

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Health Chairwoman Anna G. Eshoo

Markup of 9 Bills

November 4, 2021

Today, our Subcommittee marks up 9 bipartisan bills.

Three of the bills are children's health bills that seek to prevent and reduce the impact of stillbirth, newborn hearing loss, and birth defects or anomalies. I thank our fellow Health Subcommittee members, Representatives Carter, Trahan, Hudson, Guthrie, Matsui, Mullin, and Castor for their leadership in sponsoring these bills.

We're also marking up the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act, which was introduced by Rep. Wild and 14 bipartisan original cosponsors.

Our Subcommittee was honored to host Mr. Corey Feist, who testified at our hearing, and Ms. Jennifer Breen Feist, the brother-in-law and sister of Dr. Lorna Breen who died by suicide after experiencing the first wave of Covid-19 patients. They asked us to move this bill forward quickly since the Senate had already passed it, and I'm proud we're delivering on that promise today.

We're also considering two bills to improve cardiac care and oral health literacy.

The CAROL Act is named in honor of Carol Leavell Barr, the wife of Rep. Andy Barr, who died last year of sudden cardiac arrest. The bill funds NIH and CDC to support research and public education for valvular heart disease.

Two bills provide loan repayment for the healthcare workforce to provide long-term support for future workers, including public health workers. This bill is sponsored by Rep. Crow, Dr. Burgess, Ranking Member Guthrie, and myself.

Lastly, we're considering major legislation by Reps. Quigley and Fortenberry to advance treatments for ALS. Every Member has heard from constituents with ALS who are fed up with the lack of options. The ACT for ALS will help patients take part in the Expanded Access program for experimental ALS drugs while providing a framework for the NIH and the FDA to benefit from the data of patients.

We're moving the Act for ALS thanks to the tenacity of ALS advocates, including Brian Wallach and Sandra Abrevaya. They made a compelling case during our hearing for why Congress must do more to address this disease which is a death sentence.

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These 9 bills represent significant progress. I urge Chairman Pallone to build on this progress during the Full Committee markup by including two bills that our Health Subcommittee already heard. We were prepared to mark up those bills today but they were removed from the public bill list on Tuesday of this week.

First is Representative Raskin's Children and Media Research Advancement Act. As Dr. Radesky testified during our hearing, this bill is "highly practical and good public health."

We're at a crucial moment for understanding how media affects children, and CAMRA deserves urgent consideration. Concerns that this bill helps Big Tech in any way are specious and should not be taken seriously, and I urge the Full Committee to take up the bill.

Second, I'm incredibly disappointed that Katherine's Law was not included in this markup. During our hearing, we listened to our former colleague Congressman Rick Nolan's plea to save the lives of non-smokers who develop lung cancer by getting the early detection needed. Not one Member uttered a single word of concern about the bill during our hearing.

Nearly 25% of all cancer deaths in the U.S. are due to lung cancer. If lung cancer in never-smokers were a separate category, it'd be in the top 10 cancers in the U.S. for sickness and death.

The evidence is that current lung cancer screening guidelines are insufficient. They do not follow the guidelines set by the National Comprehensive Cancer Network. I'd like to enter into the record JAMA's "New USPSTF Guidelines for Lung Cancer Screening: Better but Not Enough."

I urge Chairman Pallone to take up the bill during the Full Committee markup and provide free coverage of lung cancer screening for individuals over the age of 40, even if they have no history of smoking.

I now recognize Mr. Guthrie, Ranking Member of the Health Subcommittee for his opening statement.