

May 21, 2024



Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Chair, House Committee on Energy and
Commerce
2188 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Bob Latta
Chair, Subcommittee on Communications and
Technology
2467 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Frank Pallone
Ranking Member, House Committee on Energy
and Commerce
2107 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Doris Matsui
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Communications and Technology
2311 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair McMorris Rodgers, Ranking Member Pallone, Subcommittee Chair Latta and Subcommittee Ranking Member Matsui:

Section 230 is often referred to as the twenty-six words that created the internet. This section of the Communications Decency Act has helped spur innovation and growth among platforms hosting user-generated content. It allows entrepreneurs of all stripes to make a name and business for themselves by fostering unique spaces and communities across the internet in areas of interest and learning. Equally important, Section 230 has made it possible for new apps and services to address the unique content moderation needs of their platforms, curating niche spaces online that deliver products and services that compete with the largest online platforms. Without Section 230 protections, small and mid-sized platforms would face the herculean challenge of withstanding new and frivolous legal threats while competing with the largest funded companies in the world with just a fraction of the resources. But above all, Section 230 has enabled the internet to grow in a way that supports free expression while also prioritizing safety, encouraging platforms to provide spaces for all kinds of conversations, but within rules and policies to mitigate real-world harms.

[Internet Works](#) and its members – 19 small and medium-sized tech companies – depend on Section 230 to provide users with enjoyable online experiences. Our membership ranges from review sites for jobs, travel and local businesses to online marketplaces and more, all of whom would not be able to flourish and thrive without the protections of Section 230. There is no “one size fits all” approach to content moderation; rather, Section 230 allows each small and medium-sized company to compete by hosting content that serves the diverse and specific wants and needs of its user base, while also enabling the removal of content that is harmful or irrelevant.

Our membership is diverse and varies in size, but we are brought together because we are all working to preserve the ability of all online communities and platforms to thrive. Section 230 impacts not just the largest companies, but also those in our membership and everyday internet users. [A few examples](#) of online functions that everyone has come to expect but are made possible through Section 230 include:

- Online forums that aren't overrun by spam content.
- Community-run message boards that do not contain posts about irrelevant topics.
- Review sites that help people plan their next vacation or recommend a local restaurant to try.
- Job boards and reviews so people can find their next dream job.
- Online marketplaces where people can shop for goods or services from small businesses around the world.

Over the last few years, Internet Works has worked to show Section 230 is crucial for the success of small and medium-sized companies – not just the largest social media companies. In 2022, we [filed an amicus brief](#) at the United States Supreme Court in *Gonzalez v. Google*. In that brief, we explained why Section 230 protects organizing and displaying content to users and highlighted the importance of Section 230 across the internet ecosystem, particularly in enabling the internet to be a tool for free speech, education, commerce and innovation.

We understand that there are valid debates around how online platforms function, and our group came together out of an eagerness to have those discussions; however, we can't lose sight of the real value of Section 230. For that reason, we urge lawmakers to consider how any change to Section 230 will impact companies beyond the largest tech platforms. Internet Works and its members look forward to working with the Chair, Ranking Member, members of this committee and all of Congress to ensure Americans are safe online while continuing to spur innovation and promote free speech.

Respectfully,

Internet Works

CC: Members of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce