

# Cablefax Daily™

Thursday — April 27, 2017

What the Industry Reads First

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## Pai Chart: FCC Chmn Outlines Plan To Nix Title II Regulations By Year's End

FCC chmn *Ajit Pai* declared his intent to hit Ctrl+Z on the Commission's 2015 classification of broadband providers as common carriers under Title II by the end of the year, sounding the opening salvo in the latest political battle over net neutrality. "We cannot stick with regulations from the Great Depression meant to micromanage Ma Bell," he said of Title II, a standard set in 1934. "Instead, we need rules that focus on growth and infrastructure investment, rules that expand high-speed Internet access everywhere and give Americans more online choice, faster speeds, and more innovation." Pai got the ball rolling on the policy reversal by introducing a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to his fellow FCC Commissioners, which they will vote on at their May 18 meeting. Pai's proposal would reclassify broadband as an information service under Title I, bringing back what he called "light-touch regulation drawn from the *Clinton Administration*." Pai's proposal also calls for the elimination of the Internet conduct standard, which the chmn said his predecessors at the FCC used to launch an investigation of free-data programs that wireless carriers had been offering consumers. The FCC will seek comment on how to approach the 2015 bright-line rules, including soliciting public input. "This will be the beginning of the discussion, not the end," Pai said. He added that a declaratory ruling, which would have allowed the FCC to reverse the 2015 ruling immediately, was not the right path, citing a desire for transparency and feedback from the public. Democratic senators, who held an earlier conference call to preemptively decry Pai's plan, vowed to use the time before and after the May 18 vote to mobilize against the reversal of the net neutrality regulations. Sen *Ed Markey* (D-MA) warned Republicans will face a "tsunami of resistance," with Sen *Richard Blumenthal* (D-CT) adding that opposition will come from both the grassroots level and a large portion of the business community. Putting ISPs in the crosshairs, Blumenthal warned, "The big companies, the ISPs who are winners here, the bad guys, are going to be targeted, and they're going to have to think twice about whether they want to fight this fight." Throughout his address, Pai hammered home his view that the 2015 regulations sought to address a problem that didn't actually exist, mocking net neutrality advocates' warnings that the Internet would "suddenly devolve into a digital dystopia of fast lanes and slow lanes." He later cited a **Free State Foundation** report estimating that Title II has already cost the US \$5.1bln in broadband capital investment. "Title II has kept countless consumers from getting better Internet access or getting ac-

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# Who Are The Most Influential Minorities and Powerful Women?

Cablefax is accepting nominations for the Most Powerful Women & Most Influential Minorities in Cable Programs that will be featured in *Cablefax: The Magazine*.

**It's free to enter both of these prestigious awards!**



## The Most Influential Minorities in Cable

Nomination Deadline: **May 19**

Publication Date: **September 2017**

**About:** Cablefax's annual Most Influential Minorities Magazine celebrates the men and women who are shaping the industry and opening doors for minorities across all areas of business.

## The Most Powerful Women in Cable

Nomination Deadline: **July 14**

Publication Date: **November 2017**

Event: **November 16**

**About:** The Most Powerful Women in Cable celebrates incredible female executives who make a difference every day.

**Nominate Now:** [www.cablefax.com/awards](http://www.cablefax.com/awards)

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cess, period,” he said. “It is widening the digital divide in our country and accentuating the practice of digital redlining—of fencing off lower-income neighborhoods on the map and saying, ‘It’s not worth the time and money to deploy there.’”

**Taking A Stand:** While fellow FCC commish *Mike O’Rielly* took the podium right after Pai to support his proposal, Democratic FCC commish, *Mignon Clyburn*, was absent from the event. She later made her own dissenting remarks, saying Pai had “issued a hall pass to the nation’s largest broadband providers while leaving those we took an oath to protect, the American consumer, back in detention.” She added, “We should not go so gentle into that good night.” Additional reaction adhered to expectations, with the cable community praising the move and protectionist advocacy groups expressing outrage. Reactions pretty much were as expected. **Comcast** chmn/CEO *Brian Roberts* released a statement saying the company supports reversal of Title II, while declaring that the company supports a free and open Internet. **Free Press** pres/CEO *Craig Aaron* said rolling back the regulations would “leave people everywhere at the mercy of the phone and cable companies, some of the most hated companies in America.” So, it begins again...

**Cox Succession Plan:** **Cox Ent** evp/COO *Alex Taylor* will succeed *John Dyer* as pres/CEO following the latter’s retirement at the end of 2017, chair *Jim Kennedy* announced Wednesday. In addition, Cox evp HR & admin *Marybeth Leamer* will retire in the summer of 2018, with current **Cox Comm** evp/COO *Jill Campbell* filling the resulting vacancy at Cox Ent in June. Cox Comm head *Pat Esser* is expected to name her successor shortly. The news came the same day Campbell was inducted into the **Cable Center** Hall of Fame.

**Hearst-DISH Agreement:** It took 57 days, but **Hearst** stations returned to **DISH** on Wednesday. The two announced a multi-year deal for carriage of the broadcaster’s local channels in 26 markets across 30 states.

**ESPN Layoffs:** Long-anticipated talent cuts hit **ESPN** Wednesday, as about 100 members of the talent lineup were informed that they were being laid off. Following an email from ESPN pres *John Skipper* to employees, many of those impacted identified themselves on **Twitter**. Big names include **NFL** analysts *Ed Werder* and *Trent Differ*, radio host and college football analyst *Danny Kannell*, college hoops analyst *Len Elmore* and **MLB** analyst *Jim Bowden*. College football and the **NHL** were among the coverage areas hit hardest by the cuts, which come amid sub losses and unprecedented rights fees for live sports. Our eyes will be on which nets look to bolster their own lineups by scooping up ex-ESPN talent.

**Production Partnership:** **AMC** and **Charter** have formed a content partnership aimed at using **AMC Studios** to develop and co-produce original programming for Charter’s **Spectrum** platform. The agreement will give Charter an “exclusive initial window in the US to the co-produced content for use on its own platform” while AMC Studios will retain subsequent rights.

Ranked Top 35 or Better Among  
All Nielsen Rated Cable Networks  
All Quarter Long.



HIGHEST RATED QUARTER IN INSP’S HISTORY  
MORE ORIGINAL CONTENT IN 2017

Source: Nielsen Npower, 1Q2017, Weekly C3 based on 24-Hour



Daphna Edwards Ziman, President of Cinémoi  
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## **Media Solutions Summit**

To promote diversity and independent voices and  
discuss marketplace challenges affecting independent networks

**Thursday, April 27, 2017**

Senate Russell Office Building, Room 385

2 Constitution Ave NE, Washington, DC 20002

**9am-Noon**

**9am-10am** – Breakfast, Press Briefing, Policymaker Remarks  
(including FCC Commissioner Clyburn)

**10am-11am** – Industry Panel

**11am-Noon** – Policymaker Remarks

### **HONORARY HOSTS**

U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein

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U.S. Senator Edward Markey

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U.S. Representative Tony Cárdenas

U.S. Representative Yvette Clarke

U.S. Representative Joseph Crowley

U.S. Representative Ted Deutch

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U.S. Representative Adam Schiff

**RSVP**

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Summit is open to the press