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6 MEMBER'S DAY

7

8 TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2023

9 House of Representatives,

10 Committee on Energy and Commerce,

11 Washington, D.C.

12

13

14

15 The Committee met, pursuant to call, at 2:00 p.m., in
16 Room 2123, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Cathy McMorris
17 Rodgers [Chair of the Committee] presiding.

18 Present: Representatives Rodgers, Burgess, Latta,
19 Griffith, Bilirakis, Johnson, Duncan, Weber; Pallone, Veasey,
20 and Soto.

21

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22 Staff present: Sean Brebbia, Professional Staff Member;
23 Sarah Burke, Deputy Staff Director; Michael Cameron,
24 Professional Staff Member; Seth Gold, Professional Staff
25 Member; Grace Graham, Chief Counsel; Nate Hodson, Staff
26 Director; Tara Hupman, Chief Counsel; Noah Jackson, Clerk;
27 Sean Kelly, Press Secretary; Peter Kielty, General Counsel;
28 Emily King, Member Services Director; Chris Krepich, Press
29 Secretary; Tim Kurth, Chief Counsel; John Lin, Senior
30 Counsel; Mary Martin, Chief Counsel; Karli Plucker, Director
31 of Operations; Carla Rafael, Senior Staff Assistant; Olivia
32 Shields, Communications Director; Micheal Taggart, Policy
33 Director; Evan Viau, Professional Staff Member; Keegan
34 Cardman, Minority Staff Assistant; Waverly Gordon, Minority
35 Deputy Staff Director and General Counsel; Perry Hamilton,
36 Minority Member Services & Outreach Manager; Cornell Harris,
37 Minority Intern; Katarina Morgan, Minority Health Fellow;
38 Avni Patel, Minority Health Fellow; and Emma Roehrig,
39 Minority Staff Assistant.

40 *The Chair. Energy and Commerce Committee will come to
41 order.

42

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43 STATEMENT OF THE HON. CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS, A
44 REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON
45

46 *The Chair. Thank you to everyone in participating in
47 today's member day. We are celebrating the rich, bipartisan
48 history of the Energy & Commerce Committee.

49 For more than 227 years this Committee has taken on some
50 of the most difficult challenges of the day. We do the hard
51 work, plow the hard ground necessary to legislate and deliver
52 results.

53 It is the oldest committee in Congress. It was here at
54 the beginning. We are the very first hopes and dreams in the
55 promise of America where we have lifted more people out of
56 poverty and led the world in raising the standard of living
57 through free markets, free speech, and individual liberty.

58 Each of our colleagues, who we will hear from today, has
59 the honor of representing about 750,000 people, and just like
60 us, they were duly elected to serve and are committed to
61 working on ideas to improve people's lives.

62 Today is about listening and learning about what our
63 colleagues are leading on and why these solutions are

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64 important in their districts.

65 It is an honor to host this Member Day with Ranking
66 Member Pallone. I am grateful for his leadership and
67 friendship as we work together to build a brighter future
68 across America.

69 So to all the members today, thank you, welcome and I
70 look forward to hearing about your work and legislation.

71 At this time I will yield to the Ranking Member, Mr.
72 Pallone, for his opening statement.

73 [The prepared statement of Ms. Rodgers follows:]

74

75 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

76

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77 STATEMENT OF THE HON. FRANK PALLONE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
78 CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

79

80 *Mr. Pallone. Thank you, Chair Rodgers. You are going
81 to have to bear with us as we tell you how wonderful the
82 Committee is for a few more minutes.

83 So I want to welcome our colleagues to the Energy &
84 Commerce Committee today for our Member Day Hearing. The
85 Committee has accomplished an incredible amount in recent
86 years.

