



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

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Pallone Opening Statement at Full Committee Markup of Telecom and Public Health Bills

Energy and Commerce Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) delivered the following remarks at a Full Committee Markup of H.R. 2566, Improving Rural Call Quality and Reliability Act of 2016; H.R. 2669, Anti-Spoofing Act of 2016; H.R. 1192, National Diabetes Clinical Care Commission Act; H.R. 1209, Improving Access to Maternity Care Act; H.R. 1877, Mental Health First Aid Act of 2016; H.R. 2713, Title VIII Nursing Workforce Reauthorization Act of 2015; H.R. 3537, Synthetic Drug Control Act of 2015; and H.R. 4365, Protecting Patient Access to Emergency Medications Act of 2016:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Tomorrow, the Committee will mark up eight bills that are worthy of strong, bipartisan support.

We will begin with two commonsense telecommunications bills. H.R. 2566, the Improving Rural Call Quality and Reliability Act of 2016, would seek to ensure that calls to Americans living in the rural areas of our country actually make it through to the intended receiver. Every one of our constituents should be able to reach out and connect by phone with family and friends in rural America. Making sure a call goes through, regardless of where it is being made, is fundamental to our communications system, and I'd like to applaud Representatives Welch and Loeb sack for their leadership on this issue.

We are also marking up H.R. 2669, Representative Grace Meng's Anti-Spoofing Act. Undoubtedly, we've all heard stories of fraudsters fleecing consumers by using fake caller ID information to impersonate a loved one or a trusted institution over the phone. The bill before us adds text messages to the current spoofing prohibitions and aims to expand the reach of those prohibitions outside the U.S. I'd like to thank Representative Meng for working to fix this problem, and the Majority for engaging with us to iron out some of the technical specifics of the bill. I think we've come to a bipartisan compromise, and I'm glad we could work together.

Tomorrow we'll also discuss several bipartisan bills aimed at improving our nation's health. H.R. 1192, the National Clinical Care Commission Act, would strengthen federal programs to treat and prevent metabolic disorders, autoimmune diseases, and diseases resulting from

insulin deficiency or insulin resistance. Improving the clinical services and support available will help us avoid largely preventable conditions, like Type II diabetes. It will also help us limit the severe and costly complications, such as kidney failure, that can result from poor management of these diseases.

H.R. 1209, the Improving Access to Maternity Care Act, introduced by Representatives Burgess, Capps, and Duckworth, would bolster federal efforts to increase access to maternity care services. This legislation will help us place maternity care providers in the places they're needed the most through the National Health Service Corps.

H.R. 1877, the Mental Health First Aid Act, introduced by Representatives Matsui and Jenkins would bolster efforts to respond to individuals suffering from mental health crises and link such individuals to treatment and support services available in their community by increasing the availability of mental health first aid training.

H.R. 2713, the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Reauthorization Act, was introduced by Representatives Capps and Joyce. This legislation would reauthorize nursing workforce programs that are important for ensuring that we have the nursing workforce needed to meet the nation's demand for nursing services. I want to thank Representative Capps for her work on this bill and her longstanding leadership in promoting federal efforts that advance the nursing profession.

H.R. 4365, the Protecting Patient Access to Emergency Medications Act of 2016, would amend the Controlled Substances Act to allow emergency medical service (or EMS) personnel to administer controlled substances during an emergency under a standing order from a Medical Director that supervises emergency care. This change codifies the current practice of EMS agencies and will help ensure that patients have timely access to necessary drugs during an emergency. The bill would also streamline the DEA's registration process by allowing a single registration for an EMS agency in a State and help address diversion concerns by holding registered EMS agencies responsible for receiving, storing, and tracking all controlled substances.

We will consider an amendment that incorporates input from a wide range of stakeholders, and I believe the proposed changes will ensure that EMS professionals have the flexibility needed to respond during emergency situations, while preserving DEA's ability to effectively enforce controlled substances laws and regulations.

Finally, we will consider a bill to address the continued threat from synthetic drugs. An amendment under consideration to H.R. 3537, the Synthetic Drug Control Act of 2015, would schedule a narrow list of 22 synthetic substances to Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act. I continue to be concerned about the availability and use of synthetic drugs, such as synthetic marijuana like K2 or synthetic fentanyl. This legislation would take a proactive approach to trying to limit abuse and misuse of these substances, while also helping law enforcement to prosecute the manufacturers of these substances.

Thank you. I yield back.

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