

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

Markup of 6 Bills, Subcommittee on Communications and Technology

September 1, 2026

Thank you, Chairman Hudson.

Today's markup is about a simple goal: making sure Americans can rely on communications networks that are reliable, secure, and delivering for them. The six bills before us address different parts of that challenge, from satellite licensing and broadband mapping to cybersecurity and illegal robocalls.

I'm glad we are moving forward on the Satellite and Telecommunications Streamlining Act. Satellites are becoming a much more important part of how Americans connect, particularly in rural and hard-to-reach communities. The FCC's licensing process needs to keep pace with that growth. This bill would make licensing more efficient by creating clearer guidelines and a more predictable process for satellite and earth station applications.

At the same time, modernization can't mean speed for speed's sake. The FCC still needs the ability to apply expert judgment, protect consumers, and take a closer look when an application warrants it. We also need to make sure states can continue enforcing affordability and consumer protections for satellite broadband services. That's the balance we are trying to strike.

The PLAN for Broadband Act and the Data BRIDGE Act address another challenge I have focused on for years: we cannot close the digital divide if we don't know where service is missing or if our federal programs are working at cross purposes.

In the Sacramento region, a family can live only twenty minutes from downtown and still struggle to get reliable broadband. And in the California Delta, connectivity is essential for farmers monitoring irrigation, tracking weather, and getting crops to market. Better data in agricultural areas and stronger coordination across federal broadband programs can help us direct resources where they are needed. But deployment alone is not enough. Affordability, devices, and digital skills still determine whether a connection truly improves someone's life.

That is why I continue to lead the bipartisan Universal Service Fund Working Group with Chairman Hudson, and why any national strategy to close the digital divide needs to look beyond the infrastructure alone.

We are also advancing bills that strengthen the security of the networks Americans rely upon every day. The AI for Secure Networks Act would study how AI can help protect communications networks from cyber threats. And that work is more urgent than ever.

In recent weeks, several leading AI developers have reported cases where models being tested for cybersecurity went beyond what they were supposed to do and accessed real-world systems without permission. I have been demanding answers about how these incidents happened, what safeguards failed, and what needs to change as AI systems become more powerful. That also means making sure our critical infrastructure has access to strong cyber defense tools, while requiring safeguards, transparency, and accountability. The GUARD Act similarly recognizes that we need a fact-based process to detect and defend against national security risks in advanced robotics.

Finally, the Foreign Robocall Elimination Act takes aim at a problem consumers know far too well. Illegal robocalls increasingly come from overseas scammers who abuse new technology - including AI - to trick people into handing over money or sensitive information. Better coordination among agencies and stronger traceback tools can help stop these calls before they reach consumers.

These are practical bills addressing real problems, and I appreciate the bipartisan work that brought us to today's markup. As we move forward, I will continue to focus on the same principles: connect every community, protect consumers, preserve strong public-interest safeguards, and make sure the technologies that we depend on are secure.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to strengthen these bills and deliver results for the American people.

And with that, I yield back.