



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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Statement of Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology  
Hearing on “FCC Reauthorization: Oversight of the Commission”  
March 19, 2015**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Over the past few days, we have heard quite a bit about process, fairness, and transparency at the FCC. Given what has transpired in this subcommittee over the last 48 hours I wonder whether we first have to make sure our own house is in order. As witness testimony was already being submitted, the Republicans released—with no notice—a partisan discussion draft that would completely overhaul the FCC’s funding. This maneuvering is unfair to the witnesses and unfair to the members of the Subcommittee.

Unfortunately, the 114th Congress seems to have halted a long tradition of sharing text with all members of the Subcommittee at least a full week prior to a legislative hearing. We have seen these same partisan tactics in this Subcommittee and in the Consumer, Manufacturing, and Trade Subcommittee. It seems that the concerns we have heard from Republicans about process runs only one way. If these tactics are emblematic of how this committee will be run going forward, we may have to readjust our expectations about the next two years.

Moreover, I have yet to hear a convincing explanation for why this legislation is a good idea. Given what we just went through with the Department of Homeland Security, I doubt our

constituents are clamoring for us to create another funding cliff—especially for an agency that just netted \$41 billion dollars for public safety and deficit reduction without raising a dime in taxes. This agency is too important to play these types of games with its funding.

Nonetheless, I am grateful that we are having this hearing today. It gives us the opportunity to show our appreciation in person and in public to the FCC for its work. So thank you to Chairman Wheeler and to his fellow commissioners for all that you accomplished.

This has been an eventful year for the FCC. The Commission has certainly received more than its fair share of attention and also an unprecedented level of civic engagement. Four million Americans weighed in, overwhelmingly calling for strong network neutrality rules. One hundred and forty members of Congress engaged in the process. And of course, the President expressed his opinion as well, which is not something to be embarrassed about.

Yet despite the withering glare of the spotlight, the Commission stood tall. The Commissioners—and the entire staff of the FCC—have shown a steadfast dedication to serving the public interest. You showed everyone who called in; who wrote in; who came in to support net neutrality that the FCC and the rest of Washington know how to listen.

Now, I have repeatedly said that I welcome the majority's change of heart and their offer to legislate. I remain open to looking for truly bipartisan ways to enshrine the FCC's network neutrality protections into law. But after what has taken place over the past few days, I wonder if bipartisanship may only be in the eye of the beholder.

If we are able to find a real partner in this process, we must make sure that our efforts do not come at the expense of all the other work the Commission does. The FCC must remain an effective cop on the beat to protect consumers. The FCC must continue to promote universal service to all Americans. The FCC must ensure that the telecommunications and media markets are competitive. The FCC must maintain the vitality of our public safety communications.

That is why I look forward to hearing today how the FCC can continue to serve an important role in the broadband age. So to the Commissioners, thank you for coming here to today and thank you for your public service.