87 We played an essential role in passing the four major
88 bills that became law over the last three years. The
89 American Rescue Plan jumpstarted our economy and provided the
90 tools and resources to save lives from the COVID-19 virus;
91 the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is revitalizing and
92 modernizing our national infrastructure; the CHIPS and
93 Science Act is reinvigorating domestic manufacturing and
94 ending our dangerous dependence on foreign manufacturers of
95 critical goods like semiconductors; and the Inflation
96 Reduction Act is lowering healthcare prescription drug and
97 energy costs for American families while also finally

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98 aggressively combating the worsening climate crisis.

99 This is not to suggest that Ways & Means or other
100 Committees have not been involved in these bills as well,
101 because we know they have. But an important part of our
102 ability to consistently deliver for the American people is
103 regularly hearing from and working with members, both on and
104 off the Committee, to provide insight, bring new ideas and
105 perspectives, and to help us advance legislation that makes a
106 difference in the lives of our constituents.

107 Committee Democrats continue to be laser focused on
108 lowering costs for American families, growing our economy,
109 protecting consumers, and leading the world in the clean
110 energy transition.

111 So I look forward to hearing from our colleagues today
112 and continue to work with you.

113 And with that, Madame Chair, I yield back.

114 [The prepared statement of Mr. Pallone follows:]

115

116 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

117

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118 *The Chair. Thank you. Thank you, everyone. We are
119 going to get started. Get to as many members as possible
120 before they call votes.

121 We are going to start with the lady from Washington
122 state, my colleague from Washington State, Representative
123 DelBene, five minutes.

124

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125 STATEMENT OF THE HON. SUZAN DELBENE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
126 CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

127

128 *Ms. DelBene. Thank you, Chairwoman McMorris Rodgers,
129 from the great state of Washington and Ranking Member Pallone
130 for inviting members to testify before the Committee today.

131 Today I would like to speak on the urgent need to enact
132 a national data privacy law. Data privacy is a 21st Century
133 issue of civil rights, civil liberties, human rights, and the
134 US has no policy to protect our most sensitive personal
135 information.

136 The advancement of artificial intelligence has captured
137 the attention of policymakers and the American public alike,
138 and while we certainly should be having discussions around
139 what guardrails need to be in place for sensitive
140 applications and ensuring AI is not developed with biases, we
141 must also make sure data privacy is a central part of that
142 conversation.

143 Privacy policy goes beyond just AI and applies to many
144 ways American people interact with technology on a daily
145 basis. AI needs an immense quantity of data and developers

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146 currently do not need to disclose where they get their input
147 data from because the US has no national privacy standard.

148 As a result we don't even have a clear understanding of
149 how our data is being used to build these systems. From AI,
150 to social media, to fitness apps, to Smart devices, people
151 should be in control of their data.

152 Right now the companies that collect our information
153 control how it is used. When we don't have a clear domestic
154 policy, we aren't able to shape standards abroad and we let
155 others drive global policy.

156 We are behind on technology policy already, but we are
157 falling further behind as other countries take the lead. So
158 I applaud the Committee for the great work you did in
159 advancing a Bipartisan Data Privacy Bill last Congress, but
160 we haven't crossed the finish line yet.

161 A strong national standard on data privacy has to put
162 people back in control of their information instead of
163 companies. I believe it must also be uniform throughout the
164 country rather than a state-by-state approach that we have
165 now.

166 It must be enforceable so that the government can hold

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167 bad actors accountable, and privacy protections should not be
168 a one and done thing. We must continually ensure companies
169 are being responsible with the data that they have.

170 I appreciated working with the Committee last Congress
171 to strengthen the Biannual Impact Assessments and ensuring
172 the FTC could assess these assessments. I know this
173 Committee shares my sense of urgency on this topic and I look
174 forward to continuing to work with you to build upon the
175 success of last Congress and finally pass a comprehensive
176 data privacy bill.

177 Thank you again for the opportunity to testify and I
178 yield back the balance of my time.

179 [The prepared statement of Ms. DelBene follows:]

180

181 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

182

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183 *The Chair. I thank the gentlelady for being here.
184 Appreciate your leadership on this issue. I think we would
185 agree that we would find a lot of agreement on this. We are
186 hoping to move forward on a bill later this Congress. Yes.

