

Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton
Full Committee on Energy and Commerce
Markup of 8 Bills
September 20, 2016

(As prepared for delivery)

This markup continues our work to modernize government for the innovation era, protect consumers, and boost the public health. Working together, we have amassed a proud bipartisan record of success, with over 100 committee bills and provisions already passed through the House. I look forward to building upon our work and advancing these eight bills for Floor consideration.

We will first consider two bills originating out of the Communications and Technology Subcommittee that are both designed to hold bad actors accountable and protect our consumers. The rise of text messaging and voice over Internet protocol services has given way to new forms of communicating. Unfortunately, as our methods of communications evolve and innovate to the benefit of consumers, so too have bad actors. H.R. 2669 will strengthen the Truth in Caller ID Act by going after lawbreakers who seek to harass and defraud consumers. We will consider H.R. 2669, as well as an amendment that makes technical changes to the bill.

H.R. 2566 is aimed at helping rural consumers in Southwest Michigan and around the country. Poor call quality and lost or failed calls are still a uniquely prevalent problem for our rural consumers. We know that these call completion issues have a negative impact on rural businesses and affect their ability to run day-to-day operations. We also know that there can be real negative impacts on consumers when calls related to public safety or other important messages go undelivered. I have heard directly from rural providers in my district as well as local small businesses that this is an issue of great importance and demands action.

We will also consider six public health bills that collectively will improve the health of Americans across a large spectrum of issues. H.R. 1192, the National Clinical Care Commission Act, will help coordinate federal efforts regarding autoimmune and metabolic syndromes that plague nearly one in three Americans.

H.R. 1877, the Mental Health First Aid Act, continues the important work the committee undertook this spring in advancing programs to reform our nation's mental health system. H.R. 2713, the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Reauthorization Act, will help promote nursing workforce education programs to address the rising demand for qualified and well trained nurses across the country.

H.R. 1209, the Improving Access to Maternity Care Act, will help place maternity care providers who are already eligible for participation in the National Health Service Corps with greater precision and clarity, making sure moms across the country have access to the services they need.

Finally, we have two controlled substance bills. The amendment to H.R. 3537, the Synthetic Drug Control Act, we are considering today is the result of bipartisan negotiations. It would add a thoroughly reviewed list of dangerous synthetic drug compounds to Schedule I and get them off our streets.

And H.R. 4365, the Protecting Patient Access to Emergency Medications Act, will enable our nation's emergency medical services professionals to continue to provide critical care in a timely fashion, including the administration of controlled substances, while preventing drug diversion.

I commend all our members from both sides of the aisle for their work on these important bipartisan bills that will truly make a difference.

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