

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ENERGY AND COMMERCE SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

September 8, 2016

“Rural Call Quality and Reliability” Representative David Young (IA-03)

Chairman Walden, Ranking Member Eshoo, and my distinguished colleagues who are members of the Subcommittee:

Rural America is struggling – the recent economic downturn has led to more people leaving rural areas and seeking opportunities in larger cities. In my home state of Iowa, rural communities are working to reverse these trends by attracting new businesses and amenities for their residents. Communication is key to these businesses’ success in reaching customers – in town or out-of-state. Yet, in rural communities across America, calls are not getting through or are of poor quality.

Telephone companies often rely on intermediate providers to route calls from larger networks to local service providers, to poor results. Dropped, looped, or poor quality calls do not just hurt small businesses and consumers, they also hurt our families in need of emergency assistance and public services. Improving rural call completion rates and quality is essential to ensuring families in rural America have access to the services and amenities offered in larger urban areas. These services are important to ensuring the survival of small towns and granting Americans the choice to live and thrive in rural or urban areas.

The Improving Rural Call Quality and Reliability Act, which I introduced alongside Congressman Peter Welch, seeks to address the significant problems dropped and poor quality calls pose to rural Americans. The bill requires providers to register with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in order to meet quality standards to ensure reliable phone service in rural areas. It also prohibits providers from using intermediary routing services not registered with the FCC. By addressing these concerns, Congress can help provide Iowans and all Americans in rural communities with reliable phone service to conduct business, respond to emergencies, and live their lives.

I thank the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Communications and Technology for their work on this important issue and I welcome the technical changes to this bill to ensure the legislative language meets the bill’s intent. I especially want to recognize Chairman Walden and Ranking Member Eshoo for their commitment to addressing this important issue.