

DID YOU KNOW? Corporations VOTED to adopt this. Through ALEC, global companies work as “equals” in “unison” with politicians to write laws to govern your life. Big Business has “a VOICE and a VOTE,” according to newly exposed documents. **DO YOU?**

Statement of Principles: The Internet and Electronic Commerce

The Internet is dramatically changing the way we communicate, learn, conduct business, transact financial services and are entertained. Every day the nature of the Internet changes, as people add more material, build faster computers, devise cheaper means of electronic storage, create improved software, and develop more capable communications. Such explosive growth of the Internet defies detailed one-size-fits-all approach to public policy and regulation. However, as policymakers write laws and regulations impacting the Internet, they should be guided by principles which have fostered the early progress of the Internet and will ensure the fullest realization of its potential.

The American Legislative Exchange Council supports the following principles in formulating laws and regulations that impact the Internet and electronic commerce:

Dynamic Competition. New electronic and/or digital technologies are converting industries once characterized by economies of scale and natural monopolies into prototypical competitive markets. Government policies, laws and regulations should support the Internet and Internet access by aggressively promoting free entry into markets and replacing government mandates with market competition. Laws and regulations designed for a regulated utility market environment should not be applied to the Internet.

Growth. The Internet’s continued expansion depends on continuing growth in its capacity. Public policies must be designed to foster ongoing expansion of useful and affordable bandwidth, encourage development of innovative technologies and promote broad universal access.

Self-Governance. The Internet has flourished in large part due to the unregulated environment in which it has developed and grown. Voluntary codes of conduct, industry-driven standards and individual empowerment, together with a market environment, generally hold greater future promise than does intrusive governmental regulation.

Free Speech. The Internet allows persons to communicate and share ideas with others with an ease never before possible. Federal and state government policy should rigorously protect freedom of speech and expression on the Internet, but not restrict states or local governments from future needed controls. New electronic and/or digital technologies adequately enable individuals, families and schools to protect themselves and students from communications and materials they deem offensive or inappropriate.

Electronic Commerce and Taxation. Electronic commerce promises to become an increasingly vital component of our states’ and national economies. Government policies should not hinder the creation of a workable infrastructure in which electronic commerce can flourish. Policy makers must resist any temptation to apply tax policy to the Internet in a discriminatory manner that hinders growth.

Privacy and Security. Citizens should be empowered to protect, assure and secure their privacy and intellectual property from intrusion or piracy. Advanced technologies, including encryption, should be available in the marketplace without government controls, restrictions, or technical mandates.

Digital Government. State Governments should place their agencies and departments on the Internet in order to facilitate efficient and convenient citizen/government interactions. Transactions, such as permits and licenses, and property records are examples that can be handled electronically. Education programs for the public should be developed so that citizens are aware of the resources available through the Internet.

The American Legislative Exchange Council will oppose any federal legislation or regulation that would: hinder access to the Internet; limit competition or an increase in consumer choice; or, impede efforts by states to ensure the security of personal information of consumers conducting electronic commerce transactions.

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