

Opening Statement of Republican Leader Robert E. Latta
Committee on Energy and Commerce
“LIFT America Act Hearing”
March 22, 2021

As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

During several Congresses that Republicans led this committee, we were able to work with you all to pass substantive, bipartisan policies to move this country forward.

I am extremely disappointed that we have not been able to reach the same consensus we have had in years past, and the importance of bipartisanship has been seemingly forgotten.

The issues before us today **should not be partisan**. They impact Americans in each of our districts, regardless of their political party. Don't we owe it to them to work together on their behalf?

Republicans on this committee recently re-introduced the Boosting Broadband Connectivity Agenda to help Americans get broadband more quickly, and not a single one of those proposals is included in the legislation before us today.

Same goes for broadband mapping, which has historically been a bipartisan issue. Acting FCC Chairwoman Rosenworcel, who has several times stated “no money before maps,” is now saying that it could take up to one year to complete the maps; yet here we are today, evaluating legislation that pushes \$80 billion out the door before the maps are completed. We've made this mistake before, and it appears we could make it again if this legislation proceeds.

Furthermore, it has LONG been a bipartisan effort to upgrade our 9-1-1 networks to Next Generation 9-1-1. In fact, we have been working with you and your staff *diligently* over the last several years on legislation to authorize this program. But in this legislation, you threw away all of that bipartisan work. On top of that, I'm not convinced that the \$15 billion in this bill for NG9-1-1 will *actually* accomplish the goal of an interoperable, nationwide 9-1-1 network.

I could go on, but I'll leave it at that for now. I am truly disturbed by these actions.

It is clear that this legislation is a partisan wish list. We must strategically and smartly fund programs to have a real impact only after evaluating what we have already done in order to see if it is working or not. Unfortunately, this bill does not do that at all, but instead throws money thoughtlessly at every problem in hopes that it will be fixed. I can tell you right now, that isn't how we make lasting solutions.

I yield the remainder of my time to my colleague Mr. McKinley.