

Chairman Brett Guthrie Opening Statement

Full Committee Markup

March 5, 2026

Good morning.

As people, as a Committee, and as a Congress, there are few things that are more essential than our responsibility to protect our nation's children. Today, the harms kids face online are complex, immense, and constantly changing.

In August of 2025, the Ranking Member and I sat down and made a commitment to try to deliver a bipartisan package to empower parents and protect children and teens online. We both recognized the gravity of the issue. We both recognized that parents across this country are asking for action.

Since that time, bipartisan committee staff have spent more than 40 hours directly negotiating these bills and countless more working with members on this committee, stakeholders, and each other to build consensus. Dozens of hours of negotiation. Drafts. Redlines. Counterproposals. Serious engagement. Good-faith efforts.

I am disappointed that, despite that work, we were ultimately unable to reach a bipartisan agreement. This committee has a long history of working across the aisle on issues affecting children and families. In the past, we have shown that when the stakes are high enough, we can put politics aside and work together.

That is why it is unfortunate that the slate of bills before us today is not bipartisan.

But at the end of the day, as Members of Congress, our responsibility is to our constituents, especially our children.

Across the country, children are being targeted, groomed, harassed, and exploited online. Algorithms amplify addictive, harmful content. Predators exploit anonymity. And parents are left trying to navigate a digital world that evolves faster than the safeguards they have at their disposal.

Every month we delay, more families experience the kind of devastation that no parent should ever endure.

We worked hard to try to make these bills bipartisan. We meant it when we said we wanted to get there. But the absence of bipartisan consensus cannot be an excuse for inaction. We hoped to do this with our Democrat colleagues. But if we cannot do it together, we still must take steps forward.

The time is now.

We are taking the meaningful steps forward to empower parents and protect children and teens online. We owe it to parents. We owe it to communities. And most importantly, we owe it to the kids who are counting on us to get this right.

Today, we also will mark up five bills from the Energy Subcommittee, which will help ensure the physical and cyber security of one of America's greatest forms of infrastructure – our electric grid.

As more and more of our lives become digital, the physical and cyber security threats to our grid grow in frequency and impact, particularly from adverse nation states.

These bipartisan cybersecurity bills will help combat those threats by strengthening DOE's leadership when it comes to securing the energy sector,

providing targeted funding and technical assistance to rural and municipal utilities, and authorizing public-private partnerships on grid security that enhance information sharing.

I appreciate the willingness of Ranking Members Pallone and Castor to work with us on these important bills and look forward to moving them forward.

Thank you and I now yield to the Ranking Member of the Full Committee, the gentleman from New Jersey.