

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927
Minority (202) 225-3641

June 5, 2018

The Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Marsha Blackburn
Chairman
Subcommittee on Communications and
Technology
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Walden and Blackburn:

We write to request that the Committee immediately reschedule the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology's postponed hearing entitled "Federal Communications Commission: Budget and Oversight" that was originally scheduled for February 16, 2018.¹ As you recall, this hearing was announced in a bipartisan fashion and then canceled. We believe it is long past time to reschedule this important oversight hearing to follow through on a commitment from the Republican leadership of this Committee that it would hold quarterly Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) oversight hearings.

It is critical that this hearing be scheduled considering the FCC has consistently failed to answer our questions in letters and written inquiries. Despite early commitments to be responsive to both Republicans and Democrats in Congress,² the current FCC has refused to fully answer the letters of Committee Democrats 26 times. In fact, all Democratic members of the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology recently wrote to the FCC asking for

¹ Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Communications and Technology, Postponement Notice, Hearing on "Federal Communications Commission: Budget and Oversight," (Feb. 12, 2018).

² Letter from Ajit Pai, Chairman, Federal Communications Commission to Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr., Ranking Member, House Committee on Energy and Commerce (Jan. 27, 2017) ("I intend to reach out to Committee leadership, Committee Members and non-Committee Members in a bipartisan manner. In the same vein, I will continue to strive to be responsive to all Congressional inquiries to the extent that I can within the law and Commission rules.").

The Honorable Greg Walden
The Honorable Marsha Blackburn
June 5, 2018
Page 2

proper responses to these inquiries.³ Many of these letters seek important answers to questions related to issues of public concern like net neutrality, privacy, universal broadband access, and media concentration.⁴

Unfortunately, over the past few months, the Commission has become less transparent with the legislative branch, altogether frustrating any attempt at our Constitutional responsibility to oversee the agency on behalf of the American people.⁵ The Commission must be brought before the Committee to account for its repeated and willful evasiveness.

While the leadership of this Committee committed to holding quarterly oversight hearings with the Commission, only two oversight hearings have been held this entire Congress, and the last was seven months ago in October 2017. We should all agree that the Subcommittee should not abdicate its responsibilities to oversee the agencies in its jurisdiction. Therefore, we implore you to reschedule this critical hearing as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member



Mike Doyle
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Communications
and Technology

³ Letter from Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr., et. al. to Ajit Pai, Chairman Federal Communications Commission (May 22, 2018).

⁴ See e.g., Letter from Ajit Pai, Chairman, Federal Communications Commission to Sen. Thad Cochran, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations (April 6, 2018); see also Letter from Thomas M. Johnson, Jr., General Counsel, Federal Communications Commission to Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr., Ranking Member, House Committee on Energy and Commerce and Rep. Mike Doyle, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Communication and Technology (Apr. 16, 2018).