

**Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery**  
**of**  
**Subcommittee on Communications & Technology Member Darren Soto**  
*Markup of 11 Bills, Subcommittee on Communications and Technology*  
**July 12, 2023**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We worked together with President Biden and Congress last term with a generational goal, which is to ensure that every American has access to high-speed internet. Urban, suburban, rural areas Across Central Florida and our nation.

We had a great start with the American Rescue Plan, which saw about \$14 million plus go to rural areas of south Osceola County in Florida's Ninth Congressional District, but then we made the big Down-payment: the bi-partisan Infrastructure Law, which provided \$65 billion to help with broadband investment, including \$42 billion for the BEAD Program. We saw Florida finally get the reward: \$1.17 billion just two weeks ago to help across the Sunshine State.

While we see these major investments, these generational investments, there are challenges ahead: how best to close the digital divide, the divide between the haves and the have-nots of high-speed Internet; how to make our telecommunications system more resilient against cybersecurity attacks; and also to improve public safety for our first-responders responding to hurricanes and other natural disasters.

I'm proud to support the NTIA Reauthorization Act today, which is going to help us address some of these major challenges as we forge ahead on this audacious goal to ensure every American has access to high-speed Internet.

I yield back.