

**Opening Statement for Chairman Brett Guthrie
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
“The Telecommunications Act of 1996: 30 Years Later”**

March 26, 2026

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Thank you, Chairman Hudson, for bringing us together for this important hearing, and thank you to the witnesses for your participation.

It is incredible how things have changed over the last 30 years. In 1996, I was in business school learning from case studies that had not yet anticipated the dramatic evolution of technology we’ve seen since then over three decades, which have fundamentally changed the world of business and the daily lives of our constituents.

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 was a monumental law when it passed, and it is largely responsible for ushering in years of growth and development. The 1996 Act deregulated the telecommunications industry, allowing for technological

innovation and new competitors to enter the marketplace, which ultimately benefited consumers. The law was also essential to rural America by codifying the principle of universal service, which has played a critical role in ensuring that every American has access to the communications services that have become essential to everyday life.

But things have changed in the last 30 years. Landlines are no longer the primary mode of communication. Technologies that were in their infancy or unforeseen in 1996—broadband, AI, streaming—are now the foundations of how we communicate, interact, and carry out tasks in our day-to-day lives.

One of my priorities as Chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee is modernizing the laws in our jurisdiction that govern nearly 70 percent of the economy. The 30th anniversary of the Telecom Act gives us an opportunity to

reexamine our communications laws and consider how to update them for today's world and the next generation's.

In conducting this review, we must recognize this is a critical moment in history. The United States is the global leader in technological advancements due in large part to policies that allow the private sector to innovate. Congress should continue the deregulatory framework of the Telecommunications Act and implement light-touch policies that allow the U.S. to maintain its status as the global leader in technological advancements. This is especially important as we compete for technological leadership against adversaries like China.

I look forward to hearing from the witnesses on this important topic and hearing how Congress can modernize our communications laws.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.