

**Opening Statement of Republican Leader Robert E. Latta
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
“Leading the Wireless Future: Securing American Network Technology”
April 21, 2020**

As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses for joining us to discuss the future of securing our communications networks.

Over the last year, Americans have relied more than ever on broadband technology to earn a livelihood, educate their children, and stay connected to their families and communities. Wireless connectivity has played a key role, and thanks to the investment and ingenuity of our nation’s wireless providers, U.S. networks rose to the challenge of meeting Americans’ unprecedented demand for voice and high-speed data services.

We must continue to build upon our success and remain the global leader in wireless innovation. We must lead in developing 5G and 6G standards and deploying next generation 5G technology. In a large part, our leadership depends on ensuring that all generations of our networks are secure, and on having policies that encourage investment and innovation from trusted companies and the flexibility to bring new technologies to market here in the United States.

Congress and the Trump Administration acted in many ways to protect and diversify our communications supply chain, including funding the implementation of the Secure and Trusted Communications

Networks Act to support the removal and replacement of harmful equipment in our nation's communications networks. We also worked with our Democratic colleagues last year to enact the bipartisan Utilizing Strategic Allied Telecommunications Act, which created a grant program at NTIA to facilitate the deployment of Open Radio Access Network (known as "Open RAN") technologies that will diversify our 5G supply chain, lower equipment costs, and help us prevent bad actors like China from disrupting our networks.

It is crucial that Congress funds this grant program in any funding program that moves forward. The use of Open RAN technology represents one such path to reducing threats. By enabling providers to move away from end-to-end product lines, and mix and match vendors inside their networks, Open RAN can help reduce reliance on foreign equipment and ensure that problematic components of a network's architecture can be easily swapped out. It will also help trusted suppliers remain economically competitive against Huawei and others seeking to undermine our national security.

But more work needs to be done to drive 5G innovation, and we must be forward-thinking in our approach to network security. Three years ago, this Subcommittee held a bipartisan hearing examining the communications landscape, economic competitiveness, and national security. Congress has addressed many of the concerns that we heard, in large part because of that bipartisan focus. However, it is clear that we must continue to put a focus on these efforts to preserve American leadership, improve transparency and information sharing, and remain vigilant in identifying new vulnerabilities.

We can start by working together on policies to safeguard American leadership at standards setting bodies that are crucial for setting the technical rules of the road for equipment and devices. We should also work to address the challenges that U.S. and other trusted companies face to compete in a global supply chain, and ensure that the work we have already done is being implemented effectively and working as intended, such as NTIA's information sharing program for smaller and rural communications providers.

These are important issues that deserve bipartisan attention, and I am grateful for the opportunity to hear from today's witnesses on how we can secure our global 5G leadership.