

Opening Statement
Energy and Commerce Markup
July 18, 2018
Congressman Gregg Harper

Mr. Chairman –

Thank you for bringing these important bills to the committee for markup today.

I am pleased to speak about the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation Act of 2018, which reauthorizes critical preparedness and response activities at the Department of Health and Human Services. This legislation will enable the federal government to prepare for possible threats in the event of natural disasters or other types of national emergencies.

Mississippi is no stranger to these sorts of threats. After Hurricane Katrina devastated the Mississippi Gulf Coast and delivered winds upwards of 100 miles-per-hour in my district—which is more than 150 miles inland—the University of Mississippi Medical Center, or UMMC, developed a statewide preparedness and response system for future emergencies. UMMC is the state’s only academic medical center and only Level One Trauma

Center, and the rural nature of our state causes available resources to be especially valuable during times of crisis. UMMC has developed an all-hazards strategy and set of best practices for local response during these types of emergencies and has worked with state and federal partners on this approach. UMMC's work offers a model that could be helpful for other medical preparedness activities.

The legislation we are considering today includes a provision that would enable the establishment of regional demonstration projects to improve capacity and coordination during these emergencies. I am pleased that institutions similar to the University of Mississippi Medical Center will be able to benefit from future projects created by this program.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your work on the bill and the support of the Energy and Commerce Committee staff on this effort. Again, thank you for holding this markup today. I urge passage of the bills before us and yield back.