

The Free State Foundation

A Free Market Think Tank.....Because Ideas Matter

**Free State Foundation
Seventeenth Annual Policy
Conference
March 25, 2025**

**National Press Club
Washington, DC**

Tweet [#FSFConf17](#)

Welcome

Welcome to the Free State Foundation's Seventeenth Annual Policy Conference. Each year our annual conference has become even more of a must-attend event. With all the changes in key leadership positions, and the already implemented and proposed changes in the legal and policy landscape at the FCC and FTC, throughout the Trump administration, and in Congress, this almost certainly will be one of the most interesting, important, and impactful of our annual conferences. How could it be otherwise with such an outstanding group of speakers and sessions!

I will kick off the program with a Keynote Conversation with FTC Chairman Andrew Ferguson titled "New Directions in Competition and Consumer Protection Policies." Following Chairman Ferguson will be a Keynote Address by Jonathan Turley, Shapiro Chair of Public Interest Law, George Washington University Law School, and Fox News Media Contributor. His address is titled "The Indispensable Right: Free Speech in an Age of Rage," which is also the title of his new book.

Then FSF Director of Policy Studies and Senior Fellow Seth Cooper will moderate the "New Directions in Communications Policy" panel with experts Rick Cimerman, Vice President, External and State Affairs Lead for NCTA – The Internet & Television Association; Robert Fisher, Senior Vice President, Federal Government Relations & Public Affairs for Verizon; and Rosa Mendoza, President and CEO of ALLvanza.

Two Keynote Addresses by top congressional communications lawmakers follow: first, Senator Ted Cruz, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, offering "The View from the Senate," then Congressman Richard Hudson, Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Communications and Technology, with "The View from the House."

Next, I will moderate a session titled "Universal Service After the Supreme Court's Consumers' Research Decision" with two members of the Free State Foundation's Board of Academic Advisors – Michelle Connolly, Professor of the Practice of Economics at Duke University, and Daniel Lyons, Professor and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at Boston College Law School.

After our usual scrumptious buffet lunch, Michael O'Rielly, former FCC Commissioner and now an FSF Adjunct Senior Fellow, will moderate a Keynote Conversation with FCC Commissioner Nathan Simington, FTC Commissioner Melissa Holyoak, and Ajit Pai, former FCC Chairman and just-named the new President and CEO of CTIA. (Congratulations, Ajit!) This session will be a "TMT With Mike O'Rielly" videocast, which is hosted by FSF.

And I will end our program with yet another important Keynote Conversation – "New Directions in Communications Policy" – with FCC Chairman Brendan Carr.

Throughout the conference, there will be plenty of back-and-forth discussion on most of the important telecom, media, Internet, competition, and administrative law issues of the day. At FSF, we unabashedly proclaim our commitment to promoting free market, free speech, property rights, and rule of law principles. But from our founding in 2006, we have made clear that we respect others with different perspectives. As I'm sure Jonathan Turley will explain, now as much as ever, free speech remains "the indispensable right." All other rights depend on its maintenance!

As always, I remain grateful for your interest and participation in the Free State Foundation's programs and activities – and for your friendship!



Seventeenth Annual Policy Conference



Agenda

Welcome and Introduction

9:00 a.m. - 9:10 a.m.

Randolph May, President, Free State Foundation

Keynote Conversation with FTC Chairman Andrew Ferguson "New Directions in Competition and Consumer Protection Policies"

9:10 a.m. - 9:40 a.m.

Moderator: *Randolph May, President, Free State Foundation*

Keynote Address –

"The Indispensable Right - Free Speech in an Age of Rage"

9:40 a.m. - 10:10 a.m.

Jonathan Turley

*Shapiro Chair for Public Interest Law, George Washington University Law School,
and Fox News Media Contributor*

Panel: "New Directions in Communications Policy"

10:10 -10:45 a.m.

Moderator:

Seth Cooper, Director of Policy Studies and Senior Fellow, Free State Foundation

Panelists:

Rick Cimerman

*Vice President, External and State Affairs Lead for NCTA - The
Internet & Television Association*

Robert Fisher

*Senior Vice President, Federal Government Relations & Public
Affairs, Verizon*

Rosa Mendoza

Founder, President, and CEO, ALLvanza

Keynote Address - "The View from the Senate"

10:45 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Senator Ted Cruz

Chairman, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation

"Keynote Address - "The View from the House"

11:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Congressman Richard Hudson

Chairman, House Subcommittee on Communications and Technology

**Panel: "Universal Service After the Supreme Court's
Consumers' Research Decision"**

12:00 p.m. - 12:20 p.m.

