

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of**

Subcommittee on Communications and Technology Chairman Michael F. Doyle

Hearing on “Leading the Wireless Future: Securing American Network Technology”

April 21, 2021

Good morning. First off, I'd like to thank our witnesses for appearing before us.

Today, we are talking about our nation's wireless future - and to some extent the world's as well.

The importance of wireless has never been greater - 5G networks and beyond will grow our economy and enable revolutionary advances in technology and connectivity.

However, as a country and a planet we face a growing challenge - currently only four major companies - 2 based in Europe and 2 in China - build the equipment and infrastructure essential for these deployments.

I'm glad to see that representatives from three companies working to shake up this industry are with us here today.

We have seen in the United States, Europe, and around the world that the lack of competition in this space has divided folks into two camps - those that can afford secure networks, and those that cannot.

As more and more of communications and commerce occur via wirelessly connected devices - the security and integrity of these networks has only become more important.

Last Congress, we came together to pass the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act to address concerns about the security threats posed by Huawei and ZTE equipment in domestic networks.

But that's just a first step. We need national policies that aren't just built for the moment - we need to plan and legislate for the future - particularly in critical and fast-growing areas like 5G and beyond.

It has become clear that lower costs are a driving force for wireless providers to use cheaper Chinese vendors.

And as we look at networks in other countries - we can see so many folks struggling with this issue.

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Ensuring that the United States and folks around the world have secure networks depends on vendors ability to be price competitive with equipment from Huawei and ZTE.

That's why I am excited about Open Radio Access Networks or Open RAN

Last Congress, we passed the USA Telecommunications Act - which authorized a range of programs to help accelerate the development and deployment of Open RAN technologies.

This technology has the potential to level the playing field - and it is already unleashing the power of American ingenuity and competition- as well that of our allies. There are already efforts under way to deploy and integrate this technology into networks in the United States and around the world - but we need to do more - and we need to do it faster.

I've talked with a wide range of American network equipment and software companies that want to participate in this growing space.

We have the technology, the ingenuity, and the ability to build this technology here in America.

Our leadership in virtualization and cloud technologies creates tremendous opportunities for Open RAN, and we already design and deploy the most advanced network equipment in the world.

However, proprietary interfaces and end to end networks built by a single vendor have hampered efforts to apply this experience and expertise to wireless networks. We need to change that.

There are a number of opportunities to fund the USA Telecommunications Act and to expand it.

The Biden Administration's Infrastructure proposal as well as the Senate's forthcoming Endless Frontiers Act both provide opportunities for major investment that can help the United States reassert leadership in this critical sector.

I look forward to working with the Administration, the Senate, and my colleagues on the other side of the aisle on these important priorities.

Shifting gears, I would be remiss in this discussion about our wireless future and our leadership in wireless - if I did not talk about spectrum policy.

Spectrum is the fuel that has been powering our nation's wireless deployments. We have led the way in 4G and we have the opportunity to lead in 5G.

But so much of that will depend on our government's ability to coordinate the use of federal spectrum - and to create pipelines for government spectrum to be made available for commercial use.

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Over the last four years, we saw too many spectrum squabbles break out between federal agencies as established norms and processes broke down.

It's critical that NTIA play the role given to it by Congress - to manage federal spectrum resources - and the White House needs to make that clear to all federal agencies and stakeholders.

Ultimately, these are technical issues - and as we have seen time and time again - we can come up with solutions that protect federal incumbents' capabilities - while at the same time making spectrum available for commercial use.

These are issues that are critical to our country, to our economy, and to our nation's ability to continue to lead the world in wireless innovation. Thank you and I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses.