



COMMITTEE ON *DEMOCRATS*  
**ENERGY & COMMERCE**  
RANKING MEMBER FRANK PALLONE, JR.

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Statement of Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr., as prepared for delivery**

#### **Committee on Energy and Commerce**

#### **Full Committee Mark Up of H.R. 2666, No Rate Regulation of Broadband Internet Access Act and H.R. 4725, Common Sense Savings Act of 2016**

Today we are considering two unnecessary and dangerous bills; the “No Rate Regulation of Broadband Internet Access Act” and the so-called “Common Sense Savings Act.”

Let me first say, regarding the so-called “Common Sense Savings Act – we made a budget deal already. A deal is a deal. Putting everyone through a meaningless exercise because the Republican Party is in disarray and unable to govern is simply a waste of time, especially considering the incredibly pressing issues before this Committee.

And, it’s worth mentioning, nothing in this bill is “common sense” or “saving” anything. It doesn’t pull any costs out of the system or “bend the cost curve”; instead the legislation merely shifts costs onto states, thus leaving a gaping budget hole for financing care for our most vulnerable populations. We’re talking about forcing states to cut access to benefits and health coverage for low-income children, the frail elderly and the severely physically or intellectually disabled. To pretend this

bill does anything else is simply an outright lie.

I also find it unbelievable that, in the midst of serious public health crises, Republicans have again proposed to eliminate the Prevention and Public Health Fund, placing Americans' health at risk. This legislation would defund critical public health investments in efforts such as preventing childhood lead poisoning and building epidemiology and laboratory capacity to respond to infectious disease outbreaks like Zika.

The "Common Sense Savings Act" is a sham of a bill thrown together at the last minute to once again appease the extreme right of the House Republican Conference. It has no chance of becoming law and I strongly oppose its passage.

We are also considering a deceptively simple communications bill. It says only that FCC may not regulate rates. But as many experts have pointed out, the term "rate regulation" could mean anything. While the Republicans claim that they intend the bill to be narrow, we have heard over and over that their draft could swallow vast sections of the Communications Act. Most notably, as written, this bill could undermine the FCC's ability to protect consumers.

Democrats have repeatedly offered to help improve this bill. I continue to be willing to work on a bill that prevents the FCC from setting rates. But I have also said that I cannot allow the bill to undermine the FCC's core mission. For instance, I cannot support a bill that prevents the agency from acting in the public interest. I cannot support a bill that prevents the agency from protecting consumers from discriminatory practices. And I cannot support a bill that undercuts the FCC's net neutrality rules.

If Republicans were truly serious about passing a narrow bill, accomplishing these goals should not be hard. Our collective interests should be aligned.

Unfortunately, previous attempts at compromise have failed so far. I therefore encourage my colleagues to support amendments offered by Ranking Member Eshoo and Congresswoman Matsui. Together, these amendments can accomplish many of the Republicans' goals without the same risks to consumers. I believe these amendments offer a fair compromise, but without these changes I cannot support the underlying legislation.

Instead of being partisan, I urge my Republican colleagues to work with me to find a solution that is equitable to everyone.

Thank you, I yield back.

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