

**Committee on Energy and Commerce**

**Opening Statement  
of**

**Subcommittee on Communications and Technology Ranking Member Mike Doyle**

***Closing the Digital Divide: Broadband Infrastructure Solutions***

**January 30, 2018**

Thank you, Chairman Blackburn for holding this hearing, and thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us today.

I want to start off by saying that I share Chairman Blackburn's and this Committee's goal of ensuring that all Americans have access to broadband – and that we need to come together on a bipartisan basis to address the challenges that millions of Americans face today from a lack of broadband access, a lack of sufficient speeds, and a lack of affordable options.

While it is crucial that nobody gets left behind, I believe that we cannot ignore the lack of competition, particularly among wireline providers, and the high cost of service that results in far too many people forgoing service.

That being said, I'm concerned about the approach we are taking here today. We are considering twenty five bills at this hearing, I don't remember a time when this Committee held a hearing on so many bills with a single panel of witnesses. We are simply not giving these bills the time and expertise required for the members of this Committee to fully consider each of these bills and their ramifications.

It would seem far more prudent to hold a series of hearings so that members would have an opportunity to discuss and understand each of the proposals before us. Rushing this process gives short shrift to many of the worthwhile ideas from members on both sides of the aisle, and it precludes these bills from undergoing a truly deliberative process.

It is my hope that Chairman Blackburn and the Committee staff for the majority can work with us to avoid this shortsightedness and avoid unnecessary problems for the future. It is my hope, Madam Chairman, that as we move forward on broadband infrastructure legislation we can do so on a collaborative and bipartisan basis.

That being said, I am concerned that many of the Majority's proposals do not actually address the primary issue of getting broadband to rural America – and that there is no business case for private investment. If we are serious about solving this problem, and we believe that people living in rural areas should have access to reasonably comparable service, we need to appropriate the funds necessary for that buildout.