Moderator: *Randolph May, President, The Free State Foundation*

Panelists:

Michelle Connolly

*Professor of the Practice of Economics at Duke University and a Member of the
Free State Foundation's Board of Academic Advisors*

Daniel Lyons

*Professor and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at Boston College Law School
and Member of the Free State Foundation's Board of Academic Advisors*

Luncheon

12:20 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.

Keynote Conversation – "TMT with Mike O'Rielly"

12:50 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Moderator: *Michael O'Rielly, Former Commissioner, Federal Communications
Commission, and Adjunct Senior Fellow, Free State Foundation*

Panelists:

Melissa Holyoak

Commissioner, Federal Trade Commission

Ajit Pai

*Former Chairman, Federal Communications Commission, and Partner, Searchlight
Capital*

Nathan Simington

Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission

**Keynote Conversation with FCC Chairman Brendan Carr
"New Directions in Communications Policy"**

1:30 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.

Moderator: *Randolph May, President, Free State Foundation*

Speaker Biographies

Brendan Carr

Chairman, Federal Communications Commission

Chairman Brendan Carr is the senior Republican on the Federal Communications Commission, having served previously as the FCC's General Counsel. Nominated by both President Trump and President Biden, Chairman Carr has been confirmed unanimously by the Senate three times. Chairman Carr has led the FCC's work to modernize its infrastructure rules and accelerate the buildout of high-speed networks. His reforms cut billions of dollars in red tape, enabled the private sector to construct high-speed networks in communities across the country, and extended America's global leadership in 5G. He brings nearly 20 years of private and public sector experience in communications and tech policy to his position. Before joining the FCC as a staffer back in 2012, he worked as an attorney at Wiley Rein LLP in the firm's appellate, litigation, and telecom practices. Previously, Mr. Carr clerked on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit for Judge Dennis Shedd. He received his undergraduate degree from Georgetown University and earned his J.D. from the Catholic University of America's Columbus School of Law.

Rick Cimerman

Vice President, External and State Affairs Lead for NCTA – The Internet & Television Association

Rick Cimerman is Vice President, External and State Affairs Lead for NCTA – The Internet & Television Association. He leads a team responsible for engagement with state broadband officials, state cable associations, state and local intergovernmental groups, third parties and strategic partners, think tanks, and the academic community. Mr. Cimerman is a member of the Board of Directors of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) Foundation, the Internet Education Foundation, the TPRC Research Conference on Communication, Information and Internet Policy, and the Advisory Council for New Mexico State University's Center for Public Utilities. He previously served as Private Sector Chair of the American Legislative Exchange Council's Communications and Technology Task Force, President of the National Coalition for Technology and Education in Training (NCTET), co-chair of the Congressional Internet Caucus Advisory Committee's Broadband Task Force, and program chair for the three NARUC/NECA National Summits on Broadband Deployment, as well as holding leadership positions in other intergovernmental organizations. He is a recognized expert on broadband and telecommunications policy, has testified across the country before numerous state Public Service Commissions and Legislatures and has also served as an adjunct faculty member of Michigan State University's NARUC Annual Regulatory Studies Program. Prior to joining NCTA, Rick was the Director of the Telecommunications Division of the Maryland Public Service Commission and worked at the Florida Public Service Commission. Mr. Cimerman holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Florida, where he studied public utility economics in association with the Public Utility Research Center (PURC) at the University of Florida. He is also a former Jeopardy TV game show winner.

Michelle Connolly

Professor of the Practice of Economics, Duke University and a Member of The Free State Foundation's Board of Academic Advisors

Michelle Connolly is Professor of the Practice in the Economics Department at Duke University. She was the Economics Director of Duke in New York: Financial Markets and Institutions Program for 2007-2009 and the Director of EcoTeach for several years. She currently serves as the Director of the Honors Program in Economics. Professor Connolly previously served as Chief Economist of the FCC in 2006-2007 and 2008-2009 and as an Economist for the International Research Function for the Federal Reserve Bank of New York from 1996 to 1997. Professor Connolly has testified before Congress, participated in a White House panel on Spectrum Issues, has published in numerous journals, and has been recognized on multiple occasions for her teaching. Professor Connolly's research currently focuses on broadband and spectrum policy, though her body of research includes work in international trade, telecommunications policy, media policy, education, growth, and development. She graduated from Yale University and went on to earn her M.A., M.Phil, and Ph.D., also from Yale University.

