



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

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Pallone Opening Remarks at NTIA Hearing

Washington, DC – *Energy and Commerce Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) delivered the following opening remarks today at a Subcommittee on Communications and Technology hearing on, “Oversight of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration.”*

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has not always received the same attention as the FCC, but that doesn’t mean it’s any less important. The agency has quietly driven many of our nation’s communications policies from behind the scenes. That’s a good thing in the Trump Administration, where most agencies have a hard time staying out of the headlines.

Case in point, the FCC has thrust itself into the national spotlight by dramatically walking away from its statutory obligations to serve the American people. It’s more than just their assault on net neutrality. It’s privacy, cybersecurity, public safety—the list goes on and on. The Trump FCC is simply refusing to do its job.

So I look forward to hearing from the new leadership at NTIA about what they can do to fill the tremendous void left by the FCC. I know that Administrator Redl has a deep understanding of these issues. And I hope he also understands that his agency must now step up to improve and secure our communications networks for the future.

I am particularly interested in hearing how NTIA will handle cybersecurity as we move to more robust next-generation wireless networks and the internet of things. The Administration itself has pointed out how vulnerable our wireless networks will be if the government does not do more to protect them. NTIA has an important role in figuring out how to make sure they are secure.

But NTIA needs to do more than just defend our networks from attacks. The agency must also find better ways to protect our privacy. During previous administrations, NTIA actively worked to protect our private information through a multi-stakeholder approach. Now that

Congressional Republicans ripped away our online privacy, we need to know whether Administrator Redl plans to increase NTIA's efforts to oversee our private information online.

But NTIA's responsibilities do not end with privacy and security—the agency must also take an active role in encouraging broadband deployment and improving our nation's broadband maps. Democratic members of this Committee have introduced the LIFT America Act, which directs NTIA to distribute \$40 billion to extend our broadband networks to Americans in every corner of the country.

Ensuring that NTIA is the agency that distributes these funds is critical. The FCC already manages the Universal Service Fund, which operates independently from any appropriations. Changing that now by co-mingling USF with appropriated funds would be a mistake and would risk its long-term sustainability. That's why the LIFT America Act would direct NTIA to handle broadband infrastructure funding. I would like to hear how Administrator Redl would handle this responsibility.

Finally, I'm interested to learn how Administrator Redl plans to deal with internet governance and our international commitments. Senator Cruz has been pushing for the U.S. to walk away from our agreements regarding ICANN. I believe strongly that Senator Cruz is playing right in to Russia's hands in their efforts to shake global confidence in our government. Ultimately these efforts could undermine the integrity of the internet.

I was even more disappointed to see Senator Cruz try to use the confirmation process to force Administrator Redl to commit to undermining our country's goodwill overseas. These commitments are counterproductive. I would therefore like to hear from the Administrator whether he has promised a predetermined outcome to his proceedings relating to America's oversight of ICANN.

With that, I yield the rest of my time.

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