187 *Mr. Pallone. Well, I would totally agree with the
188 Chair. You know, this really is our priority, above all
189 legislation, this is our priority and we are just constantly
190 trying to get members of other committees, you know, to be
191 supportive of this on a bipartisan basis and also work with
192 the Senate as well.

193 So you are speaking to the choir, which you know.

194 *The Chair. Thank you for highlighting the issue and
195 for your leadership.

196 Next, we will move to the gentleman from Indiana,
197 Representative Baird.

198

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199 STATEMENT OF THE HON. JIM BAIRD, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS
200 FROM THE STATE OF INDIANA

201

202 *Mr. Baird. Good afternoon, and thank you, Chairwoman
203 McMorris Rodgers and Ranking Member Pallone for allowing me
204 to address an issue plaguing my congressional district in
205 Indiana and many cities across the country. Catalytic
206 converter thefts.

207 Now, from the outside looking in, I am sure catalytic
208 converter theft may seem like a small problem, but many
209 police officers across the country and the victims of these
210 crimes will tell you otherwise.

211 And for those of you who are unfamiliar with catalytic
212 converters, this required part is used to reduce the potency
213 of toxic emissions from an internal combustion engine and is
214 made up of platinum group metals called PGMs, which can be
215 sold to scrap dealers for hundreds of dollars on the black
216 market.

217 The value of these metals, combined with the thief's
218 ability to remove them from a car in a matter of minutes
219 makes them a prime target for criminals looking to earn cash

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220 with little risk, and they tell me that with a saw-saw, it
221 really just takes seconds to take these out of a vehicle.

222 The replacement of these parts can sometimes cost a
223 vehicle owner thousands of dollars and in some cases, when
224 the part is removed hastily, it can even destroy or total a
225 vehicle.

226 So thanks to the loopholes in current federal law,
227 police departments lack the necessary support to hold thieves
228 accountable and to locate stolen parts, which is why I
229 introduced the Preventing Auto Recycling Thefts, the PART
230 Act, HR-621.

231 My bill takes a multipronged approach to tackling this
232 problem by including traceable identifying features on
233 catalytic converters, addressing how parts are purchased, and
234 strengthening enforceability of catalytic converter thefts.

235 By creating a system where law enforcement can link
236 stolen catalytic converters from their vehicles of origin,
237 closing the deconning loophole on catalytic converters and
238 codify catalytic converter thefts as criminal offenses with
239 criminal penalties, it is my great hope that we can curb
240 these costly thefts.

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241 Catalytic converter theft is nothing new. Thieves have
242 known they can make money from the valuable components of
243 these parts for years. Unfortunately, though in recent
244 years, since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic, an increase in
245 the price of the precious rhodium, palladium metals in
246 catalytic converters, combined with an abundance of new free
247 time, have sent these crimes into overdrive.

248 In the past four years the theft of catalytic converters
249 went from hovering around 1,500 incidents per year and
250 exploded to more than 150,000 incidents per year. Worse yet
251 is that many of these reported incidents represent the theft
252 of dozens of parts at one time, like the theft of 40
253 catalytic converters from a hospital parking lot in Northern
254 Indiana or the theft of more than 90 catalytic converters
255 from an RV factory in Elkhart County.

256 This bipartisan, bicameral legislation brings a
257 commonsense solution to problems that affect every single one
258 of our districts and one that has huge financial strains on
259 families and small businesses.

260 This is a bill that's largely supported by major city's
261 Chief Associations, the National Automobile Dealers

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262 Association, the National Insurance Crime Bureau, the
263 Institute for Scrap Metal Recycling, The International
264 Association of Auto Theft, and investigators, and several
265 others.

266 So I want to thank Representative McCollum who is co-
267 leading on this legislation and my colleagues on both sides
268 of the aisle who have joined me in this effort to empower law
269 enforcement and deter future theft by joining the PART Act.

