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COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND
COOPERATION IN EUROPE
(U.S. HELSINKI COMMISSION)

Energy and Commerce Member Day Statement

December 12, 2025

Thank you, Chairman Guthrie and Ranking Member Pallone, for the opportunity to discuss my Energy and Commerce Committee priorities for 2026.

My top priorities include: 1) improving health care affordability and accessibility, 2) ensuring a functional Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 3) unleashing sources of renewable American energy, and 4) conducting appropriate oversight.

Improving Health Care Affordability and Accessibility

According to a June 2025 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), over 27 million Americans do not have health insurance.¹ Congress needs to enact solutions to make health care more affordable and accessible. The first thing to do would be to extend the premium tax credits that are expiring at the end of 2025. Any additional changes to our existing health care insurance system should ensure that people with pre-existing conditions are not prohibited from coverage or priced out of health insurance due to their health history or genetics.

We should also enact legislation to help build our health care workforce – from doctors and nurses to therapists and home health workers. A 2024 HRSA report estimates that there will be shortages of over 187,000 physicians and over 302,000 nurses in 2037.² These shortages will result in lower quality care across the country, but the shortages will be exacerbated in rural areas, many of which are already having trouble recruiting and retaining health care workers. Investments in training programs and reducing the financial barriers to the training required to enter the health care workforce will reduce this shortage. Congress should also refrain from raising barriers to non-citizens who seek to practice in the United States.

The Committee should also advance legislation to make it easier for people to receive the care that is recommended by their doctors and reduce the role of pharmacy benefit managers and health insurance companies in what care can be provided and how it is delivered. People with

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/releases/20250624.html>

² <https://bhw.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/bureau-health-workforce/state-of-the-health-workforce-report-2024.pdf>

disabilities who need long-term care services should be able to choose whether to receive care in their home or in a long-term facility.

Congress should also strengthen programs that improve public health. Maternal and infant health and mortality can be addressed through vehicles such as my bill, the **NEWBORN Act (HR2040)**, which would expand the Healthy Start Program through pilot programs within areas with the highest infant mortality rates. Obesity can be addressed through efforts such as my bill, the **Reducing Obesity in Youth Act (HR5224)**, which would provide grants to improve health eating habits and promote physical activity among young children. Programs such as these will lead to long-term reductions in health care costs across the lifespan.

Ensuring a functional EPA

The EPA's mission is to protect human health and the environment. Yet, under the current administration, the EPA has actively worked to do the opposite. In less than a year, the EPA workforce has shrunk by nearly 4,000 employees, a reduction of almost 25%. Some of the remaining employees have been on a "rollercoaster" of termination, administrative leave, and requests to return to work.³ This is not conducive to efficiency, productivity, or morale.

Rather than allowing the EPA to rescind rules loosening controls on industry that will negatively impact the environment and human health, Congress should be encouraging the EPA to do more to promote public health and pressing them to uphold standards that protect air, water, and soil quality. Instead, the lack of congressional oversight – and some of the legislation the Committee has advanced for passage – this year has resulted or will result in policies that do the opposite. As my colleague in the House of Representatives, then-Congressman Lee Zeldin championed legislation to address PFAS, or "forever chemicals." Yet, as EPA Administrator, he is working to weaken standards on PFAS – moving to vacate determinations and enforceable PFAS drinking water standards.⁴

We've seen what happens when industry isn't held to high standards – smog clouds over Los Angeles, burning rivers in Ohio, gas-powered turbines generating up to 422 megawatts of energy without any emissions controls or monitoring in Memphis,⁵ and acidic lakes across the country. We shouldn't be going backward. We need strong regulations in place. With looser guidelines and less enforcement, companies will take shortcuts, resulting in irreversible impact to the environment and public health.

Unleashing renewable sources of American energy

For all the talk about "unleashing American energy," the Trump Administration has canceled energy grants and halted renewable energy projects. These grants and projects would increase the amount of energy produced by the United States. For solar energy alone, over 500 projects are at risk, which would provide 116 gigawatts of capacity.⁶ Rather than continuing the progress our country has made in the development of these technologies, we are now ceding any leadership we had in solar panels, wind power, and other renewable energies to other countries, including China which has developed a solar farm filled with 162 square miles of solar panels.⁷

³ <https://www.eenews.net/articles/complete-roller-coaster-epa-probationary-staff-returns-to-work/>

⁴ <https://earthjustice.org/press/2025/epa-seeks-to-roll-back-pfas-drinking-water-rules-keeping-millions-exposed-to-toxic-forever-chemicals-in-tap-water>

⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/boards-policy-regulation/musks-xai-increased-tennessee-gas-turbines-without-permits-community-groups-say-2025-04-09/>

⁶ <https://underthreat.seia.org/>

⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/10/business/china-solar-tibetan-plateau.html>

More power generation is needed largely due to the demand for new energy for data centers, cryptominers, and AI. Congress can minimize these industries' impact on the cost of energy for residential customers by providing incentives to develop sources of clean energy. Over 400 companies have already committed to transitioning to 100% renewable energy.⁸ My **Clean Cloud Act (HR6179)** would incentivize data centers and cryptominers to develop clean energy sources over the next 10 years. This would increase the power generated nationally and reduce competition for the limited power generation on the grid.

Conducting appropriate oversight

President Trump authorized Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr to “go wild on health”⁹ and to Make American Healthy Again. However, many of the Secretary’s actions are instead leading us into the wild, where only the individuals with the most resources can get the health care they need and demoralizing health care providers and researchers across the country. He has installed an Advisory Committee on Immunization Practice that is setting policies making it harder to get lifesaving and illness-averting vaccines. Secretary Kennedy has cancelled hundreds of millions of dollars’ worth of long-standing research projects, some of which were within a few months of publishing findings. Doing so was irresponsible and essentially turned the taxpayer-funded research into wasted federal funds. Because of these actions and many others, Americans will get sicker more often and we have lost years of research toward yet-to-be-discovered cures.

Members of Congress need opportunities in oversight hearings next year that allow them to question the actions taken by the Trump Administration, including those mentioned above which are ceding our scientific advantage, weakening our research capabilities, harming our environment, hampering clean energy development, and unduly straining our health care system.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to present my priorities. I look forward to working with you on these issues.

⁸ <https://www.there100.org/re100-members>

⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/30/us/politics/rfk-jr-trump-health-policy.html>