

Opening Statement of the Honorable Marsha Blackburn
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Markup of H.R. 734, H.R. 212, H.R. 471, H.R. 639, H.R. 647, and H.R. 648
February 11, 2015

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Today we embark upon our first full committee markup of the new Congress. This committee is an ideas factory, with the results to show for it. We racked up an impressive bipartisan record of success in the 113th Congress - over 90 bills passed in the House and over 50 bills now law to promote jobs, modernize government, and protect families and communities. Today, we will consider a half-dozen bills as we look to build upon that solid foundation of results.

First up is H.R. 734, the FCC Consolidated Reporting Act of 2015, authored by Majority Whip Scalise, Communications and Technology Subcommittee Chairman Walden, and Ranking Member Eshoo. This good government legislation reduces the reporting workload and increases efficiency at the FCC by consolidating eight separate congressionally mandated reports on the communications industry into a single comprehensive report. This streamlined report will give us important information about competition among technology platforms and the deployment of communications technologies to unserved communities.

Next is H.R. 212, the Drinking Water Protection Act, authored by Rep. Bob Latta (R-OH). This bill will give the EPA the tools they need to prevent future occurrences like the one that happened in Ohio. As the Cleveland Plain Dealer editorialized yesterday, this bill “recognizes the urgency of addressing the public health threat presented by harmful algal blooms.”

H.R. 471, the Ensuring Patient Access to Effective Drug Enforcement Act, one that I have authored in partnership with Reps. Marino, Welch, and Chu would help prevent prescription drug abuse. The bill will establish clear and consistent enforcement standards, and ensure patients have access to medications by promoting collaboration among government agencies, patients, and industry stakeholders.

H.R. 639, the Improving Regulatory Transparency for New Medical Therapies Act, authored by Health Subcommittee Chairman Pitts, Subcommittee Ranking Member Green, and full committee Ranking Member Pallone, would amend the CSA to improve and streamline the Drug Enforcement Agency’s process for scheduling new drugs approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

Lastly, the committee will consider two trauma bills led by Dr. Burgess and Ranking Member Green. H.R. 647, the Access to Life-Saving Trauma Care for All Americans Act reauthorizes language from the Public Health Service Act to aid hospitals in handling their uncompensated care costs from traumatic injuries. This funding is set to expire in fiscal year 2015. H.R. 648, the Trauma Systems and Regionalization of Emergency Care Reauthorization Act, was passed through the full House in June 2014 and would help support state and rural development of trauma systems.

From modernizing government for the innovation era to protecting the public health, these are all important bills that will make a difference.

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