Seth L. Cooper

Senior Fellow and Director of Policy Studies, The Free State Foundation

Seth Cooper is a Senior Fellow and Director of Policy Studies at The Free State Foundation. His work on federal communications and technology policy at the Free State Foundation began in 2009. He previously served as Director of the Telecommunications and Information Technology Task Force at the American Legislative Exchange Council. Mr. Cooper served as judicial clerk at the Washington State Supreme Court. He has worked in law and policy staff positions at the Washington State Senate and at the Discovery Institute. Mr. Cooper is the co-author, with FSF President Randolph May, of *Modernizing Copyright Law for the Digital Age: Constitutional Foundations for Reform, A Reader on Net Neutrality and Restoring Internet Freedom*, *#CommActUpdate: A Communications Law Fit for the Digital Age*, and *The Constitutional Foundations of Intellectual Property*, and he contributed to chapters in *Communications Law and Policy in the Digital Age* (2012). Mr. Cooper earned his B.A. from Pacific Lutheran University and his J.D. from Seattle University School of Law.

Senator Ted Cruz

Chairman, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation

Senator Ted Cruz was elected as the 34th U.S. Senator from Texas in 2012 and was reelected in 2018 and 2024. He has been a passionate fighter for limited government, economic growth, and national security, and he has authored dozens of legislative measures that have been signed into law. He is also leading the fight in the Senate to support Texas jobs, rein in Big Tech, secure the border, and fundamentally reassess the U.S.-China relationship and hold the Chinese Communist Party accountable for covering up the coronavirus pandemic, committing human rights atrocities, and engaging in censorship, propaganda, and espionage in the United States. In 2003 Senator Cruz was appointed Solicitor General of Texas, and during his five year tenure, he argued eight cases before the Supreme Court. Following his service as Solicitor General, he returned to private practice, where he continued to litigate high stakes cases and argued his ninth case before the Supreme Court. In 1999, Senator Cruz joined George W. Bush's campaign for president as a domestic policy advisor. He also worked at the Department

of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission during the Bush administration. After law school, he clerked for Chief Justice Rehnquist and then worked in private practice. Senator Cruz earned a B.A. from Princeton University and a J.D. from Harvard Law School.

Andrew N. Ferguson

Chairman, Federal Trade Commission

Andrew Ferguson is the Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission. He was nominated as a Commissioner in July of 2023 and confirmed by voice vote March 2024 to a term running through Sept. 25, 2030. President Donald Trump recently picked Commissioner Ferguson to head the Federal Trade Commission. Chairman Ferguson most recently served as Solicitor General of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Prior to that position, he served as chief counsel to Senator Mitch McConnell and as a Republican counsel on the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee. He also practiced law at several law firms in Washington, DC. After law school, Mr. Ferguson clerked for Judge Karen L. Henderson on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. He earned his undergraduate degree and law degree from the University of Virginia.

Robert Fisher

Senior Vice President, Federal Government Relations & Public Affairs, Verizon

Robert Fisher is Verizon's Senior Vice President of Federal Government Relations & Public Affairs. He manages Verizon's advocacy and relations in Congress and the Administration, federal policy development, oversees Verizon's federal, state, and local tax policy advocacy, and is responsible for Verizon's public affairs strategy relating to public policy. Mr. Fisher is also Vice-Chairman of Verizon's Political Action Committee. Before joining Verizon, he was Director of Government Affairs for Clear Channel Communications (now iHeart Media). Previously, he served on the staff of Senator John McCain, where he worked on the Senate Commerce Committee. Mr. Fisher advised then-Chairman McCain and other Senators on the Committee on various telecom and technology issues. He also worked on Senator McCain's 1998 reelection campaign, 2000 presidential campaign, and was a policy advisor during the Senator's 2008 presidential campaign. He has also served as an informal policy advisor to three Republican presidential campaigns. Mr. Fisher earned a B.A. from Arizona State University and attended the Corporate Finance Executive Program at Stanford.

Melissa Holyoak

Commissioner, Federal Trade Commission

Melissa Holyoak is a Commissioner of the Federal Trade Commission. She was sworn in March 25, 2024. She has extensive experience as a litigator and leader. Most recently, she served as Solicitor General with the Utah Attorney General's Office, where she oversaw the civil appeals, criminal appeals, constitutional defense and special litigation, and antitrust and data privacy divisions. She also managed multistate matters including those involving consumer protection and antitrust claims. Before taking on that role, she served as the president and general counsel of Hamilton Lincoln Law Institute, a Washington, DC-based public interest law firm and in other public interest attorney positions with the Competitive Enterprise Institute and the Center for Class Action Fairness. Ms. Holyoak has argued in the Fifth, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, Tenth and D.C. Circuits. She is a former prosecutor and attorney with

O'Melveny & Myers LLP. Commissioner Holyoak is a member of the bars of Utah, DC, and Missouri (inactive). She graduated from the University of Utah S.J. Quinney College of Law.

