

Ten years ago, the United States stood at the forefront of the Internet revolution. With some of the fastest speeds and lowest prices in the world for high-speed Internet access, the nation was poised to be the global leader in the new knowledge-based economy. Today that global competitive advantage has all but vanished because of a series of government decisions and resulting monopolies that have allowed dozens of countries, including Japan and South Korea, to pass us in both speed and price of broadband. This steady slide backward not only deprives consumers of vital services needed in a competitive employment and business market—it also threatens the economic future of the nation.

Those are the words of Susan P. Crawford in her book *Captive Audience: The Telecom Industry and Monopoly Power in the New Gilded Age* published last year and despite the negative reaction she received from critics of government regulation she is speaking truth to power. “Crawford shows us that the railroad barons of today run cable companies. These monopolies raise prices, stifle competition, and drag the U.S. further behind in global telecommunications revolution.”—Clay Shirky, author of *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations*.

*I wholeheartedly agree we need open and universal access to communications and for the cable and telecom companies to be properly regulated. The FCC needs to reconsider its 2010 decision to not reclassify broadband under Title II as a telecommunications service after opening a proceeding to solicit comments on doing so. The FCC must also work to strengthen authority to implement rules and strengthen rules (especially if rules struck down by courts) and enforce its Network Neutrality rules in the 2010 Open Internet Order. In addition, the FCC must extend the rules to cover all wireless services to ensure nondiscrimination on the Internet for users of cellular companies Internet services. Maintain and strengthening USF rules to ensure universal access for all applies to the Internet and cellular communications while maintaining it for land-line phone/Internet for those in need of those services. Wire-line phone is still important for operating home alarm systems and in rural areas universal service is highly important for the poor, low-income and people of color who need access.*

"Federal regulatory agencies make definitional decisions in the lives of Americans. But they are little covered by our diminished media; and even when the stories are told, they tend to be told from the perspective of the powerful. That's what makes Susan Crawford's book . . . so remarkable. She gets the facts straight—I know, because I was there. But she also does something just as important: she puts the facts in perspective, providing readers with an analysis that is essential if we are ever going to forge communications policies that serve all Americans." —Michael J. Copps, Former FCC Commissioner, *The Nation*.