

## **EDITORIAL: Internet Taxes**

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Have we finally found something congressional Democrats don't want to tax?

Perhaps.

On Tuesday, the House overwhelmingly passed a four-year extension of a moratorium on state and local taxes on Internet access. The vote was 405-2. The current ban was passed in 1998, but was set to expire on Nov. 1.

"This bill," said Rep. Mel Watt, D-N.C., one of the bill's sponsors, "is pro consumer, pro innovation and pro technology."

Great. But one question. Why not make the ban permanent?

Under House rules set for the vote, no amendments were allowed. So even though there is widespread support for a permanent ban, House Democratic leaders wouldn't allow a vote on such a proposal.

Why? Rep. Watt explained that a permanent exemption might not make it out of the Senate.

In other words, there's still some appetite among Democratic leaders in the upper chamber for levying Internet taxes sometime in the future.

That's too bad. By not making the ban permanent, Congress creates an uncertain climate for businesses and investors.

"We want to broaden broadband in the country. The best policy is to make it permanent," said Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Calif. "I regret that the House position today has been really diminished. I really don't know why we've fallen back to four years."

She's right. But we shouldn't let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Extending the temporary ban is better than nothing.

Let's hope the Senate addresses the issue post haste.