

**Opening Statement of Chairman Brett Guthrie**  
**Subcommittee on Communications and Technology**  
***“Public Safety Communications in the United States”***  
**Tuesday, September 9, 2025, at 10:15 AM**

Thank you, Chairman Hudson, for bringing us together for this important hearing and thank you to the witnesses for your participation. I look forward to hearing about the state of public safety communications and learning what our first responders need going forward.

In the wake of the tragic floods in Texas in July, we are especially thankful for our emergency responders, and we are committed to making sure they can do their jobs effectively. I know Representatives Pfluger and Carter respectively had children and grandchildren attending the camp, and fortunately they are okay. We will continue to pray for those whom we have lost and their families in this heart-wrenching time. A tragedy like this highlights the importance of the hearing topic today, as communications infrastructure is needed in desperate moments like these.

We may take “9-1-1” for granted today, but the very first 911 call was placed in 1968 in Haleyville, Alabama. Before then, reporting an emergency meant looking up the local

agency's number manually. The single, three-digit number improves response times and saves lives when every second counts.

Since that first 911 call, technology for public safety communications has advanced significantly. Next Generation 911 is becoming more common at call centers around the country, which means faster and more prepared emergency responses, including enhanced location accuracy. Nationwide networks that provide more seamless, cutting-edge service and advanced deployable communications infrastructure provides quick restoration of service for first responders after a natural disaster. And low earth orbit satellites are providing service in areas that traditional mobile service can't reach, leading to more resilient networks.

Regardless of what type of technology or which service provider first responders use, it is critical that their communications tools work reliably in the moment of need. My home state of Kentucky has also dealt with significant flooding and tornadoes in recent months, and my district dealt with the same just a few years ago. I have seen firsthand how reliable access to communications infrastructure is critical for our first

responders and our communities during emergencies, and I am excited to learn about how this Committee can help our nation's first responders to strengthen our public safety communications across the country to better serve those in need.

Before I wrap up, I want to take a moment to thank and congratulate my Communications and Technology Chief Counsel Kate Harper for her service to this Committee. Kate served under three Chairs of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and has been an invaluable team member for as long as she's been here. Though we will certainly miss her, we are very excited for her, as she takes on a new challenge in the private sector.

Thank you again to the witnesses for your participation and I look forward to hearing from you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.