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RPTR KEAN

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MARKUP ON:

H.R. 2345, NATIONAL SUICIDE HOTLINE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2017; H.R. 5709,

PREVENTING ILLEGAL RADIO ABUSE THROUGH ENFORCEMENT (PIRATE) ACT;

H.R. 3994, ADVANCING CRITICAL CONNECTIVITY EXPANDS SERVICE, SMALL BUSINESSES

RESOURCES, OPPORTUNITIES, ACCESS, AND DATA BASED ON ASSESSED NEED AND

DEMAND (ACCESS BROADBAND) ACT;

AND H.R. 4881, PRECISION AGRICULTURE CONNECTIVITY ACT OF 2018

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13, 2018

House of Representatives,

Subcommittee on Communications

and Technology,

Committee on Energy and Commerce,

Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 2123, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Marsha Blackburn [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Blackburn, Lance, Shimkus, Latta, Guthrie, Olson,

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Johnson, Long, Flores, Brooks, Collins, Cramer, Walters, Costello, Walden (ex officio), Doyle, Welch, Clarke, Loeb sack, Ruiz, Dingell, Eshoo, Engel, Matsui, McNerney, Pallone (ex officio).

Staff Present: Jon Adame, Policy Coordinator, Communications and Technology; Mike Bloomquist, Staff Director; Samantha Bopp, Staff Assistant; Daniel Butler, Legislative Clerk; Karen Christian, General Counsel; Kelly Collins, Legislative Clerk, Energy/Environment; Robin Colwell, Chief Counsel, Communications and Technology; Kristine Fargotstein, Detailee, Communications and Technology; Sean Farrell, Professional Staff, Communications and Technology; Margaret Tucker Fogarty, Staff Assistant; Melissa Froelich, Chief Counsel, Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection; Adam Fromm, Director of Outreach and Coalitions; Ali Fulling, Legislative Clerk, Oversight and Investigations, Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection; Elena Hernandez, Press Secretary; Peter Kielty, Deputy General Counsel; Tim Kurth, Deputy Chief Counsel, Communications and Technology; Ryan Long, Deputy Staff Director; Milly Lothian, Press Assistant and Digital Coordinator; Lauren McCarty, Counsel, Communications and Technology; Drew McDowell, Executive Assistant; Austin Stonebraker, Press Assistant; Evan Viau, Legislative Clerk, Communications and Technology; Hamlin Wade, Special Advisor, External Affairs; Jeff Carroll, Minority Staff Director; Jennifer Epperson, Minority FCC Detailee; Elizabeth Ertel, Minority Office Manager; Jerry Leverich, Minority Counsel; Jourdan Lewis, Minority Staff Assistant; Dan Miller, Minority Policy Analyst; Tim Robinson, Minority Chief Counsel; Andrew Souvall, Minority Director of Communications, Outreach and Member Services; C.J. Young, Minority Press Secretary.

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Mrs. Blackburn. The subcommittee will come to order, and the chair recognizes herself for an opening statement.

Good morning, everyone. We are glad that you are here and we welcome you to today's markup, because we are very pleased about the legislation that is before us. It is something that is going to help solve some problems. These are bipartisan bills, and we look forward to advancing them to the full committee.

Though each of these bills addresses a different part of our communications ecosystem, they are all timely and important from public safety to closing the digital divide.

First, we will consider Mr. Stewart's National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act, which has five Democratic and five Republican cosponsors on the Energy and Commerce Committee.

With the losses of Anthony Bourdain and Kate Spade in recent weeks, Americans are looking for things that we can do to prevent these senseless tragedies. This bill takes an important step in identifying potential ways to use communications technologies to save the lives of those seeking help.

The Senate companion to this bill passed the Senate unanimously, and I look forward to moving this bipartisan legislation to the full committee.

We will also consider Mr. Lance and Mr. Tonko's PIRATE Act, which gives the FCC more tools to combat illegal pirate radio operations.

These illegal broadcasts deprive Americans of their access to important

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emergency alerting information and their access to educational and other programming provided by legitimate license holders.

Additionally, I am pleased that we are continuing our efforts to close the digital divide. Access to broadband continues to lag behind in rural America. And I know bridging this gap is a top priority for so many of our members on this committee and across Congress.

We will consider Mr. Tonko and Mr. Lance's ACCESS BROADBAND Act, which ensures Federal funding for broadband deployment that is tracked and coordinated across the Federal Government.

Throughout our consideration of NTIA this Congress, from our NTIA reauthorization hearing last year and our NTIA oversight hearing in March, not to mention our infrastructure hearings, it has become clear that we rely on NTIA for its expertise in mapping efforts and coordinating these programs. So I am pleased we are taking steps in our efforts to reauthorize NTIA.

