

Committee on Energy and Commerce

Opening Statement

of

Subcommittee on Energy Ranking Member Bobby Rush

Markup of H.R. 1320, the “Nuclear Utilization of Keynote Energy Act;” H.R. 6140, the “Advanced Nuclear Fuel Availability Act;” H.R. ____, the “Advancing U.S. Civil Nuclear Competitiveness and Jobs Act;” and H.R. 6141, to require the Secretary of Energy to develop a report on a pilot program to site, construct, and operate micro-reactors at critical national security locations

June 21, 2018

Mr. Chairman, before I get into the suite of nuclear bills before us today, I just want to reiterate my position that I touched on in yesterday’s hearing.

As I mentioned, Ranking Member Pallone and I, along with all 24 Democratic Members of the full Committee sent a letter to Chairman Walden and Health Subcommittee Chairman Burgess yesterday, requesting an immediate hearing on the Trump Administration’s misguided policy of separating immigrant children from their parents at the southern border.

While the President may have suddenly shifted his stance and signed an Executive Order undoing this abominable policy for the time being, who knows when he might change his mind on a whim and reverse himself once again.

Mr. Chairman, it is critical that we hear from key Administration officials on how this loathsome policy came about.

More importantly, as elected representatives, we need answers on how many of these children were ripped from their parents, where are all of these children now, and what is the Administration’s procedure for ensuring that all of these babies will indeed be reunited with their parents.

Mr. Chairman, this is an issue that is of utmost concern to many, if not all Americans, regardless of their political leanings or religious affiliations, so I hope that we can schedule this hearing sooner rather than later.

With that being said, Mr. Chairman, as I stated in the hearing on these four nuclear bills, it is my desire that we can work with the majority side to attempt to find consensus so that these bills are forwarded out of the full Committee with bipartisan support.

I support the discussion draft, authored by Rep. Flores of Texas, which would simply direct the Secretary of Energy to establish a program to support the availability of high-assay low enriched uranium, or HA-LEU, for commercial use.

I also support the discussion draft authored by a group of bipartisan Members, including two from this Subcommittee, Mr. Hudson of North Carolina and Mr. Peters of California.

This bill would require the Secretary of Energy to develop a report on a pilot program to site, construct, and operate micro-reactors at critical national security locations.

Mr. Chairman, I am also inclined to support some of the objectives of HR 1320.

This bill would amend the NRC's fee recovery process associated with the advanced reactor regulatory framework, while also limiting the total funds available for corporate support costs, and capping fees on operating reactors.

I understand that there have been some minor changes to the bill under the Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute.

I look forward to meeting with various stakeholders over the next week or so to better understand the consequences of enacting the changes that this bill proposes.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, the most problematic bill for me is the Advancing U.S. Civil Nuclear Competitiveness and Jobs Act.

This bill would, among other things, revise DOE's review of the Part 810 process by expediting procedures for transferring civilian nuclear technology, including to foreign powers.

Mr. Chairman, I can tell you that I have even less confidence in the Trump Administration today than I had a few weeks ago when we held a hearing on this bill so I do not see the wisdom in moving this bill forward at this time.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and with that I yield back the balance of my time...