

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Innovation, Data and Commerce Ranking Member Jan Schakowsky

Innovation, Data, and Commerce Subcommittee Hearing on “Preserving Americans’ Access to AM Radio”

April 30, 2024

Today we are here to discuss the importance of AM radio in our cars. AM radio has been delivering American consumers news, sports, and weather for more than 100 years.

Last year, over 85 million Americans listened to AM radio. Even more importantly, AM radio is an essential part of the national emergency alert system. This system provides life-saving information during emergencies like tornados, hurricanes, and wildfires. AM radio stations have continued working during disasters when cellular networks have failed. For example, during Hurricane Ida in 2021 local AM stations stayed on the air 24 hours to share life-saving updates.

According to AARP, older Americans are some of the most vulnerable in disaster situations. They are also the largest share of AM radio listeners. Finally, AM radio plays a crucial role in connecting Black and Latino communities. There are over 600 AM stations broadcasting in languages other than English

However, recently some car manufacturers began removing analog AM radio from their new cars. This deprives American drivers of access to AM radio news and emergency alerts. For public safety we must ensure Americans can access emergency alerts in their cars.

Let’s work together on bipartisan solutions to ensure American drivers have access to AM radio and the news, sports, and weather they enjoy daily.