270 I believe that this widely bipartisan issue can be an
271 easy win for Congress and offer a straightforward, yet,
272 impactful solution for law enforcement struggling to address
273 these rampant crimes across the country.

274 I hope the Committee will consider this impactful piece
275 of legislation and I yield back my time and thank you.

276 [The prepared statement of Mr. Baird follows:]

277

278 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

279

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280 *The Chair. Thank you again for presenting your
281 legislation. It is a huge issue in eastern Washington and I
282 know it is all across the country and we will take it into
283 serious consideration. Thank you.

284 Next, Representative Davis from the great state of North
285 Carolina. Five minutes.

286

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287 STATEMENT FROM THE HON. TED DAVIS, JR., A REPRESENTATIVE IN
288 CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

289

290 *Mr. Davis. Thank you, Chair McMorris Rodgers and
291 Ranking Member Pallone and all of the members of this
292 marvelous, remarkable, and most distinguished, did I say
293 marvelous, remarkable? Well, thank you for allowing me to
294 speak on issues within the Committee's jurisdiction that
295 matter to residents of North Carolina's 1st Congressional
296 District.

297 Since taking office in January, healthcare has been my
298 number one legislative priority. Having led, co-led, or co-
299 sponsored more than 50 bills in this space. As we sit here
300 today the people of eastern North Carolina are hurting. And
301 at the root of this pain is a lack of access to healthcare.

302 To tackle these health disparities I joined two
303 colleagues in restarting the state Medicaid Expansion Caucus
304 to demonstrate the overwhelming public support for basic
305 access to healthcare.

306 After more than a decade of waiting or, in some cases,
307 dying, 95,000 more eastern North Carolinians are eligible for

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308 life-saving healthcare. As a co-chair of the state Medicaid
309 Expansion Caucus I will continue leading the charge in
310 Congress to expand Medicaid across the country.

311 Beyond Medicaid expansion, I've championed the cause of
312 rural hospitals. In the past decade four rural hospitals in
313 eastern North Carolina alone stopped operations creating
314 significant barriers to lifesaving medical care. Martin
315 General is the most recent example of suspending operations
316 in the east.

317 While we have limited tools at our disposal, especially
318 where the payer makes use of Medicare or Medicaid, the rural
319 emergency hospital designation authority is a critical part
320 of the solution.

321 Let us remember the rural hospitals not only provide
322 healthcare, they also serve as an economic engine for our
323 communities. As eastern North Carolinians grapple with
324 limited access to care, the opioid epidemic continues to
325 plague the region.

326 To combat this crisis, I introduced bipartisan
327 legislation with Congressman John Rutherford to stem the flow
328 of counterfeit substances, including Fentanyl, that have

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329 flooded the drug market, H.R. 4988, the Modern Authentication
330 of Pharmaceuticals Act will come hard on counterfeit
331 controlled substances by requiring on dose identifiers to
332 guarantee the legitimacy of pharmaceuticals.

333 I urge the Committee to take this legislation and put a
334 dent in the Fentanyl crisis, just as we emphasize the
335 importance of physical health, mental health is a critical
336 part of children's overall health and well-being.

337 As a father of three, it pains me to say that our
338 children are in crisis. Given the record number of teenagers
339 attempting and committing suicide. To tackle this head-on, I
340 will soon introduce a bipartisan bill in the coming weeks to
341 combat algorithms on social media platforms that amplify the
342 most graphic, problematic content.

343 As the Committee takes up the American Data Privacy
344 Protection Act, I urge you to consider and incorporate in
345 this bill, as a commonsense solution for our kids. On the
346 subject of improving the well-being of eastern North
347 Carolinians, broadband access is top of mine.

348 Many rural and agricultural communities across North
349 Carolina's 1st Congressional District lack broadband access.

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350 It has been excruciating to close gaps and access because the
351 Federal Communications Commission's broadband map lack
352 precision and accuracy.

