

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

Hearing on "Legislative Hearing on Protecting Communications Networks and Improving Connectivity"

July 22, 2026

Thank you, Chairman Hudson.

I'm glad we're holding this hearing to address two basic needs: affordable broadband for every American and secure networks people can trust.

Reliable communications connect students to classrooms, patients to health care, and communities to lifesaving emergency services. In the Sacramento region, we see both the promise of connectivity and the consequences when it falls short. A family may live only 20 minutes from downtown Sacramento and still lack the connection needed for work, telehealth, or online learning. And for farmers in the California Delta, broadband is also essential for monitoring irrigation, tracking changing weather, and getting crops to market.

That is why accurate data matters. We cannot connect the right places when our maps fail to show where service is actually needed.

It's great that we are looking at ways to improve our broadband maps and provide a clearer picture of connectivity across agricultural areas. But infrastructure alone will not close the digital divide. A connection does little good when a family cannot afford service or lacks the device or skills to use it.

That is why I lead the bipartisan, bicameral Universal Service Fund Working Group, with Chairman Hudson. We are working to preserve and modernize the programs that connect rural communities, schools, libraries, health care providers, and low-income families.

It is also why I introduced the Digital Opportunity Foundation Act. This legislation would bring public and private partners together to expand digital skills, device access, and broadband adoption.

We must ensure the infrastructure we build actually improves lives and that every person has the skills and tools to make full use of it. We must also secure these networks. Communications networks connect Sacramento's hospitals, utilities, schools, and businesses. A cyberattack can interrupt medical care, classroom instruction, electricity, and emergency response.

I have long worked to protect our communications networks from untrusted equipment and support more secure technology made here at home. I have also pushed to strengthen cybersecurity protections for our schools and libraries. That effort helped build momentum for the FCC's \$200 million cybersecurity pilot program. But our schools and libraries need sustained support to protect their networks and the people who depend on them. That's why I'll keep fighting to secure long-term funding, including through the Universal Service Fund.

The bills before us also take important steps such as studying how AI can help identify malware and cyber threats in real time. But AI can also create new security risks. We need strong guardrails for both open source and proprietary AI models, especially when they are used in our communications networks and other critical systems. That means rigorous testing, strong cybersecurity standards, transparency, and clear accountability when systems fail or are misused.

Finally, we need stronger protection from scams. Last year, Americans lost \$3.5 billion to imposter scams. This includes scams that lure consumers through text and phone. And AI now allows criminals to clone a loved one's voice, impersonate a government official, or create a convincing false emergency.

The bills we are considering at this hearing take important steps toward protecting consumers from illegal robocalls. But we have more work to do. That is why I am working on legislation to prohibit fraudulent AI impersonations and improve coordination among enforcement agencies. Scammers should not escape accountability because they are exploiting new technologies and targeting our most vulnerable communities.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to strengthen the bills before us today and keep every community connected and secure.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.