

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Member Doris Matsui**

Markup of 11 Bills, Full Committee

January 21, 2026

Thank you, Chairman Guthrie.

I appreciate the Committee making strides to improve our public safety communications.

In a true emergency, you shouldn't have to wonder whether help will come. When someone calls 9-1-1, the call should go through and help should come immediately. Northern California has seen what happens when emergency communications fail. During the 2018 Camp Fire, more than half of initial 9-1-1 calls did not get through, and emergency alerts were inconsistent. That's unacceptable, and that's what matters here.

Since then, communities in my district have stepped up. Elk Grove has modernized their emergency communications with cloud-based systems that connect dispatch with real time information. They're also leading the nation by integrating drones into their first response operations. But local innovation cannot substitute for federal action.

I'm pleased the Committee is taking up the public safety legislation that I'm leading with Congressman Bilirakis. First, the Emergency Reporting Act requires the FCC to evaluate 9-1-1 access and outages after major disasters and recommend steps to strengthen reporting, resiliency, and coordination with state and local officials. It also requires the FCC to examine unreported outages and recommend improvements so carriers notify 9-1-1 centers immediately. First responders should never be operating blind in an emergency, and this bill takes important steps to ensure that never happens.

My other bill, the Kari's Law Reporting Act, builds on the 2018 Kari's Law by requiring the FCC to report on whether telephone system manufacturers and vendors are complying with the law. Kari's Law came from the tragic murder of Kari Hunt, when her daughter tried repeatedly to call 9-1-1 from a hotel phone and couldn't because it required dialing 9 first. In America, "call 9-1-1" should mean exactly that.

Moving these bills forward is an important step. But it's not the last one. We should continue working to improve public safety by strengthening our systems against disasters, improving outage reporting, and fully funding and deploying Next Generation 9-1-1.

With that Mister Chairman, I yield back.