



The Daily Dish

April 25th Edition

DOUGLAS HOLTZ-EAKIN | APRIL 25, 2014

Good Morning,

In a last act of desperation the [State of Oregon has turned to the federal government](#) to take over their broken healthcare exchange. The worst example of exchanges in the country, no Oregon resident has been able to sign up for coverage online. The issue of getting the complicated marketplaces up and running has plagued a few individual states and, of course, [healthcare.gov](#), but none to this level. The state hopes this will jumpstart their program, but if history teaches us anything, the Oregonians will need serious patience with HHS in charge of troubleshooting a website.

A new statement from the FCC on net neutrality that providers can charge companies for different speeds of delivery is [in direct conflict with President Obama's 2007 campaign promises](#). Before he was in the White House, the President abhorred the idea saying it “destroys one of the best things about the Internet — which is that there is this incredible equality there.” From Politico, “Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.), another regular net neutrality critic, later charged that Wheeler’s plans amount to ‘regulatory action that could change the future of the Internet as we know it.’”

Eakinomics: K-12 Education Standards

Yesterday Education Secretary Arne Duncan [announced](#) that Washington State would lose its waiver from No Child Left Behind (NCLB) standards, the result of the fact that Washington did not tie teacher evaluations to improvements in student performance. Recently the Washington state legislature failed to pass legislation that would have imposed such a standard.

What does this mean? For the state, it means that federal funds will have to be used as specified in NCLB — funding private tutoring services for at-risk students and teacher training. It will be forced to tell parents of students in low-performing schools they have the right to transfer their child to a better school and transport the child to that school. Finally, the most crushing blow is that essentially every school will be labeled as failing under NCLB because the law requires 100 percent math and reading proficiency by 2014 — something that will not happen.

From the broader perspective, it is useful for the Department of Education to enforce its policies (even if one does not agree with the policies it was trying to implement under the NCLB waiver). States should not get a free pass with taxpayer money. And the general idea of tying evaluations to student performance metrics is a good one (see [here](#), and [here](#)), so leaning on states to adopt such systems is a good policy.