Finally, we will be considering Mr. Latta and Mr. Loeb's Precision Agriculture Connectivity Act. Bringing broadband to rural America will not only bring connectivity to consumers, it will bolster the innovative work of the agriculture industry.

This bill would require the FCC and Department of Ag to form a task force that leverages the FCC's expertise on broadband services to enhance the effectiveness of innovative high precision agricultural services.

I would like to thank the members of the subcommittee for their work on these bills, especially Mr. Stewart for his passionate leadership on suicide prevention.

With that, I yield to my friend, the ranking member of the subcommittee,

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Mr. Doyle, 3 minutes for his opening.

Mr. Doyle. Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to thank you for convening this markup today. The legislation before us addresses a number of pressing issues.

I am happy to support the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act sponsored by Representatives Stewart and Bernice Johnson. This bill would require the FCC, in coordination with SAMHSA, to produce a study evaluating the feasibility of designing a 3-digit dialing code to be used for a national suicide prevention and mental health hotline system and to evaluate the current hotline.

The recent tragic deaths of Kate Spade and Anthony Bourdain have highlighted the need for renewed focus on the threat of suicide. A recently released study by the CDC found that suicide rates have risen nearly 30 percent since 1999. In my home State of Pennsylvania the rate has risen by 34 percent.

I hope that we can work together to advance this legislation and help address this critical threat.

I just want to add on a personal note, like so many others, our city was profiled by Anthony Bourdain. And for a long time, people didn't go to Pittsburgh or think about Pittsburgh as a food destination, but that is changing now. When Bourdain came to our city to highlight how far the city has come and how much we have to offer, in his way, he also highlighted the challenges we face as well.

So my hope is we can address this issue to avoid future tragedies like this one and so many others.

The Preventing Illegal Radio Abuse Through Enforcement Act, or the PIRATE Act, sponsored by Representatives Lance and Tonko, aims to reduce unauthorized radio

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broadcasts. I am happy to see that changes have been made to this bill and I hope that we can continue to work on it in order to address broadcasters' concerns.

The ACCESS BROADBAND Act, sponsored by Representatives Tonko and Lance, establishes an Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth within NTIA. The bill would require that this new office engage in a number of activities intended to enhance broadband deployment, share best practices, and accelerate adoption.

This legislation is a step in the right direction, but if we want to address the deployment and adoption challenges facing our Nation, particularly in low-income and rural communities, we need to do more, and we need to dedicate more resources to this task.

The FCC's ill-conceived actions on Lifeline and the Mobility Fund II debacle highlight the need for congressional oversight and greater direction from this committee.

Finally, the Precision Agriculture Connectivity Act, sponsored by Representatives Latta and Loeb sack, addresses technological and connectivity challenges to deployment of precision agriculture. This is a great example of how advanced technologies, such as GPS, mobile broadband, and potentially autonomous vehicles, can enhance productivity in rural America.

I am excited about the promise of this technology, and I look forward to working with my colleagues on this legislation.

And with that, Madam Chair, I yield back.

Mrs. Blackburn. The gentleman yields back.

At this time -- Mr. Walden is not here -- I recognize Mr. Latta for an opening statement.

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Mr. Latta. Well, thank you, Madam Chairman. I appreciate you holding today's markup and wish to express my support for the bills that we are marking up, and especially my bill and Mr. Loeb'sack's H.R. 4881, the Precision Agriculture Connectivity Act.

I represent the largest income-producing agricultural district in the State of Ohio. I have visited many farms and I also hear about the use of precision agriculture or the desire to use advanced equipment. But farmers are hindered in taking full advantage of this technology due to limited access to high speed broadband.

That is why my friend from Iowa, Mr. Loeb'sack, and I introduced H.R. 4881. We recognize the need for broadband in the rural, unserved agricultural areas of our districts and across the country.

Our bill would establish a task force at the FCC for reviewing the connectivity and technology needs of precision agriculture. This task force would be required to identify current gaps in broadband coverage on agricultural lands and recommend policies that will promote the rapid, expanded deployment of broadband Internet access service in unserved areas.

Without broadband, farmers cannot utilize precision agriculture that allows for the collection of field data in real time that can help with crop management. This type of technology helps farmers maximize resources to reduce costs, increase crop yields, and promotes environmentally sustainable practices.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan piece of legislation and all the bills that we have before us today, Madam Chairman. And I yield back the balance of my time. Thank you.

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Mrs. Blackburn. The gentleman yields back.

Mr. Pallone, you are recognized for an opening statement.