353 I urge this Committee to ensure the FCC is making real
354 and tangible progress in providing the public with more
355 accurate and realistic maps. We need these maps to ensure
356 federal dollars reach underserved communities.

357 Another way to serve rural communities is through stable
358 and reliable energy grid systems. People in Eastern North
359 Carolina expect their lights, stoves, and cooling systems to
360 work.

361 These needs are not a given because Eastern North
362 Carolinians grid or Eastern North Carolina's grid system is
363 much older, potentially resulting in higher utility costs for
364 families. A greater chance of system failure due to extreme
365 weather events as well as increased risk of cyber threats. I
366 ask this Committee to prioritize rural energy grid systems to
367 ensure transparency and good use of taxpayer dollars.

368 I co-lead another bipartisan bill with the Congresswoman
369 Lisa McLain to ban government funding for animal testing,
370 appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2024 include language

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371 closely mirroring this bill and I genuinely appreciate the
372 opportunity to testify before the Committee today on the
373 critical issues impacting my constituents and I yield back.

374 [The prepared statement of Mr. Davis follows:]

375

376 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

377

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378 *The Chair. Thank you very much. Appreciate your
379 testimony today in front of our Committee. You have outlined
380 many shared priorities and we will certainly look at your
381 legislation very seriously.

382 *Mr. Pallone. Thank you, Madame Chair. I just wanted
383 to say, Representative Davis, that you really got to the
384 heart of what Americans face today because a lot of this
385 deals with affordability, right?

386 But a lot of this is access as well. And we have a
387 digital divide, we have a health disparity. We have been
388 trying, as you know, to deal with some of this, the ACA, of
389 course, provided for Medicaid expansion, but I assume that
390 the state legislature hasn't done that in your state, which
391 is unfortunate because that leaves a gap, right?

392 But we are going to continue to see what we can do to
393 close that gap and to maybe persuade, try different things to
394 get the states to move towards Medicaid expansion by
395 providing more funding or hire match, but that doesn't seem
396 to work, so we have to look at it in other ways.

397 And as far as the broadband access, you know, we have
398 various affordability measures, but they need to be expanded.

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399 So these are very important things and we are certainly going
400 to pay attention to them. Thank you.

401 *The Chair. Thank you very much.

402 Next, the gentleman from New York, Representative Santos
403 recognized for five minutes.

404

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405 STATEMENT OF THE HON. GEORGE SANTOS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
406 CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

407

408 *Mr. Santos. Thank you, Madame Chair, Mr. Ranking
409 Member, members of the Committee.

410 I have three bills that are under the sole jurisdiction
411 of the Committee, so I wanted to come by and read my thoughts
412 on them. So I presented H.R. 2636 would amend the Public
413 Health Service Act to include neuropathy in its list of
414 conditions covered by the World Trade Center Health Program.

415 This constituent-driven legislation simply adds
416 neuropathy to the illnesses covered from the events of 9/11.
417 To have this added in regular order, through the CDC, is
418 extremely bureaucratic and has failed multiple times and we
419 don't have time to wait on them.

420 Patients who claim a neuropathy-related illness would
421 still go through the same process of having a doctor verify
422 the condition, and that the illness is, in fact, related to
423 their proximity to ground zero New York City.

424 Very simple Act and there's no gimmicks. Just asking
425 for a straightforward approval of this condition in the bill.

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426 H.R. 2631 would prohibit the federal government from
427 imposing any mandate requiring an individual to receive a
428 vaccine that has not been authorized for marketing for at
429 least 10 years.

430 So this bill affirms my commitment to protect medical
431 freedom in NY 3 and across our great nation. If enacted this
432 legislation ensures government transparency and provides for
433 accountability if other public health emergencies occur. So
434 just really allowing the people to have a choice.

435 H.R. 2635, the Big Tech Accountability Act of 2023,
436 would amend section 230 of the Communications Act of 1934 to
437 limit liability protection provided by such section for
438 providers of social media services.

