



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

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Pallone Remarks at Markup of Four Nuclear Energy Bills

During Opening Comments Pallone Urged Republican Majority to Hold an Immediate Hearing on Family Separation

Washington, D.C. – *Energy and Commerce Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) delivered the following opening remarks today at a Subcommittee on Energy markup of Four Nuclear Energy Bills:*

Today the Subcommittee will mark up four nuclear energy bills. At our legislative hearing in May, I expressed concern with two of the proposals before us.

The “Advancing U.S. Civil Nuclear Competitiveness and Jobs Act” makes changes to the “Part 810” process by which the Secretary of Energy authorizes the transfer of nuclear energy technology and assistance to foreign countries. The bill establishes a brief 30-day time frame for the Secretary to approve the transfer of certain nuclear technologies to countries that are not nuclear weapons states.

I am uncomfortable with expediting the review process for Part 810 at a time when there is so much global uncertainty with regard to nuclear proliferation. We can’t let industry financial interests trump our national security needs.

H.R. 1320, introduced by Representatives Kinzinger and Doyle, makes several major changes to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission’s (NRC) budgeting process and fee structure. I have concerns with the provision of the bill that sets up an expedited timeline for NRC review of nuclear reactors. Inflexible deadlines could jeopardize the environmental and safety review process for more complex applications. I am also concerned with a provision requiring NRC to issue a construction permit for a nuclear facility even if an entity has filed a formal request for a hearing objecting to the project. Stakeholders should have the chance to voice their concerns publicly before a project permit is issued.

Despite my concerns I appreciate their efforts to address the financial strain currently facing the nuclear industry, and will work with them on this bill.

Finally, I want to strongly request that this Committee hold a hearing immediately on the President's Family Separation Policy that has led to more than 2,300 children being separated from their parents. While I hope yesterday's Executive Order puts an end to the barbaric separation of families, I remain deeply concerned that these families will continue to face cruel and inhumane treatment at the hands of the Trump Administration.

All of us on this Committee should demand that the Administration must now immediately reunite each of the more than 2,300 children who have already been separated from their parents. HHS has been sending conflicting signals as to whether it will reunite these families.

There are still a lot of unanswered questions, and, to date, the Administration has not been forthcoming with the truth as it relates to this policy. HHS has also not been transparent, and continues to dodge a lot of important questions.

This ongoing crisis demonstrates the real need for Congressional oversight. Yesterday, [every Democrat on this Committee made a request](#) to Chairmen Walden and Burgess for a hearing as soon as possible. We must schedule this hearing because this policy has created real trauma for thousands of kids and we must get answers from HHS.

Mr. Chairman, will you work with me to get this important hearing scheduled?

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