Mr. Pallone. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I am glad that we are meeting to mark up for bills, but it is unfortunate that the subcommittee chose not to take up a proper balance of proposals led by Democrats, and I hope we can find ways to work on this inequity moving forward.

One of the bills before us aims to strengthen the efforts of the Federal Communications Commission to crack down on pirate radio operators.

Another bill would set up a process for the FCC to consider how to support broadband or internet-connected farming techniques.

The third bill would help the Federal Government better target our efforts to support broadband.

And the fourth bill will make important improvements to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. This lifesaving tool offers confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The idea was simple: help people in a crisis before it is too late.

This lifeline is needed now more than ever. Last week a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that suicide rates increased by 28 percent between 1999 and 2016. Forty-nine States experienced an increase in suicide rates during that period.

Suicide is a problem that affects people from all walks of life. It is the 10th-leading cause of death in the U.S. Among some groups, the total is even higher. Suicide is the second-leading cause of death among American Indian/Alaska

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Native youths between the ages of 10 and 24.

And these statistics point to a problem that is all too real and sadly all too common. That fact was evident last week when both Kate Spade and Anthony Bourdain, both very successful in their respective industries, took their own lives. It is heartbreaking when someone is suffering so much that they choose to end their own life.

The National Suicide Prevention Hotline Improvement Act before us today would make it even easier for people wanting to connect with someone through the hotline, and the bill will give people an easy-to-remember 3-digit code, like 911, to call when they or their loved one is in crisis rather than the current 10. And it is a commonsense measure that will help Americans get the critical support they need during a time of crisis.

So I look forward to supporting this bill and the other three. And unless someone wants my time -- oh, no, I guess other members get to speak -- I yield back the balance of my time, Madam Chair.

Mrs. Blackburn. The gentleman yields back.

Mr. Collins, you are recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. Collins. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Since I have been on this subcommittee, I have raised time and again the issue of pirate radio. Pirate radio operators threaten public safety and negatively affect not only radio listeners, but also local broadcasters. It is time that we give the FCC the tools they need to combat these pirates.

Today we are taking a step to doing that by marking up H.R. 5709, the PIRATE Act. The PIRATE Act is a bipartisan bill that I introduced with Vice Chairman Lance, Representative Bilirakis, and fellow New Yorker Representative Paul Tonko.

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This bill fines for illegal pirate operations, streamlines the FCC's enforcement process, and empowers State and local law enforcement to combat illegal pirate operations.

I commend Chairman Pai and Commissioner O'Rielly for their advocacy and work in combating the pirates plaguing our broadcast system. I thank Vice Chairman Lance for his joint leadership on this issue. And I urge support for this legislation.

I yield back.

Mrs. Blackburn. The gentleman yields back.

Are there other members seeking -- the gentlelady is recognized for 1 minute for her opening.

Ms. Eshoo. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. I move to strike the last word.

I am proud to support this bill. It is bipartisan. And I think that it is going to go a long way to help people.

I have long been a champion of mental health issues, going back to my service on the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors. And I know that when someone is struggling mentally, reaching out for help can seem like really the hardest thing to do.

This bill is going to further the goal of making access to critical support service as simple as possible. We taught our children when they were very young in case of an emergency to dial 911. I know I did and many others did. Why? Because it is simple, it works, it is accessible. And this bill applies that same logic to mental crisis. So our hope is that in the end, like 911, it is going to help to save lives.

I think as Members of Congress helping to save American lives is one of our greatest callings, and I think that this bill advances that. So I am proud to support it. I

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am sure that this is going to just sweep right through our subcommittee, go on to the full committee and the full House.

And I yield back the balance of my time.

And I thank all the sponsors of it and cosponsors.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Mrs. Blackburn. The gentlelady yields back.

I know there are no further requests for time on the Republican side. Are there any other members?

Ms. Clarke, you are recognized for 1 minute.

Ms. Clarke. Thank you, Madam Chair. And I would like to strike the last word.

I thank you, Madam Chair and Ranking Member Doyle, for convening our subcommittee for this important and timely markup. Today, we are marking up a critical piece of legislation that I am proud to cosponsor, H.R. 2345, the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act of 2017.

I would like to thank my dear colleague, Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson, and Representative Chris Stewart for introducing H.R. 2345. This bill creates a process for generating a new 3-digit number for Americans to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

And as has already been stated, with the recent suicide death of American fashion designer and businesswoman Kate Spade, the celebrity chef, author, and documentarian Anthony Bourdain, and on a more personal note, late last year in New York City, a dear family friend, persevering entrepreneur, founder, president, and CEO of Golden Krust Caribbean Bakery & Grill, Mr. Lowell Hawthorne, who unfortunately took his life, we must

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make sure we help those in need of seeking help.