439 For over a decade conservatives and Republicans have
440 been unduly targeted by big tech and deplatformed and
441 censored, myself included and many colleagues of mine in this
442 body.

443 With no real legal protections or actions from Congress
444 until now, this bill allows for accountability if a citizen
445 of the United States is deplatformed or de-censored while
446 upholding the rights of private companies.

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447 I highly suggest consideration of these bills to engage
448 in discourse and if, obviously, productive conversation and
449 debate so we can work together and move for a path forward to
450 represent people, but I appreciate the time, Madame Chair.
451 Thank you for all the work you do and I know you guys do
452 fantastic work in the Committee. Thank you for having me
453 today. I yield back.

454

455 [The prepared statement of Mr. Santos follows:]

456

457 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

458

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459 *The Chair. Thank you. Thank you for taking the time
460 to highlight these bills. Appreciate your work on all these
461 fronts. So we will take them into consideration and
462 certainly circle back with you.

463 *Mr. Pallone. I just wanted to ask briefly.

464 *The Chair. Yes?

465 *Mr. Pallone. On the first bill, you know, I have been
466 very much involved with the World Trade Center Program
467 because in my district we had a lot of people impacted and I
468 know the process whereby I guess it is CMS, or no? There is
469 a process whereby different diseases or disorders can be
470 added to the list.

471 Now, what has happened with that? In other words, have
472 they just said there is just not enough evidence? What is
473 the reason why they haven't?

474 *Mr. Santos. So in 2017, the first attempt to
475 neuropathy was dismissed as insufficient evidence and a
476 second attempt was attempted in 2019. Now, there is somewhat
477 about 70 firefighters who have ever since registered to have
478 evolved with cases of neuropathy and the Commission continues
479 to decline sufficient evidence.

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480 I don't think it is a coincidence, Mr. Ranking
481 Member, that there is -- it is very hard to say there isn't a
482 coincidence and a link. These 70 firefighters served on
483 ground zero either on or after the events of 9/11.

484 So having constituents in my district with the case, I
485 have seen it firsthand. My guests at the State of the Union
486 this year, Michale Weinstock is a firefighter who is -- his
487 life has been completely debilitated due to neuropathy and he
488 is unable to practice law and it is disheartening to see
489 that.

490 They get absolute no support from the Commission, so I
491 think it would be really an act of Congress would make this
492 right for a lot of people and I believe that going through
493 the Commission has proven to be less than fruitful for them.

494 So this body should be able to deliver it for them.

495 *Mr. Pallone. All right. Thank you.

496 *Mr. Santos. Thank you, sir.

497 *Mr. Pallone. I appreciate that input.

498 Thank you, Madame Chair.

499 *The Chair. Okay. Thank you very much.

500 Next, we will move to the Chairman of the Homeland

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501 Security Committee, Representative from Tennessee, Mark
502 Green. Five minutes. Welcome.
503

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504 STATEMENT OF THE HON. MARK GREEN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
505 CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TENNESSEE
506

507 *Dr. Green. Thank you, Chairwoman McMorris Rodgers, it
508 is great to see you and, Ranking Member Pallone, thank you
509 for this opportunity to testify to the Committee about my
510 bills addressing the alarming conditions of our rural
511 healthcare systems.

512 I know that you have heard the same sobering stories
513 from constituents, physicians, hospital administrators, and
514 parents. Our rural hospitals are entering a financial and
515 workforce crisis.

516 As an emergency care physician and former CEO of an
517 emergency department management and staffing company, I have
518 seen firsthand how desperate the situation has become. It
519 has only gotten worse in recent years.

520 Rural hospital closures and limited access to emergency
521 medicine significantly impact my home state of Tennessee.
522 According to the US News & World Report, Tennessee has seen
523 more hospital closure than any other state, besides Texas.

