

Opening Statement of Chair Gus M. Bilirakis
As Prepared for Delivery
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Innovation, Data, and Commerce
Markup of Three Bills
May 23, 2024

Good morning, and welcome to today's Subcommittee markup where we will consider 3 significant Subcommittee priority pieces of legislation to protect Americans' data privacy rights, protect kids online, and preserve access to AM radio.

I want to thank all the Subcommittee members for their input and feedback on these topics, and I am looking forward to continuing productive conversations in a bipartisan manner to refine these bills as we move through the legislative process.

We have a historic opportunity to advance legislation that will end the patchwork and finally provide a federal standard to govern how Americans' personal information is collected, stored, retained, and transferred.

The American Privacy Rights Act is the strongest consumer data privacy and security framework to date.

It provides businesses with certainty through a national preemptive standard, secures individual liberties through strong data minimization provisions, and cements America's global leadership through data security provisions that warn consumers when their information is being collected and shared with our foreign adversaries, like China and Russia.

For years, Congress has long tried to thread the needle when it comes to getting a national data privacy bill enacted into law, given the many differences in approach from both sides of the political spectrum.

I want to applaud Chair Rodgers and Chair Cantwell for their tireless efforts to move forward with a framework that strikes this critical balance, as well as all the members on both sides of the aisle that have provisions included in the draft before us today.

I understand many stakeholders have continued to engage with every office on their requests, and I look forward to hearing from my colleagues about how we can continue to incorporate that feedback.

I'm thankful for all the constructive comments we've received up to this point. This is certainly not the last opportunity to deliberate and refine this draft further. But time is of the essence, so let's continue to move this process forward to protect Americans privacy rights, promote individual freedoms and civil liberties, and secure data from abuse by bad actors.

In addition to APRA, I'm proud that we are also considering my bill, H.R. 7891 the Kids Online Safety Act. I'm thankful to Rep. Castor for her partnership on this effort, as well as the many colleagues on this Subcommittee who've cosponsored our legislation.

Sadly, in the face of an unprecedented youth mental health crisis in this nation, Big Tech has continued to turn a blind eye to harms perpetuated on their online platforms. Congress has been forced to step in to ensure children and parents have the safeguards, tools, and transparency measures they need to stay safe.

KOSA requires the prevention and mitigation of harms to minors, such as the promotion of suicide, depression, substance abuse, sexual exploitation, and illegal drug sales such as fentanyl. Too often we've seen the design features of social media fuel these problems, rather than prevent them.

This legislation is not perfect, and I'm hopeful conversations today can illuminate how we can better establish needed protections for children.

Lastly, the Subcommittee will be taking a bipartisan bill I'm leading with Ranking Member Pallone, the AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act. At our legislative hearing, we heard from our witnesses about the importance of having a robust emergency alert and public safety communications infrastructure. Further, rural and underserved Americans still enjoy listening to AM radio broadcasts for their diverse viewpoints.

Given AM radio's significant reach as a medium, much of it taking place in vehicles, we must ensure it remains a readily available option for all Americans, particularly as we approach hurricane season. I'm proud to partner with Ranking Member Pallone on this initiative and look forward to advancing it through Subcommittee today.

In closing, I look forward to working with all my colleagues on both sides of the aisle today to get these critical bills across the finish line. And with that I yield back.