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FCC COMMISSIONER CARR WELCOMES SECTION 230 PETITION

WASHINGTON, DC, July 27, 2020—Today, the Commerce Department’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) filed a petition for rulemaking with the FCC. The petition asks the FCC to adopt rules clarifying Section 230.

In an op-ed published earlier [today](#) in *Newsweek*, Commissioner Carr laid out a path forward on Big Tech. His plan focuses on promoting change along three main lines—transparency, accountability, and user empowerment. Many of those ideas are relevant to FCC action on the Section 230 petition.

FCC Commissioner Carr issued the following statement on NTIA’s Section 230 petition:

“Section 230 confers a unique set of benefits on social media companies and other ‘providers of interactive computer services.’ It gives them special protections that go beyond the First Amendment rights that protect everyone in this country. Congress passed this provision back in the 1990s to address the limited content moderation practices employed by Internet sites like the then-popular Prodigy and CompuServe messaging boards. In doing so, Congress sought ‘to encourage the development of technologies which maximize user control over what information is received’ and to ‘preserve the vibrant and competitive free market that presently exists,’ as several of Section 230’s provisions state. Empowering users to engage in their own content moderation is thus at the core of Section 230.

“Flash forward over 20 years, and the content moderation practices employed by the Internet giants of today bear little resemblance to the activities Congress had in mind when it passed Section 230. And there is bipartisan support for reforming Section 230. Yet the federal government has provided virtually no guidance on how the unique and conditional set of legal privileges Congress conferred on social media companies should be interpreted today.

“The Section 230 petition provides an opportunity to bring much-needed clarity to the statutory text. And it allows us to move forward in a way that will empower speakers to engage in ‘a forum for a true diversity of political discourse,’ as Congress envisioned when it passed Section 230.

“I look forward to reviewing and acting expeditiously on the petition.”

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