



NEWS

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY & COMMERCE
DEMOCRATS

RANKING MEMBER FRANK PALLONE, JR.

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Pallone Opening Remarks at 5G Hearing

Washington, D.C. – *Energy and Commerce Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) delivered the following opening remarks today at a Subcommittee on Communications and Technology hearing on “The Race to 5G and its Potential to Revolutionize American Competitiveness:”*

Thank you Madam Chairman. This Congress, Democrats on this Committee have focused on protecting security, providing economic opportunities, and promoting democracy. Faster wireless networks have the potential to do all three.

These technologies can make us safer by helping first responders react faster after an emergency or a disaster. They can offer economic opportunity by helping people apply for jobs or train for a new career. And they can improve civic engagement by keeping people better connected with their government.

People increasingly connect to the government using only their smartphones. That’s especially true for the most vulnerable among us. Unfortunately, when they try to reach their government for help, too often they find websites that do not work on their mobile devices.

That’s why I introduced the Connected Government Act earlier this year with Congresswoman Robin Kelly that was passed by the full House last night. Our bill ensures that all new federal agency websites are designed to work well on mobile devices.

Today, I look forward to discussing other ways that 5G networks can serve all of our communities. While we have heard a lot this year about the importance of broadband in rural areas, today’s hearing focuses on new technologies best designed for urban centers. These 5G technologies could present new opportunities for low-income Americans in urban areas who often struggle to pay for their connections.

I know that some say that speeding deployment of these networks means that we must sacrifice environmental protections, that we must undermine tribal sovereignty, and that we need to block our local governments. But I urge my colleagues to look past these

naysayers. Let's find a path that promotes broadband deployment while still respecting the public interest.

I believe that the LIFT America Act—which was introduced by the Democrats on this Committee earlier this year—does just that. Our bill ensures high-speed broadband deployment to 98 percent of the country, without jeopardizing the environment, city governments, or tribal rights.

It is unfortunate that while we are working here today to bring high-speed wireless broadband to urban areas, the FCC is working against us. As we speak, they are voting to kill the Lifeline program as we know it, effectively taking wireless phones out of the hands of the people who need them the most. They are acting to senselessly cut the wireless lifeline to 7.3 million Americans. That's cruel, particularly when some of those Americans live in places that are still recovering from natural disasters. I hope they reconsider and work with Congress to help those who need it most.

With that, I thank the witnesses, and I would like to yield one minute of time to Congresswoman Matsui and one minute of time to Congressman McNerney.

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