Congressman Richard Hudson

Chairman, House Subcommittee on Communications and Technology

Congressman Richard Hudson has served in Congress since 2013, currently representing North Carolina's 9th Congressional District. In the 119th Congress, Rep. Hudson was re-elected by his colleagues to House Republican leadership. As a Member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee and Chairman of the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology, Representative Hudson is committed to bridging the digital divide, streamlining federal regulations, making health care more affordable, and unleashing American energy to lower costs and create jobs in North Carolina. He has also led efforts to clean up chemicals in drinking water which impact our overall quality of life. Congressman Hudson earned a B.A. from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, while serving as Student Body President.

Daniel Lyons

Professor and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at Boston College Law School and Member of The Free State Foundation's Board of Academic Advisors

Daniel Lyons is a Professor of Law, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, and the Dean's Distinguished Scholar at Boston College Law School. He specializes in property, telecommunications and internet law, and administrative law. Before joining BC Law, Professor Lyons practiced at the firm of Munger, Tolles and Olson in Los Angeles. He also clerked for Judge Cynthia Holcomb Hall of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Professor Lyons has testified before Congress and state legislatures and has participated in numerous proceedings at the Federal Communications Commission. His work has appeared in legal journals such as the *Emory Law Journal* and in the popular press, including *Forbes Magazine*, *US News and World Report*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. He is also a nonresident senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. Professor Lyons received his A.B. from Harvard College and his J.D. from Harvard Law School.

Randolph J. May

President, The Free State Foundation

Randolph May is founder and President of The Free State Foundation. Before entering the think tank world, Mr. May practiced communications, administrative, and regulatory law as a partner at major national law firms. He previously served as Associate General Counsel at the FCC. Mr. May has held numerous leadership positions in bar associations, including serving as Chair of the American Bar Association's Section of Administrative Law and Regulatory Practice and a member of the ABA's House of Delegates. He is a Senior Fellow of the Administrative Conference of the United States and a Fellow at the National Academy of Public Administration. He has published more than 250 articles and essays on communications, administrative, and constitutional law topics. Mr. May is author of *A Call for a Radical New Communications Policy: Proposals for Free Market Reform*. He is co-author, with FSF Senior Fellow and Director of Policy Studies Seth Cooper, of *Modernizing Copyright Law for the Digital Age: Constitutional Foundations for Reform*, *A Reader on Net Neutrality and Restoring Internet Freedom*, *#CommActUpdate: A Communications Law Fit for the Digital Age*, and *The Constitutional Foundations of Intellectual Property*. Mr. May is editor of

two books, *Communications Law and Policy in the Digital Age: The Next Five Years* and *New Directions in Communications Policy*. In addition, he is the co-editor of two other books, *Net Neutrality or Net Neutering: Should Broadband Internet Services Be Regulated?* and *Communications Deregulation and FCC Reform*. Mr. May received his B.A. from Duke University and his J.D. from Duke Law School.

Rosa Mendoza

Founder, President, and CEO, ALLvanza

Rosa Mendoza is the Founder, President, and CEO of ALLvanza, an organization created to “ensure all Americans have a fair opportunity for success in our innovation- and technology-driven world.” Ms. Mendoza was recognized as one of Washington DC’s 500 Most Influential People of 2024 by *Washingtonian* magazine. She serves on the FCC’s Communications Equity and Diversity Council. Prior to founding ALLvanza, Ms. Mendoza served as the Executive Director of the Hispanic Technology and Telecommunications Partnership (HTTP), where she informed elected officials, policymakers, and other stakeholders on how telecommunications and technology policy issues impact the Latino community. Prior to joining HTTP, she served as the Manager of Special Projects for The Raben Group. She also served as the Assistant Finance Director for Congressman Henry Cuellar (D-TX), and worked as the Media Relations Executive for the Hispanic Communications Network. Ms. Mendoza holds a B.A. in Communication with an emphasis in Public Relations and a Ed.M. with an emphasis in Higher Education Administration from Washington State University.

