

Statement of Republican Leader Greg Walden
Full Committee Markup
September 9, 2020

Good morning.

I thank Chairman Pallone for holding today's markup on 38 bills.

I am pleased that today we can advance Mr. Butterfield's "Expanding Broadcast Ownership Opportunities Act" which will reinstate the FCC's Minority Broadcast Tax Certificate to increase diversity in the broadcast industry.

As a former broadcaster, I know firsthand the challenges that smaller broadcasters face in trying to run their businesses successfully, and this program is a proven way to help ensure diverse content stays on the air.

Unfortunately, we were unable to reach bipartisan consensus on several other items, which, if done correctly, could have made major advances in promoting diversity in the media industry, and it saddens me that we were unable to find consensus on such an important issue.

We are also marking up 26 health bills on a variety of issues important to patients across the country, including 21 bills in the public health space alone.

We are building upon the 21st Century Cures Act to broaden access to mental health, addiction treatment, and suicide prevention services.

We have a long-term extension for the pediatric priority review voucher program—which expires this month—giving children with rare diseases and their families continued hope.

We're also closing gaps in insurance coverage to support children with congenital anomalies and helping children access health care in their own schools.

Today's bills also would ensure seniors avoid late enrollment penalties in Medicare.

And finally, we're helping improve health care data for American Indian and Alaska Native tribes.

I am proud that we also achieved bipartisan agreements to guide the Federal Trade Commission and Consumer Product Safety Commission on better protecting our vulnerable communities during the pandemic.

This committee has a long bipartisan history of promoting national frameworks to enable our global leadership. I'm honored that Republican Members have heeded my call to promote Artificial Intelligence and other technologies here today, but I am disappointed that we missed opportunities to finish legislation on autonomous vehicles and data protections. We're already seeing estimates that China grew its GDP by 3.2% in the second quarter of this year - no one will wait for us to act.

And last – but never least – I am pleased that we are moving two important energy bills.

First, the Expanding Access to Sustainable Energy Act – this bipartisan legislation would support the deployment of energy storage and microgrid projects for rural electric co-ops.

And Second, H.R. 8159 – a bill I introduced, along with Chairman Pallone, to strengthen the management of DOE, including with respect to the National Nuclear Security Administration.

Thank you, and I yield back.