As a hip-hop fan, I was delighted to see the enormous success of Maryland's native rapper Logic's song entitled "1-800-273-8255" featuring Alessia Cara and Khalid, about suicide prevention. Logic stated that the song was the most important song he has ever written. And I do agree. There is something each of us can do.

On the day of the song's release, the Suicide Prevention Hotline received the second-highest daily call volume ever at that time, over 4,573 calls.

In closing, I believe this bill will help ensure that everyone who needs help will receive it in their time of need, whether they are a teenager, a parent, a celebrity, a businesswoman, a businessman, or a veteran.

With that, I thank you, Madam Chair, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. Blackburn. The gentlelady yields back.

The chair reminds members that pursuant to committee rules, all members' opening statements will be made a part of the record.

The chair calls up H.R. 2345, and asks the clerk to report.

The Clerk. H.R. 2345, to require the Federal Communications Commission to study the feasibility of designating a simple, easy-to-remember dialing code to be used for a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system.

Mrs. Blackburn. Without objection, the first reading of the bill is dispensed with and the bill will be open for amendment at any point. So ordered.

[The bill follows:]

***** INSERT 1-1 *****

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Mrs. Blackburn. The chair recognizes herself for the purpose of offering an amendment in the nature of a substitute. And the clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk. Amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 2345 offered by Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn. Without objection, the reading of the amendment is dispensed with, and the chair recognizes herself in support of the amendment.

[The amendment of Mrs. Blackburn follows:]

***** INSERT 1-2 *****

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Mrs. Blackburn. The amendment I am offering today is technical in nature. It is clearing the way to get this bill quickly through the House and onto the President's desk.

S. 1015, the Senate companion to H.R. 2345, passed the Senate unanimously last fall.

This amendment would provide clarifying changes and incorporates technical feedback provided by the FCC.

I would also like to take a few moments to talk about the underlying bill.

First, as we have previously done, I thank Mr. Stewart for his leadership on suicide prevention and for continuing the subcommittee's bipartisan spirit in his approach to addressing this issue.

Through his hard work, the bill has strong consensus, 87 bipartisan cosponsors, including strong support from members of this committee on each side of the aisle. On the majority side, Representatives Flores, Bilirakis, Costello, Olson signed on as cosponsors. And Representatives Eshoo, Clarke, Tonko, Rush, Loeb sack signed from the minority side.

As I stated in my opening remarks, Americans are looking for actions we can take to prevent senseless tragedies.

This is an issue that affects all Americans. It affects each one of us as we know family and friends who have been struck by suicide. We know the debilitating loss that comes from this as we see veterans, as we see children, and hardworking Americans who struggle and who then decide this is their option.

In our legislative hearing on this bill, Mr. Madigan, who leads the policy initiatives at the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, pointed out that suicide is one of the

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leading, yet largely preventable causes of death in this country. It is striking to us that there has been such an increase in suicide.

This amendment could add one more tool to the toolbox of those who are seeking to prevent suicide across the country. I urge your support of this amendment.

And with that, I yield back.

If there is no further discussion, the vote occurs on the amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended.

All those in favor should signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, no.

The ayes have it, and the amendment in the nature of a substitute is agreed to.

The question now occurs on forwarding H.R. 2345, as amended.

All those in favor, say aye.

Those opposed, no.

The ayes have it, and the bill is agreed to.

The chair calls up H.R. 5709 and asks the clerk to report.

The Clerk. H.R. 5709, to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to provide for enhanced penalties for pirate radio, and for other purposes.

Mrs. Blackburn. Without objection, the first reading of the bill is dispensed with and the bill will be open for amendment at any point. So ordered.

[The bill follows:]

***** INSERT 1-3 *****

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Mrs. Blackburn. The chair recognizes the vice chairman, Mr. Lance, for the purpose of offering an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

Mr. Lance. Thank you, Chairman. I have an amendment at the desk.

Mrs. Blackburn. The clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk. Amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5709 offered by Mr. Lance.

Mrs. Blackburn. Without objection, the reading of the amendment is dispensed with.

[The amendment of Mr. Lance follows:]

***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

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Mrs. Blackburn. And the chair recognizes Mr. Lance for 5 minutes in support of the amendment.

Mr. Lance. Thank you, Chairman.

This is first and foremost a public safety bill. Unlicensed FM and AM radio operators are a significant harm to public safety and public health. By disrupting and interfering with licensed broadcasts, these pirate radios can cause radio listeners to miss important updates during times of emergency by blocking the emergency alert system.