Michael O’Rielly

Former Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission, and Adjunct Senior Fellow, The Free State Foundation

Michael O’Rielly is an Adjunct Senior Fellow with the Free State Foundation and host of the “TMT With Mike O’Rielly” videocast hosted by FSF. He is a member of APCO’s International Advisory Council, principal at MPORielly Consulting, LLC, a visiting fellow at the Hudson Institute’s Center for the Economics of the Internet, and a senior fellow at the Media Institute. Mr. O’Rielly served as a commissioner at the FCC from 2013 through 2020. Before being unanimously confirmed to the FCC, Mr. O’Rielly held a variety of leading staff positions during twenty years on Capitol Hill in both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, ending as policy advisor in the Office of the Senate Republican Whip, then led by U.S. Senator John Cornyn. He previously worked for the Republican Policy Committee in the U.S. Senate as a policy analyst for banking, technology, transportation, trade, and commerce issues, and as legislative director to Senator John Sununu. Before his tenure as a Senate staffer, he served as a professional staff member and telecommunications policy analyst on the Committee on Energy and Commerce in the United States House of Representatives. He began his career as a legislative assistant to U.S. Congressman Tom Bliley. Mr. O’Rielly received his B.A. from the University of Rochester.

Ajit Pai

Former Chairman, Federal Communications Commission, and Partner, Searchlight Capital

Prior to joining Searchlight in 2021, **Ajit Pai** was the Chairman of the FCC, which he led from 2017 until 2021. During his tenure as Chairman, he implemented major initiatives to help close the digital divide; advance U.S. leadership in 5G, Open Radio Access Networks, Wi-Fi 6, and

other wireless technologies; promote innovation; protect consumers, public safety, and national security; and make the agency itself more open, transparent, and data driven. Mr. Pai first joined the FCC as a Commissioner in 2012. Before becoming Commissioner, Mr. Pai served in various positions of increasing responsibility at the FCC, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the U.S. Senate. Previously, he was a partner at Jenner & Block LLP and served as in-house counsel at Verizon. Mr. Pai serves on various portfolio company boards. Immediately following law school, he clerked for the Honorable Martin L.C. Feldman of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana. Mr. Pai received an A.B. from Harvard University and a J.D. from the University of Chicago Law School.

Nathan Simington

Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission

Nathan Simington was nominated to serve as a Commissioner of the FCC by President Donald J. Trump. He was confirmed by the United States Senate in 2020. Commissioner Simington brings both private and public-sector experience to the Commission. Previously, he served as Senior Advisor at the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA.) In this role, he worked on many aspects of telecommunications policy, including spectrum allocation and planning, broadband access, and the U.S. government’s role in the Internet. Prior to joining the Commission, he was senior counsel to Brightstar Corp., an international mobile device services company. In this capacity, he led and negotiated telecommunications equipment and services transactions with leading providers in over twenty countries. Prior to joining Brightstar, he worked as an attorney in private practice. Commissioner Simington is a graduate of the University of Michigan Law School. He also holds degrees from the University of Rochester and Lawrence University.

Jonathan Turley

Shapiro Chair of Public Interest Law, George Washington University Law School, and Fox News Media Contributor

Jonathan Turley is a nationally recognized legal scholar who has written extensively in areas ranging from constitutional law to legal theory to tort law. He is the author of *The Indispensable Right: Free Speech in an Age of Rage*, published by Simon & Schuster. He is a columnist for *USA Today* and writes regularly for the *Washington Post*. After a stint at Tulane Law School, Professor Turley joined the George Washington faculty in 1990 and, in 1998, was given the prestigious Shapiro Chair for Public Interest Law, the youngest chaired professor in the school’s history. In 2024, a G.W. alum endowed a fellowship after him, “The Professor Jonathan Turley Public Interest and Public Service Summer Fellowship.” He has been ranked in the top five most popular law professors on Twitter and has been repeatedly ranked in the nation’s top 500 lawyers in annual surveys. Professor Turley has served as counsel in some of the most notable cases in the last two decades including the representation of whistleblowers, military personnel, judges, members of Congress, and a wide range of other clients. He is a frequent witness before the House and Senate on constitutional and statutory issues as well as tort reform legislation. Professor Turley is also a nationally recognized legal commentator, and he appears regularly as a legal expert on all of the major television networks. In 2024, the *Washingtonian* recognized Turley as one of the most influential persons in shaping policy. His award-winning blog is routinely ranked as one of the most popular legal blogs by AVVO. Professor Turley received his B.A. at the University of Chicago and his J.D. at Northwestern. In 2008, he was given an honorary Doctorate of Law from John Marshall Law School for his contributions to civil liberties and the public interest.

About The Free State Foundation

The Free State Foundation is a nonpartisan research and educational institution located in Maryland. Its purpose is to promote understanding of free market, limited government, and rule of law principles.

Thank you for joining us today, and we look forward to seeing you at future FSF events.

**The Free State Foundation
P.O. Box 60680
Potomac, Maryland 20854**

For more information, please visit us online —
www.freestatefoundation.org

Tweet #FSFConf17



**Free State Foundation
Seventeenth Annual Policy
Conference
March 25, 2025**