

Statement of the Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman, Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Full Committee Markup of H.R. 4889, H.R. 4167, H.R. 4111, H.R. 4190, H.R. 3998, H.R.
2013
Opening Statement
April 26, 2016

Today I'm pleased that we will be considering a series of important communications bills, including two that deal directly with public safety. We have the opportunity today to improve the laws to make sure that law enforcement can utilize technology to the fullest in an effort to save lives.

The Kelsey Smith Act allows law enforcement an important tool in their efforts to locate a victim who is in imminent danger—the location of their mobile device. The bill grants law enforcement access to this narrow subset of data, in a narrow set of circumstances, but in those cases, it can be the difference between life and death, or between a family wondering where their child is for four days or for forty-five minutes.

While we've heard concerns from many about the privacy implications of the bill, we've worked to make the bill as targeted as possible to avoid these problems. In the 22 states where the Kelsey Smith Act has been adopted, there haven't been instances of privacy violations, or of law enforcement abuse of the data. Instead, there have been stories of lives saved and tragedies avoided.

We also will consider Kari's Law, which requires that any multi-line phone system will be able to dial 9-1-1 directly, without any other digit or prefix needed. When we began to consider this bill, I think many of us were shocked to hear that there were instances in which this was a possibility- that someone could try and dial 9-1-1, only to get static or dead air. Sadly, this very real problem resulted in a tragedy for one Texas woman and her family, and her father made it a mission to make sure that no one else's child or grandchild would try and fail to reach first responders in an emergency. This legislation is a solution that makes sure it doesn't happen again. By updating our telephone systems in offices, hotels, universities, and similar buildings, we can keep people safe.

Finally, we again turn to the issue of process reform with three bills that deal with improving transparency of the Federal Communications Commission. These bills don't alter in any way the authority of the agency, or their ability to carry out their mission. Instead, we just ask the FCC to publish on their website things like rule changes, draft items, and items on delegated authority. Much like we are doing this week, considering amendments and revisions to our rules in a public forum allows the public to hold us accountable for the ultimate product. I believe that these transparency bills will allow both the industry regulated by the FCC and those who ultimately benefit from those services to see how the rules are made.

In addition to those bills, we'll also be looking at a slate of other communications bills. We'll look at a bill by Rep. Matsui to encourage innovative solutions to the spectrum crunch, a problem we've spent a great deal of time considering in our subcommittee. We'll also look at Ranking Member Pallone's bill to improve post-disaster communications, something that he is unfortunately all too familiar with after Superstorm Sandy struck his district. We will also consider a bill to allow skilled nursing facilities to improve their broadband connectivity, and

finally, we will look at a bill to increase penalties for criminals who spark an unnecessary and dangerous law enforcement response by falsifying caller ID information.

This week's markup demonstrates how we can work together as a committee to formulate good policy to benefit our constituents in many facets of life, and I look forward to discussing all of these legislative proposals, and urge my colleagues to support them.