

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.

Markup of 19 Bills, Full Committee

May 24, 2023

Today, the Committee will be marking up 19 bills. We will begin by marking up seven health care bills that, taken together, improve transparency and lower health care costs for the American people.

I am pleased we are marking H.R. 3561, the PATIENT Act, which was introduced by Chair Rodgers and myself. It will improve the transparency of our health care system, lower costs for patients, and strengthen our health care workforce by reauthorizing important programs that make care accessible in the most high-need communities. The bill strengthens the requirements for both hospitals and insurers to display price information in easy-to-understand formats for consumers. This is going to help both consumers and employers save money on health care services.

The legislation reauthorizes our nation's Community Health Centers through the end of 2025 with increased funding for a total of \$4.2 billion per year. Community Health Centers work tirelessly to deliver high-quality, affordable health care for over 30 million patients nationwide in some of our most vulnerable communities.

It also includes a six-year reauthorization and doubles the current funding level of the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education program to support the training of primary care residents and dental residents in high-need communities.

The PATIENT Act also cancels planned payment cuts to Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospitals, which provide essential care for our nation's most vulnerable populations. The Committee is also considering seven bills out of the Communications and Technology Subcommittee – six of which are bipartisan and the result of cooperative negotiations.

The Spectrum Auction Reauthorization Act, which Chair Rodgers and I introduced earlier this week, restores the spectrum auction authority of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and authorizes it for three years. It also firmly establishes the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) as the clear manager of federal spectrum holdings. And it funds two programs of critical importance to national security and public safety—the FCC's rip-and-replace program and a Next Generation 9-1-1 grant program. I am hopeful that we can advance it through both chambers and get it enacted as soon as possible.

Unfortunately, bipartisan cooperation did not extend to the Majority's partisan broadband permitting bill, H.R. 3557. At last week's Subcommittee markup, several of my Republican

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colleagues said they wanted the bill to be bipartisan, but their expectation seemed to be that Democrats would join this harmful bill with no compromise reflecting Democratic priorities and concerns. Unfortunately, Republicans insisted on a package of give aways that trample on state and local rights and consumer and environmental protections. And therefore, I will oppose this legislation.

We're also marking up several bipartisan energy bills that I will support. One directs the Secretary of Energy to designate energy emergency and security matters to an Assistant Secretary, and another strengthens our energy infrastructure's cybersecurity.

We will also consider H.R. 1042, the "Prohibiting Russian Uranium Imports Act." While I support ending our dangerous reliance on Russia for enriched uranium, we cannot simply ban the importation of Russian uranium and hope that will solve the problem. We need more domestic conversion and enrichment capabilities here at home, or else we could face steep challenges in which our nation's nuclear power reactors could struggle to find the fuel they need to operate. That's why my staff requested that any Russian uranium ban also include investments in domestic fuel cycle infrastructure, but we were told that was not on the table, and therefore I will oppose this bill.

The final two bills are nothing more than scare tactics designed to mislead Americans into thinking the Biden Administration is trying to ban gas stoves. They are not doing that, and Republicans have been spreading this falsehood for months. With H.R. 1640 Republicans are trying to prevent the Department of Energy from finalizing a common sense, Congressionally-mandated energy efficiency standard for new cooktops. DOE's proposal simply requires new cooktops to be more efficient, which will reduce energy bills and cut harmful indoor air pollution that disproportionately impacts children.

H.R. 1615 establishes a dangerous precedent by prohibiting the Consumer Product Safety Commission from fulfilling its responsibility to protect children and other consumers from potentially dangerous products. This is a political bill that would preemptively limit the Commission's options for addressing potential risks of gas stoves before either the CPSC or this Committee have had the opportunity to fully explore the risks and potential solutions. It should be rejected.

I will have more to say on several of these bills when they are considered during today's markup.