As they do not adhere to FCC regulations, pirate radios also emit a harmful level of radio frequency radiation, posing a health risk to nearby residents and workers.

They also hurt legitimate broadcasters by interfering with their licensed signals and disproportionately affect minority-owned stations as pirate mainly operate in urban areas.

I ask unanimous consent to enter a letter of support from the National Association of Black-Owned Broadcasters into the record.

Mrs. Blackburn. Without objection, so ordered.

[The information follows:]

***** INSERT 1-4 *****

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Mr. Lance. Thank you, Chairman.

I commend Chairman Pai, Commissioner O'Rielly, and the FCC's Enforcement Bureau for their leadership in enforcing against pirate radio operators. This is being done by the FCC. During Chairman Pai's short tenure, we have seen an encouraging shift in priorities at the Enforcement Bureau and renewed focus on cracking down on pirate broadcasters.

However, as Commissioner O'Rielly has stated before this subcommittee, the FCC's current enforcement tools are not sufficient to forcing these bad actors off the air permanently. This bill would increase the FCC's ability to crack down on pirates by increasing the maximum fine, streamlining enforcement, and holding facilitators liable, among other things.

I thank Congressmen Tonko, Collins, Bilirakis, and the other bipartisan cosponsors for their leadership on this issue and for working with me on this important legislation.

Our States are among the most affected by pirate radio operators in the country. This includes New Jersey, where I live, New York, and Florida. And I am pleased we are able to work in a bipartisan capacity to protect our constituents and local broadcasters from these menaces to public safety and health.

This amendment makes several technical and drafting edits to the underlying bill, adds reporting language requiring the FCC to submit an annual report to Congress on its efforts to enforce against pirate radio broadcasters, and clarifies language streamlining the notification process and prohibiting preemption of State laws outlawing pirate radio.

The reporting language is intended to provide oversight of the FCC's enforcement actions. While the current Enforcement Bureau is doing a much better job at prioritizing

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pirate radio enforcement and working to improve the FCC's relationship with various law enforcement agencies, it is important that this subcommittee, and indeed the full committee, are able to conduct oversight of future FCC administrations and ensure that these efforts will continue over time. It will allow us to see if new tools we provide the agency in the underlying bill are working.

I thank the chairman for bringing up this important piece of legislation and urge adoption of my amendment and of the underlying bill.

And I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. Blackburn. The gentleman yields back.

Are there others seeking time?

You are recognized, Mr. Doyle.

Let's dispense with the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

Mr. McNerney, you are recognized.

Mr. McNerney. I move to strike the last word.

The elimination of broadband privacy protections has left consumers without any control over how their internet service provider uses personal information they share online.

Now nothing prevents companies from selling consumers' browser history to the highest bidder without any notification, permission, or even if this involves consumers' financial or health information.

The harmful effects to consumers do not stop there. Consumers are also faced with the danger of identity theft and other crimes because the ISPs aren't required to take steps to secure their personal information.

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I have introduced legislation, the MY DATA Act, which would restore consumer control over the information they share online.

I do support the amendment before us today, and I hope the committee takes up my legislation. And I yield back.

Mrs. Blackburn. The gentleman yields back.

Mr. Doyle, you are recognized for the purpose of your amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Doyle. Yes, Madam Chairman. I have an amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute at the desk.

Mrs. Blackburn. The clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk. Amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5709 offered by Mr. Doyle.

Mrs. Blackburn. Without objection.

[The amendment of Mr. Doyle follows:]

***** INSERT 1-5 *****

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Mrs. Blackburn. And, Mr. Doyle, you are recognized on your amendment.

Mr. Doyle. Thank you, Madam Chair.

My amendment would add a new section to the bill ensuring that this legislation may not be construed to prevent the FCC from enforcing the rules adopted in the Protecting and Promoting the Open Internet, Report and Order, or, as many of you know, the net neutrality rules at the FCC. These rules were formally repealed this past Monday on June 11.

I intend to offer and withdraw this amendment, but I wanted to use this opportunity to highlight an important issue.

The repeal of net neutrality rules by the FCC has been overwhelmingly opposed by the vast majority of Americans. This is a bipartisan issue around the country. That is why I have introduced a resolution to restore net neutrality, and I urge every Member to sign the discharge petition on the floor to bring this resolution for a vote.

I would once again request that the majority hold an oversight hearing of the FCC. The majority had initially promised to hold quarterly hearings with the Commission. Our last hearing with the Commission was October of last year. This committee cannot effectively oversee this agency if it cannot hold them publicly accountable for their decisions.

