

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology Ranking Member Doris Matsui

Hearing on “Securing Communications Networks from Foreign Adversaries”

February 15, 2024

Thank you, Chairman Latta. Today’s hearing comes at a critical moment. Vulnerabilities in America’s communications networks continue to pose an unacceptable risk to our national security.

We know our global adversaries are working tirelessly to exploit the weak links throughout our networks. Nowhere is this dynamic clearer than with the vulnerable network gear still operating in American telecom networks.

As an original cosponsor of the Rip and Replace bill, I believe it is a national security imperative that we fully fund the shortfall in the reimbursement program as quickly as possible. Allowing Chinese-produced Huawei and Z-T-E gear to operate in our communications networks is like locking up the house but leaving the back door open.

Thankfully the FCC has made progress, but our work is far from complete, and we simply can’t afford to wait. Congress must immediately explore every option on the table to deal with this urgent threat. That’s why I requested updated data from the FCC detailing on a state-by-state basis where this gear remains in our networks. The data the FCC provided reinforces what we already knew to be true – this gear is still operating in nearly every single state in the country. It’s in both red states and blue states, in rural areas and urban centers.

That’s why funding this shortfall immediately needs to be a bipartisan, nationwide priority for all of my colleagues. I’m ready to work with any of my colleagues to get this done.

I’m also excited to see my FUTURE Networks Act on the agenda today. For the United States to stay ahead of the rest of the world in wireless communications, we need to be taking steps to prepare for the next generation of networks. Because the economic and national security stakes in the global race to 6G couldn’t be higher. This bipartisan bill would make a down payment on American leadership by establishing a 6G Task Force to ensure the U.S. is taking the necessary steps to lead. And, as networks evolve, there will be other opportunities to reassert U.S. leadership...

NTIA continues to make progress implementing the Wireless Innovation Fund to encourage the development and deployment of Open RAN systems. Open RAN gives us a chance to establish a counterweight to Huawei in the global equipment market and to capitalize on the United States’ strengths in software and high-value skills. So clearly there’s work to be done to stay ahead in the 21st century innovation race.

I appreciate the witnesses for being here and yield back the balance of my time.