

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.

***Subcommittee on Communications and Technology Hearing on “Global Networks at Risk:
Securing the Future of Telecommunications Infrastructure”***

April 30, 2025

While today’s discussion is important and timely, I am worried that my Republican colleagues are failing to even acknowledge the unprecedented and troubling actions of this Administration that are putting our national security at risk.

Defending our telecommunications infrastructure from our foreign adversaries and other bad actors is critically important. On a daily basis, our nation’s telecommunications networks carry enormous amounts of data that not only include our most personal information, but also sensitive government materials that any foreign nation would love to digest.

Late last year, we learned that Salt Typhoon – a cyber espionage operation backed by China – infiltrated several American telecommunications networks to gain access to detailed information on President Trump, former Vice President Harris, other political figures, and American surveillance information.

That is why it is so disturbing to watch as the Trump Administration has mishandled sensitive national security information. In one of the worst security failures in decades, Defense Secretary Hegseth last month shared highly sensitive war plans on Signal – an unofficial and unsecure messaging app. The unsecure group chat was created by National Security Advisor Waltz and he inadvertently included a reporter in the chat. Hegseth also shared this same information in a separate chat with some family members. This reckless conduct put the lives of American troops at risk. If any adversary got access to these messages, they could have shot down American planes or targeted American ships. And yet Secretary Hegseth continues to lead the Department of Defense. It’s an outrage and shows that the Administration doesn’t take these threats seriously.

This is on top of the fact that Elon Musk and his DOGE minions are being given access – often unauthorized – to sensitive information and undermining Americans’ security on a daily basis, and that could include our nuclear secrets. Musk and DOGE are also haphazardly and indiscriminately cutting and slashing important government programs and experienced public servants, which is weakening our country without any pushback from Congressional Republicans.

And while President Trump likes to act tough against China, he is blatantly violating Congress’s bipartisan TikTok legislation and continuing to allow the Chinese Communist Party

to compromise Americans' devices, harvest Americans' data, promote pro-Communist propaganda, and undermine American interests.

Securing our country's telecommunications networks and infrastructure is serious business, but the Trump Administration is NOT taking this task seriously. Imposing arbitrary tariffs on telecommunications equipment and chips that are vital to enhancing the safety and security of our networks one day and then pausing them the next is only causing chaos and confusion. This Administration's actions are increasing the chances that our foreign adversaries and others attempt even larger scale attacks on our telecommunications networks, which no one wants to see.

Despite President Trump's recklessness and my Republican colleagues' silence, today's hearing topic underpins a significant part of the American economy. From health care, to energy, to public safety, nearly every facet of American life relies on our nation's telecommunications networks and infrastructure. While the innovations and advancements that these networks enable are remarkable, it also makes them – and the devices that run on top of them – targets.

This will only increase as more devices in our homes are connected. If cars, televisions, home security systems, and more are connected to the internet, they are vulnerable to attacks. This reality means that our homes can now be attacked without anyone touching a single door or window.

So, it is imperative that we understand the vulnerabilities and risks our networks and devices face to better protect our country and consumers from attack.

And to keep up with the rapidly evolving technological landscape our nation faces, I urge my Republican colleagues to stop their irresponsible budget reconciliation plans.

Rather than using spectrum auction proceeds to fund giant tax breaks for America's billionaires and big corporations, we should use the proceeds to help fund Next Generation 911, which will enhance the safety of our emergency networks and save countless American lives.

The Trump Administration must also stop delaying sending states their funds from the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. These funds will ensure reliable connectivity across the nation, which is crucial for our national security and economic prosperity. The only person who benefits from these delaying tactics is Elon Musk, who is trying to get taxpayer money funneled to his Starlink service.

I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses about securing our telecommunications infrastructure, devices, and consumer data, and I yield back the balance of my time.