

June 6, 2016

The Honorable Reince Priebus  
Chairman  
Republican National Committee (RNC)  
310 First Street SE  
Washington, D.C. 20003

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Chair  
Democratic National Committee (DNC)  
430 South Capitol Street SE  
Washington, D.C. 20003

CC: Sen. John Barrasso, Republican  
Platform Committee Chair

CC: Rep. Elijah Cummings, Democratic  
Platform Drafting Committee Chair

CC: Gov. Mary Fallin, Republican Platform  
Committee Co-Chair

CC: Rep. Virginia Foxx, Republican  
Platform Committee Co-Chair

***RE: 2016 Party Platforms***

Dear Chairman Priebus and Chair Wasserman Schultz:

Your respective parties are beginning the process of engaging stakeholders to develop your party platforms for the 2016 election. We the undersigned organizations – representing a diverse network of public interest groups focused on civil rights, technology policy, racial justice, consumers' rights and community advocacy – call on you to ensure that conversations about internet and technology policy include the voices of public interest advocates and affected communities.

According to [recent reports](#), today the RNC will meet with telecom and tech lobbyists for a closed-door conversation about technology issues to inform your platform. The DNC will also hold its first forum with testimony in Washington, D.C. on June 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. As the process of developing your platforms continues, we believe it is vital that platform committees both understand the perspectives of the communities we advocate for and recognize how a free, open, and accessible internet supports so many of your policy goals.

Today, access to the internet is essential, not a luxury. Students across the country rely on it to advance their education, and adults use it to find jobs, start new businesses, and participate in our democracy. A free and open internet is an engine of economic growth, healthcare modernization, and social movements and change, and it is crucial that we protect the personal information and rights of all Americans to communicate. The policies that will ensure all Americans can leverage such a critical tool should be elements of both parties' platforms, and the communities we represent must be part of the conversation in developing these policy planks.

Understanding where both political parties stand on issues such as protecting privacy online, or ensuring greater broadband access, deployment, and adoption in urban, rural, and tribal areas alike, will be crucial to helping voters make an informed choice on Election Day. The important internet and technology policy issues we would like to discuss with the platform committees would include:

- **Advancing Universal, Affordable Internet Access**
- **Defending a Free and Open Internet**
- **Protecting Individuals' Information and Privacy Online**

All Americans deserve a voice in the discussions on technology policies that will shape so many of their activities in the future. Therefore, we strongly urge you to ensure that your platform development processes on technology and internet policy include public interest and affected community voices. We look forward to the opportunity to discuss these issues with you further.

Respectfully,

**18MillionRising.org**

**Alvaro Bedoya, Center on Privacy & Technology at Georgetown Law\***

**Center for Democracy and Technology**

**Center for Media Justice**

**Center for Rural Strategies**

**Color of Change**

**Common Cause**

**Courage Campaign**

**CREDO Action**

**Daily Kos**

**Demand Progress**

**Electronic Frontier Foundation**

**Free Press**

**Institute for Local Self-Reliance**

**Media Access Project**

**National Hispanic Media Coalition**

**Native Public Media**

**New America's Open Technology Institute**

**Open MIC (Open Media and Information Companies Initiative)**

**Public Knowledge**

\*(Affiliation for identification purposes only)