

National Black Church Initiative

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PRESS RELEASE

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National Black Church Initiative States Position on Net Neutrality and Broadband

Stopping the growth of the Digital Divide

Washington, DC - [The National Black Church Initiative](#) (NBCI), a coalition of 34,000 churches across the United States, believes in the general notion of Net Neutrality. NBCI supports the idea that no one should be able to intentionally restrict the quality, content and access of information over the web based upon usage, race, income or any human division that would not make one user's access equal to another user. NBCI believes that broadband should be universally accessible despite geographic location or income and is vigorously pushing for both Net Neutrality and universal broadband access to become realities in America.

The Digital Divide exists because there are some segments of the population who have the economic means to acquire the technology that is necessary for high speed internet access, and there are other segments of the population who live in an area where that economic prowess is not readily available. This question breaks down to race simply because the income to purchase new technologies is not readily available to minorities based upon the perpetual unemployment that engulfs the African American community. Therefore, NBCI believes that the government has a moral and constitutional obligation to make sure that high speed internet is available to these communities, there is proper web education and that these individuals are connected to the commerce of the internet. This subsequently helps everyone. If a poor African American child in a particular geographic area learns the essentials of the internet they are far more likely to become a productive member of society than those who have no access at all.

The internet is the great race equalizer, because no one knows how you look. This is why it is important that the African American Church speaks forcefully and powerfully to ensure that this technology is available to everyone, regardless of station. The reason the Digital Divide continues to grow is because of the historic racist perceptions against certain communities that leads to a lack

of effort to bring these communities into the digital age, but this does not have to be concerning this new technology.

Because of these beliefs NBCI fully supports the FCC's Broadband Policy Statement, and we call on them to give us yearly updates on how the policy is affecting the Digital Divide. We support the right of individuals to do the following:

- Access the lawful Internet content of their choice.
- Run applications and use services of their choice, subject to the needs of law enforcement.
- Connect their choice of legal devices that do not harm the network.
- Competition among network providers, application and service providers, and content providers.

NBCI believes that it would be counterproductive if we did not address Internet Service Providers' needs for innovation and the ability to make money. NBCI believes that these two principles go hand-in-hand. Our position is clear concerning access, but we must also advocate for minority vendors who may be providers to make a living from this new and exciting technology. Therefore, NBCI will always support those Internet Service Providers who offer reasonable proposals for profit and do not restrict user's access to the web. NBCI does not want to see a rise in electronic segregation that will create classes of haves and have-nots. The country needs these providers for employment, entrepreneurship and to offer new, innovative ways to utilize the internet.

About NBCI

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI), a coalition of 16,000 African-American and Latino member churches works to eradicate racial disparities in healthcare. In addition to our member churches, we have 18,000 sister churches. NBCI is a faith-based health organization dedicated to providing critical wellness information and preventive health screening to all of its members. The African-American community ranks first in eleven different health risk categories. NBCI's purpose is to partner with national health officials to provide health education, reduce racial health disparities, and increase access to quality healthcare.