The decisions the Commission is making in the absence of proper oversight are deeply troubling and incredibly impactful on our society and our economy. We cannot ignore our fundamental obligation as the committee of jurisdiction.

At this time, if any member would like to be yielded part of my time, I would encourage them to ask now.

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Mr. Pallone, I yield to him.

Mr. Pallone. Thank you.

I want to point out why I support the gentleman's amendment.

Eighty-three percent of Americans support keeping the FCC's net neutrality protections that were stricken from the books on Monday. We in Congress have an obligation to support strong, meaningful net neutrality protections and 170-plus Members of this body have already done that. So I call on the rest of my colleagues, Republicans and Democrats alike, to support Mr. Doyle's net neutrality CRA legislation.

We don't need watered-down net neutrality. Americans by a huge majority are asking for the real thing. We need net neutrality to foster a free and open debate online, and we need net neutrality to support small business growth. And we need to have net neutrality in order to ensure that hardworking Americans aren't forced behind big corporate conglomerates in an online slow lane.

And if we do our part, we can bring these protections back. No one said that the CRA was going to pass in the Senate, but in fact it did. And no one thought a discharge petition would work in the House, but it is happening on immigration, and it can happen here with Mr. Doyle's CRA on net neutrality.

So I just want to thank our ranking member for his tireless efforts in support of net neutrality and this CRA.

And I yield back to you, Mr. Doyle.

Mr. Doyle. Thank you.

Does anyone else on our side seek time?

Yes, I yield to Ms. Clarke.

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Ms. Clarke. Thank you, Madam Chair and Ranking Member Doyle, for giving me an opportunity to speak on this amendment in the nature of a substitute.

First, I would like to thank Ranking Member Doyle for his unwavering and amazing leadership in the fight to restore net neutrality through his CRA.

It is very important that we continue and win this fight. You see, we have to keep the key stakeholder in net neutrality first in our minds: the American people, the consumers.

The promise of the internet was the freedom of information that people around the world would have the opportunity to interact and access information easier than ever before. We must honor this promise.

With that, I yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. Doyle. Thank you.

Does anyone else on our side seek time?

Mr. McNerney.

Mr. McNerney. I thank the ranking member for yielding.

Net neutrality protections are essential for our democracy and for a growing economy. The protections have been critical for small businesses and innovation in my district and around the country, and they have been a vital gateway for economic opportunity.

The repeal of net neutrality has set us on a path backwards where internet service providers are now free to block and throttle web traffic and impose paid prioritization, creating fast lanes and slow lanes for web traffic.

But the fight for a free and open internet is not over. I am proud to be an original

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cosponsor of the legislation to restore net neutrality protections and the signatory of the discharge petition that would bring this crucial legislation to a vote on the House floor.

I urge my colleagues to stand up for consumers and small businesses and sign the petition, and I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

I yield back.

Mr. Doyle. Thank you.

Madam Chair, with that, I would like to withdraw my amendment.

Mrs. Blackburn. The gentleman withdraws his amendment.

Are there others?

Mr. Doyle, you are recognized for the purpose of offering an amendment.

Mr. Doyle. Again, I have an amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute at the desk.

Mrs. Blackburn. The clerk will report.

The Clerk. Amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 5709 offered by Mr. Doyle.

Mrs. Blackburn. Without objection, the reading is dispensed with.

[The amendment of Mr. Doyle follows:]

***** INSERT 1-6 *****

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Mrs. Blackburn. And, Mr. Doyle, you are recognized for 5 minutes in support of your amendment.

Mr. Doyle. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chair, this amendment would add a new section to the bill ensuring that this legislation may not be construed to prevent the FCC from enforcing the rules adopted by the Protection of Privacy of Consumers of Broadband and Other Telecommunications Services.

I intend to offer and withdraw this amendment also, but I wanted to use this, take this opportunity to highlight what I think is an important issue.

This rule was repealed by the majority and signed by the President last year. This rule established basic rules of the road for ISPs regarding what they could do with their customers' data.

Broadband providers were required to ask for permission from users before collecting their data. They were required to take reasonable measures to protect that data, and if that data was stolen, they were required to let consumers know. These were basic and reasonable rules.

However, more than a year after repealing these rules, we have yet to have a hearing to determine or evaluate the effect of the repeal.

I raise this point because of an investigation led by Senator Wyden's staff and followed up, worked on by researchers at Carnegie Mellon University that revealed that mobile phone operators had enabled the location data of nearly every phone in America to be tracked in real time.

We don't yet know the scope of this problem, whose phone was tracked or by

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whom, but this is a clear example of why the broadband privacy rules were necessary and the danger in repealing them. I would urge the majority to hold a hearing examining this issue and bring to light these troubling revelations.