524 In fact, the Tennessee Hospital Association estimates

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525 that 45 percent of Tennessee's hospitals are at risk for
526 imminent closure. This is an impending disaster not just for
527 the loss of care, but also for the loss of jobs.

528 According to the American Hospital Association, over 130
529 rural hospitals across the country closed their doors from
530 2010 to 2021, and according to a GAO report from December
531 2020, the median distance of travel rural patients must drive
532 to receive care increased by 20 miles, adding an ever-
533 expanding barrier to essential inpatient and emergency care.

534 In order to combat this worrying trend, I introduced
535 three pieces of legislation as part of my broader rural
536 healthcare initiative, two of which falls within the
537 Committee's jurisdiction.

538 My first piece of legislation targets a specific issue
539 in the hospital system, ER Departments. H.R. 1129, the Rural
540 ER Access Act would repeal a subsection under Title 42 US
541 Code of Federal Regulations that prohibits free-standing
542 emergency departments from operating more than 35 miles from
543 a hospital.

544 This 35-mile perimeter rule was instituted in the 1990's
545 to monitor the safety of ER patients. HHS was concerned that

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546 if ER's operated too far from a self-sustaining hospital,
547 those emergency patients would have no other medical options
548 should the self-standing ER department fail in its mission to
549 treat and triage.

550 However, speaking as an ER physician who practiced
551 medicine in rural areas across our country, I know how
552 advanced our medical technology is today and I know how
553 desperate some situations are.

554 This antiquated rule that was a number just pulled out
555 of the sky is hindering patient access, rather than saving
556 patient lives. Keep in mind this arbitrary mileage was just
557 imposed by a bureaucrat at HHS with little knowledge of its
558 real impact.

559 Congress must weigh in to correct this outdated rule.
560 Furthermore, by eliminating this mileage requirement, free-
561 standing ERs can provide the frontline emergency care to
562 rural communities most desperately in need.

563 These facilities provide a critical safety net during an
564 emergency, particularly in rural communities where the
565 nearest hospital may be many miles away.

566 Moreover, keeping a free-standing ER open and

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567 operational will keep jobs in the community and help support
568 the local economics of hard-to-reach areas.

569 We also have to address the workforce burnout amongst
570 our medical providers by enacting H.R. 5213, the Reducing
571 Medical Unnecessary Delays in Care Act. This legislation is
572 endorsed by the Medical Group Management Association and the
573 American Academy of Family Physicians and it seeks to
574 unburden our doctors from bureaucratic red tape that is prior
575 authorization.

576 According to the Medical Group Management Association
577 and I quote, "72 percent of medical groups report that the
578 clinicians assigned to complete their peer-to-peer reviews by
579 the plans are not from a relevant specialty to treat the
580 disease in question, resulting in dangerous delays and
581 unfortunately flat-out denials'', end quote.

582 My bill would reform the practice of prior
583 authorizations in Medicare and Medicaid -- and Medicare
584 Advantage. Only Board-Certified Physicians in the relevant
585 specialty should make these critical decisions about care.

586 I am going to jump off script for just a second. If you
587 make the decision as a payer to take, let's say there is five

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588 ways to treat something, and you make the arbitrary decision
589 to remove three of those, that's a medical decision.
590 Somebody is making a medical decision and it should be the
591 medical provider trained in that particular practice who
592 makes that medical decision, not a person behind a screen in
593 a computer.

594 Medical decisions must be decided by the medical
595 professional, meaning no accountant or government bureaucrat
596 should ever have the power to remove an option of care
597 because removing options is a medical decision.

598 Furthermore, with the advancement in AI in the medical
599 field, there are growing concerns that computers will be the
600 ones making these medical authorization decisions tying the
601 hands of trained physicians. This would be catastrophic to
602 physician autonomy and, I believe, to patient care.

603 These bills aim to restore our rural health systems and
604 save our patients from needless and dangerous delays in care.
605 With this Committee's help, I look forward to improving our
606 medical system.

