



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

DEMOCRATS

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**Statement of Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr., as prepared for delivery
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Hearing on “Internet Governance After ICANN 53”**

Thank you Chairman Walden and Ranking Member Eshoo for today’s hearing. Thanks also to our two witnesses for your testimony. The work this Committee has done on Internet governance has been a bright spot of bipartisanship. Support for the multi-stakeholder model has long united Republicans and Democrats in Congress, under Democratic and Republican Administrations alike. I’m pleased that we’ve found a way to work together on this issue that is so critical to the future of the Internet.

Just two weeks ago, the House overwhelmingly supported passage of the DOTCOM Act. Through this committee’s bi-partisan work, we were able to craft a bill that strikes a good balance. The DOTCOM Act continues our commitment to a global, open Internet while making sure Congress maintains its proper role overseeing over the National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

In short, the DOTCOM Act provides Congressional oversight without unnecessary delay of the IANA transition. As I’ve said many times before, this is a much better alternative to the language in the House Commerce, Justice, and Science appropriations bill that blocks NTIA’s ability to implement the transition. A bipartisan group of Senators is working on advancing the DOTCOM Act and I urge all of our colleagues in the Senate to support it.

I want to take this opportunity to let our witnesses know what I will be looking for out of this transition. I will expect that NTIA will live up to the commitments the agency has made for the IANA transition. I will also expect that any plan ensures that accountability mechanisms are in place before the U.S. government relinquishes its stewardship role. One sign of ICANN’s commitment to accountability after the transition could be its willingness to stay accountable for the contracts it already signed.

As today's hearing demonstrates, our Committee is actively engaged with ICANN and NTIA even while we are working on getting the DOTCOM Act to the President's desk. Much progress has been made since Assistant Secretary Strickling and Mr. Chehade testified before the Committee last year. The multi-stakeholder community has developed plans for all three components of the IANA transition and is moving toward finalizing them into a single proposal. And significant work has been done to develop a model for accountability after the transition.

So I hope to learn more today about the proposals for enhanced accountability at ICANN. The U.S. government role has served as an important backstop for the past two decades. We must ensure that safeguards are in place before the transition is finalized.

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