At this time, I would also ask if there is any member that would like to be yielded time.

I yield to Mr. Pallone.

Mr. Pallone. Thank you, Mr. Doyle. And I do support your amendment.

Every day another story breaks about a breach of trust or consumers' private information online. But the Republicans earlier this Congress repealed the only privacy rule we had for broadband, the FCC's broadband privacy protections.

Republicans now say they might want some privacy rules, but only after overwhelming public backlash, and rolling back those FCC broadband privacy protections was the wrong move for America.

Our Republican colleagues argue that the American people were confused and didn't understand those protections, but we hear loud and clear from our constituents that the people want more protections online, not less, and that doesn't sound confused at all to me.

As the Facebook scandal shows, Americans not only want strong, comprehensive privacy and data security protections, they need them. And for at least a portion of the internet ecosystem, the FCC's broadband privacy protections did just that.

Under the FCC's rules, broadband providers only had to ask permission and take reasonable steps to protect your privacy. But those protections were kicked to the curb last year by Republicans. And given all that has happened since, that really is a shame.

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And so with that, I yield back, but I do want to say this is a very important amendment, and I urge support.

Mr. Doyle. Does anyone also on my side seek time?

If not, Madam Chair, I withdraw the amendment.

Mrs. Blackburn. The gentleman withdraws the amendment. And I will add that we continue to look forward to working in a bipartisan manner on the issue of privacy and data security.

As you know, this committee has focused on finding a bipartisan resolution to the privacy issue for the entire internet ecosystem, and it goes back to 2013 with the bipartisan working group that Mr. Welch and I chaired. So we look forward to continuing to work on those issues.

If there is no further discussion, the vote occurs on the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

All those in favor shall signify by saying aye.

All opposed, no.

The ayes have it, and the amendment in the nature of a substitute is agreed to.

The question now occurs on forwarding H.R. 5709, as amended.

All those in favor, say aye.

Those opposed, say no.

The ayes have it, and the bill is agreed to.

The chair calls up H.R. 4881 and asks the clerk to report.

The Clerk. H.R. 4881, to require the Federal Communications Commission to establish a task force for meeting the connectivity and technology needs of precision

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agriculture in the United States.

Mrs. Blackburn. Without objection, the first reading of the bill is dispensed with, and the bill will be open for amendment at any point. So ordered.

[The bill follows:]

***** INSERT 1-7 *****

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Mrs. Blackburn. The chair recognizes the vice chair, Mr. Latta, for the purpose of offering an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

Mr. Latta. Well, thank you, Madam Chair. I have an amendment at the desk.

Mrs. Blackburn. The clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk. Amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4881 offered by Mr. Latta.

Mrs. Blackburn. Without objection, the reading of the amendment is dispensed with.

[The amendment of Mr. Latta follows:]

***** INSERT 1-8 *****

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Mrs. Blackburn. And I recognize Mr. Latta for 5 minutes in support of his amendment.

Mr. Latta. Well, thank you, Madam Chair.

My amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4881 makes technical changes to the underlying bill to improve the consistency of certain wording and to clarify the duties of the task force.

The amendment also clarifies that the task force should not recommend using existing universal service programs to target funding support for the purpose of this act.

These bipartisan changes reflect guidance received by stakeholders and technical assistance provided by the FCC.

Thank you. I yield back.

Mrs. Blackburn. The gentleman yields back.

Is there further discussion on the amendment?

You are recognized, Mr. Loeb sack.

Mr. Loeb sack. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk, an amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

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Mrs. Blackburn. The clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk. Amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R.

4881 offered by Mr. Loeb sack.

Mrs. Blackburn. The reading is dispensed with.

[The amendment of Mr. Loeb sack follows:]

***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

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Mrs. Blackburn. And I recognize Mr. Loeb sack for the purpose of speaking on his amendment.

Mr. Loeb sack. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would first like to thank the chair and the ranking member for having this markup today and bringing the Precision Agriculture Connectivity Act up for consideration.

My amendment with Mr. Latta is a technical amendment to the definition of broadband in the bill. It is a bipartisan amendment in the spirit of ensuring this bill advances the sort of bipartisan consensus that we need more of to bring broadband to rural America.

I am very happy that we have been able to come to a bipartisan consensus on this bill and we will be moving it forward today. I hope the support we show for this bill today will mirror that of the support it received on the House floor when we were debating the farm bill itself, and that before year's end the Precision Agriculture Connectivity Act will be law.

