

FIGHTING FOR CONSUMERS & PROTECTING CHILDREN ONLINE

AS CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE AND TRANSPORTATION, SENATOR MCCAIN WORKED TO EXPAND COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES TO CONSUMERS, WHILE FIGHTING TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE FROM INTERNET PREDATORS.

Expanding Internet Freedom

As a strong believer in free market enterprise, Senator McCain introduced the [*Internet Regulatory Freedom Act of 1999*](#) to ensure the internet remains available and affordable to all Americans, regardless of where they live or how much money they earn. He also sponsored the [*Consumer Broadband Deregulation Act of 2002*](#), which would have deregulated broadband access by ensuring that the market – not the government – regulates the deployment of broadband services.

Fighting for “A La Carte” Cable

Senator McCain was a longtime critic of the practice of cable television bundling, which forces consumers to purchase a package of channels, regardless of whether the viewer wants all of the channels in the package. To address this, Senator McCain introduced the [*Consumers Having Options in Cable Entertainment Act of 2006*](#), legislation that would have encouraged broadcasters and cable companies that own cable channels to sell their channels individually to subscribers and provide them with ability to choose the content they purchase “a la carte.”

Ending Discriminatory Internet Sales Tax

Senator McCain believed that in order to preserve the Internet, it must be kept tax-free. He spearheaded efforts to permanently ban multiple or discriminatory state and local taxes on Internet access and e-commerce transactions. In 2000, Senator McCain [*sponsored legislation*](#) to extend the 1998 moratorium on Internet taxes through 2006. The bill ensured that Internet commerce remained free from burdensome, anti-consumer taxation until 2006, while Congress had the chance to deliberate on a fair and equitable tax structure for the economy.

Following several short-term extensions of the moratorium, Senator McCain cosponsored the [Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act of 2007](#), which permanently extended the moratorium and assured consumers that taxes will not inhibit the offering of affordable Internet access. Congress later passed legislation including a permanent extension of the [Internet Tax Freedom Act](#), preventing state and local authorities from taxing the Internet.

Email Registry for Sex Offenders

Senator McCain led efforts in Congress to prevent the victimization of young people on the internet. In 2007, Senators McCain and Chuck Schumer (D-NY) cosponsored the [Keeping the Internet Devoid of Sexual-Predators Act of 2007](#), legislation that required sex offenders to register with law enforcement, and enabled social networks to actively track and expel child predators. Senators McCain and Schumer also fought to combat online child pornography by cosponsoring the [Securing Adolescents from Exploitation-Online Act of 2007](#). The bill, also known as the *SAFE Act*, was designed to prevent the sexual exploitation of children by requiring electronic communications providers to report images of child pornography to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. This bill eventually became the [PROTECT Our Children Act of 2008](#), which passed and was signed into law in 2008.

Combatting Online Sex Trafficking

As an advocate for human rights at home and abroad, Senator McCain worked tirelessly to combat human trafficking. In 2018, he worked with Senators Rob Portman (R-OH), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Claire McCaskill (D-MO), John Cornyn (R-TX) and Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) to pass the [Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act of 2017](#) in the Senate by an overwhelming, bipartisan vote of 97-2. This bill allows victims of sex trafficking to seek justice against websites that facilitated their victimization, and enables state law enforcement officials to take action against individuals or businesses that violate federal sex trafficking laws.