'S ACTION AT THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON
INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS (WCIT-12)**

The following statement can be attributed to Commissioner Robert M. McDowell:

Today, America's delegation to the World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT), led by Ambassador Terry Kramer, stood strong for Internet freedom when it proclaimed that it would not sign new international rules that capture the Internet. Our delegation's resolve should be commended.

Unfortunately, a majority of the International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) Member States, including many countries that purportedly support Internet freedom, chose to discard long-standing international consensus to keep the Internet insulated from intergovernmental regulation. By agreeing to broaden the scope of the ITU's rules to include the Internet, encompassing its operations and content, these nations have radically undermined the highly successful, private sector, non-governmental, multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance.

Even though the United States refused to sign the new agreement, what happened today in Dubai could have ripple effects here at home. Consumers everywhere will ultimately pay the price for this power grab as engineers and entrepreneurs try to navigate this new era of an internationally politicized Internet. If this assault on Internet freedom continues unabated, consumers' prices will rise while investment and innovation will stall.

As egregious as today's action was, many of the anti-freedom proposals were turned back - but the worst is yet to come. The United States should immediately prepare for an even more treacherous ITU treaty negotiation that will take place in 2014 in Korea. Those talks could expand the ITU's reach even further. Accordingly, Internet freedom's allies everywhere should more than redouble their efforts to erase the damage that was wrought today. Freedom and prosperity are at stake. Let's never be slow to respond again. Freedom's foes are patient and persistent incrementalists. They will never give up. Nor should we.

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