

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Full Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.

Markup of 28 Bills, Full Committee

March 20, 2024

Today the Committee will consider 28 bills.

We will begin with consideration of six partisan bills that advanced out of our energy subcommittee – one pipeline safety reauthorization bill and five bills that would undermine energy efficiency standards.

It is deeply unfortunate that the Republican Majority is moving forward on a reckless, partisan pipeline safety bill that has very little to do with safety and everything to do with gutting environmental reviews to build more pipelines. Ensuring the safety of our nation's pipelines has long been a bipartisan cause, but Republicans have refused to work with us to make this a bipartisan bill. By moving forward with a partisan bill, the Republican Majority has told us all we need to know – that they have no interest in passing durable legislation that can make it to the President's desk. Meanwhile, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has moved forward on a bipartisan bill, and it could be the basis for legislation that passes the Senate and is signed by the president.

I am also deeply disappointed that we are considering five anti-energy efficiency bills that would raise costs for American families. These bills are deliberately designed to obstruct the Department of Energy's appliance efficiency program. This is yet another unfortunate handout to industry – at the expense of everyday Americans who would be stuck with higher utility bills if these were signed into law. Thankfully for the American people, these bills stand no chance of being signed into law.

Next, we will consider H.R. 7650, which advanced out of our environment subcommittee. This legislation undermines the backbone of the Clean Air Act. It also allows corporate industry profits to override science in setting air quality standards, provides amnesty to new polluting facilities at the expense of existing manufacturing, and removes incentives to cut pollution. This bill would guarantee that people living in areas with poor air quality will continue to breathe unhealthy air for generations to come. Democrats are simply not going to allow that to happen.

We will then consider 17 bills that advanced out of the Health Subcommittee, which collectively are intended to reaffirm this Committee's commitment to strengthening our nation's

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public health infrastructure, improving quality of care for patients, and supporting our health care workforce.

I'm especially pleased that we will be considering H.R. 6829, the HEARTS Act, which I introduced last year. This legislation was inspired by two New Jersey families who each tragically lost a child to sudden cardiac arrest during high school sporting events. Sadly, more than 2,000 children and adolescents die this way every single year.

My goal in introducing this bill is to help prevent future deaths from cardiac arrest by preparing schools to respond to cardiac emergencies when they occur. The HEARTS Act will raise awareness about the causes of sudden cardiac arrest and ensure schools are more prepared to deal with cardiac emergencies in order to help save lives.

While I support the vast majority of bills from the Health Subcommittee under consideration today, there is one bill I cannot support. I continue to have significant concerns with H.R. 5074. I believe it would impede seniors access to necessary medication and raise their health care costs by further delaying the inclusion of oral-only drugs to treat end-stage renal disease into Medicare Part B. These drugs are crucial for over 60 percent of patients on dialysis who rely on them for necessary care. Right now, about 20 percent of Medicare patients on dialysis do not have part D coverage.

Congress has delayed inclusion of these drugs into the ESRD bundle for a decade now, at the expense of some seniors without access to prescription drug coverage. I do not agree with supporters of this legislation who argue that the system is not ready for the transition. It's time for the delays to stop and for Congress to ensure patients can access the treatments and care they need.

Finally, we will consider four bills that advanced out of the Communications and Technology Subcommittee with unanimous bipartisan support. Taken together, these bills will help protect American networks from security threats while also allowing our country to remain a global leader in communications technology.

I am pleased that we are considering legislation led by Subcommittee Ranking Member Matsui, H.R. 1513, the FUTURE Networks Act. This bill will establish a task force at the FCC to study sixth-generation, or 6G, technologies and identify potential supply chain and cybersecurity vulnerabilities. As the next generation of technology is developed, this legislation will help us understand the potential risks to best protect our networks and strengthen the technology's design.

And with that, I yield back the balance of my time.