Committee on Energy and Commerce

Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Member Diana DeGette

Markup of 16 Bills, Full Committee

May 21, 2026

I'm glad this committee is marking up essential public health reauthorizations today. Several, including the EARLY Act and the Kay Hagan Tick Act, improve public awareness of diseases with rising cases across the country, so providers and patients alike are prepared to catch and treat these illnesses before they worsen.

Others, including the AADAPT Act and School-Based Health Centers Reauthorization, elevate primary care for underserved communities, so patients have access to the best clinicians and services, no matter where they live. And critically, ACT for ALS Reauthorization will allow progress towards a cure to continue and more patients to access promising new therapies.

Amid the administration's assault on public health, we cannot afford to let these programs lapse.

We'll also mark up my bill with Congressman Hudson, the DeOndra Dixon NIH INCLUDE Project Act. This bill sustains and encourages Down syndrome research, with a particular directive to investigate co-occurring conditions. Since its launch in 2018, the NIH INCLUDE Project has awarded 575 unique Down syndrome research grants across 18 NIH institutes and currently supports more than 13 clinical trials. Even in this fraught political environment, this is an issue that transcends party lines and deserves our full support. The INCLUDE Project Act passed the House UNANIMOUSLY last Congress, and this must be the year it is finally passed into law.

We have a lot more work to do beyond this markup—our constituents are sounding the alarm on patient access, medical innovation, and public health, and demanding we pursue bold legislation to fix these crises. I urge my colleagues to support these bills, advance them to the floor expeditiously, and to use this momentum to further defend our public health infrastructure, biomedical research agencies, and the American patients they ultimately serve.