

**Opening Statement of Republican Leader Robert E. Latta
Committee on Energy and Commerce
“Markup of 38 Energy, Health, Consumer Protection, and
Telecommunications Bills”
September 9, 2020**

As Prepared for Delivery

Good morning and welcome to today’s full Committee markup where we will consider several pieces of legislation that will improve the state of our country’s health, media diversity, and much more.

From the Communications and Technology Subcommittee, we will be considering H.R. 3957, the Expanding Broadcast Ownership Opportunities Act, which would help new and diverse entrants achieve their dream of owning a broadcast station through tax certificates. During the years the Minority Broadcast Tax Certificate was in effect, we saw a significant increase in minority ownership of broadcast stations, and we expect similar results from H.R. 3957. While there are additional proposals from both sides of the aisle that would increase diversity in the media industry, we were not able to reach bipartisan consensus today. We hope to revisit those proposals but ask our

colleagues in the majority to work with us to advance other legislation that complement this important initiative.

Additionally, we will be considering H.R. 1289, the PHONE Act, which would prevent consumers from losing their landline phone number after their homes were destroyed by natural disasters by making changes to the way the Federal Communications Commission manages our wireline numbering resources. While I raised concerns at the legislative hearing about the necessity of this bill given the existing waiver process to provide relief following a natural disaster, we were able to make some changes so that the bill could actually be implemented by the agencies and the phone companies, and truly help consumers during the times of disaster.

Finally, we are also considering H.R. 5564, as amended by the Subcommittee. While we advanced the measure by voice vote with the hope of finding a bipartisan consensus before today's markup, we have fallen short of that goal. Consistent with the approach we have taken to promote policies that will improve employment and ownership diversity, we have amendments prepared to improve the underlying bill.

There are an additional 35 bills on today's markup, including three of my own – the DEBAR Act, and wrapped into the COMPETE Act, the SMART IoT Act, and the Advancing Unmanned Delivery Services Act. I will later speak more in depth on these bills, but I want to thank the Chairman for including these proposals in this markup.

Thank you and I yield back.