Because the future of rural development in Iowa and across the country depends in large part on the access to the internet, and specifically broadband, I have met with small businesses, farmers, and rural telecommunication companies across Iowa and here in D.C., and consistently the importance of expanding high speed internet access to rural areas is brought up as one of their top priorities. This is critical to rural economic development, to job growth, to businesses, farmers, and to families.

And working with my colleague from Ohio, Representative Latta, has been a particular honor. And I thank him for his work on this issue because he is someone who gets it in rural America.

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Farming is an integral component to the rural economy and a source of pride for the rural community, and we need to be doing more to make sure that we have the tools to do their jobs and provide for the rest of us. And we have to focus on giving family farmers the opportunity to continue the long tradition of family farming, and ensuring they have access to precision agriculture technologies is one of the ways that we support that.

With that, I encourage members to support this amendment and to support the Precision Agriculture Connectivity Act and American farmers.

And I yield back. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mrs. Blackburn. Is there further discussion on the Loeb sack amendment?

Seeing none, the vote occurs on the Loeb sack amendment.

All of those in favor, say aye.

All of those opposed, no.

The ayes have it. The amendment to the amendment is agreed to.

The vote now occurs on the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

All of those in favor shall signify by saying aye.

All opposed, no.

The ayes have it. The amendment in the nature of a substitute is agreed to.

The question now occurs on forwarding H.R. 4881, as amended.

All those in favor, say aye.

Those opposed, say no.

The ayes have it. The bill is agreed to.

The chair now calls up H.R. 3994 and asks the clerk to report.

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The Clerk. H.R. 3994, to establish the Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth, and for other purposes.

Mrs. Blackburn. Without objection, the first reading of the bill is dispensed with and the bill will be open for amendment at any point. So ordered.

[The bill follows:]

***** INSERT 1-9 *****

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Mrs. Blackburn. The chair now recognizes Mr. Lance for the purpose of offering an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

Mr. Lance. Thank you, Chairman. I have an amendment.

Mrs. Blackburn. The clerk will report.

The Clerk. Amendment in the nature of substitute to H.R. 3994 offered by Mr. Lance.

Mrs. Blackburn. Without objection, the reading of the amendment is dispensed with.

[The amendment of Mr. Lance follows:]

***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

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Mrs. Blackburn. The chair recognizes Mr. Lance for 5 minutes in support of his amendment.

Mr. Lance. Thank you, Chairman.

I am pleased we are marking up the ACCESS BROADBAND Act, which I introduced with Congressman Tonko last year. This bill would streamline the Federal grant programs related to broadband deployment and track how Federal funds are used to a greater extent than is now the case.

I thank Congressman Tonko for his leadership on this important issue.

Broadband is the infrastructure of the 21st century. It has become essential for economic and educational success. However, in many areas of the country, the cost to deploy broadband infrastructure is prohibitive, which creates a need for Federal funding in cases where a market solution is not possible.

With several different broadband support programs across several Federal agencies, there is no single comprehensive system tracking where and how Federal funds are being spent.

ACCESS BROADBAND creates an office within the National Telecommunications and Information Administration tasked with simplifying the application process for the various support programs, coordinating between the various agencies, and tracking the use and effectiveness of Federal broadband funding.

My amendment makes several technical changes after we receive technical assistance from NTIA. It also removes a broadband support program that no longer exists and makes sure that community providers, such as libraries, are included in the definition of Federal broadband support programs.

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Finally, the amendment specifies that the new office ensures that in addition to sustainability, both financially and efficiently, Federal broadband support is being offered in a technologically neutral manner, and that overbuilding of broadband is avoided.

As we seek to close the digital divide, it is essential that we recognize that any Federal funds for broadband deployment will be finite and make sure that those funds are used efficiently and effectively. The Federal Government should not be in the business of wasting broadband funds and subsidizing competitors in local markets where a broadband provider already provides the service necessary.

I am pleased that this amendment and the underlying bill help achieve the goal of providing broadband assistance effectively by coordinating the various support programs offered.

I urge the adoption of my amendment and of the underlying bill.

And, Chairman, I yield back the remainder of my time.

Mrs. Blackburn. The gentleman yields back.

Are there others seeking to speak on the amendment in the nature of a substitute?

As there is no further discussion, the vote occurs on the amendment in the nature of a substitute.

All those in favor shall signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, no.

The ayes have it. The amendment in the nature of a substitute is agreed to.

The question now occurs on forwarding H.R. 3994, as amended.

All those in favor, say aye.

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Those opposed, no.

The ayes have it and the bill is agreed to.

Without objection, staff is authorized to make technical and conforming changes to the legislation that has been approved by the subcommittee today. So ordered.

Without objection, the subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:46 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]