607 Madame Chair and Ranking Member, thank you very much and
608 whatever I can do to move these along, I am with you.

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609 [The prepared statement of Dr. Green follows:]

610

611 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

612

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613 *The Chair. Thank you. Thank you for your leadership
614 on both of these bills. I share the concerns around prior
615 authorization and the importance of making sure that it is
616 doctors making these decisions, doctors, and patients, and I
617 appreciate you highlighting the bill relating to the 35-mile
618 prohibition also.

619 We will take a look at both of those and appreciate your
620 work and leadership.

621 Okay. Thank you. Next up gentleman from Wisconsin, Mr.
622 Grothman.

623

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624 STATEMENT OF THE HON. GLENN GROTHMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
625 CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WISCONSIN

626

627 *Mr. Grothman. Thank you. Madame Chairwoman and
628 members of the Energy & Commerce Committee, I sit before you
629 today with a vital piece of legislation, which is inexpensive
630 and will save lives.

631 And I am happy to have the seated Congresswoman Dingell
632 on as co-lead. This legislation was inspired by the life of
633 Dylan Miller, a young man whose legacy continues to resonate
634 in the hearts of those who know him.

635 Dillon Mueller dies of a bee sting. Envisioning worst
636 thing in being a parent and having somebody 18, 19 years old,
637 you think he's a healthy, wonderful kid, popular kid die of a
638 bee sting?

639 He is from Mishicot, Wisconsin. He had a bright -- is a
640 bright student, full of life, dreams, and aspirations, but
641 because of a bee sting, that life was cut short. His
642 parents, in the face of unimaginable grief chose not to let
643 their son's death be in vain, instead they embarked on a
644 journey to ensure that no other family would suffer the same

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645 tragedy.

646 In their quest for change, Dylan's parents championed
647 the cause of Anaphylaxis awareness and prevention, right?
648 People can die within 15 minutes of getting a bit from a bee
649 sting, and that's before, you know, frequently emergency
650 staff can get there or anything, so we'd be so much better in
651 our society if we had people trained on giving the shot that
652 would be able to keep these people alive.

653 Before we delve into the specifics of the federal
654 version of Dillon's Law, and some states have a state
655 version, it is essential to grasp the gravity of the issue.

656 Anaphylaxis is a severe life-threatening allergic
657 reaction that can occur within minutes of exposure to
658 allergens, not only bee stings, but foods, nuts, or
659 medications.

660 Each year in America between 500 and 1,000 people die of
661 anaphylaxis. This condition also leads to hundreds of
662 thousands of hospitalizations and emergency room visits
663 annually. The numbers alone underscore the urgency of taking
664 meaningful action.

665 Dillon's Law at its core is a commonsense response to

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666 this life-threatening problem. It empowers ordinary citizens
667 to become heroes when the seconds count.

668 Under this law states are incentivized to allow
669 individuals to be trained and certified to carry and
670 administer epinephrine, a life-saving medication. This rapid
671 intervention can mean the difference between life and death.

672 What makes Dillon's Law even more impactful is its
673 potential to serve as a model for other states by offering
674 grant preferences to states that adopt similar legislation,
675 we can create a nationwide network of trained individuals who
676 will spring into action before you can transport that
677 individual to an emergency room.

678 Preventative health services are the heart of Dillon's
679 Law. By incentivizing states through grant prioritization,
680 we encourage them to establish training programs that certify
681 individuals to administer epinephrine.

682 These programs are not just cost effective, but they are
683 also quick and efficient. With proper training ordinary
684 citizens can become the first line of defense.

685 Dillon's Law also takes a step further by requiring
686 states to implement civil liability protections for those

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687 trained in administering epinephrine. This provision ensures
688 that individuals that step up in an emergency are not
689 burdened with unwarranted legal consequences.

690 Dillon's Law is garnering support from a variety of
691 organizations dedicated to healthcare. The Asthma and
692 Allergy Foundation of America, the Food Allergy Research and
693 Education Administration, American Osteopathic Association,
694 and the Elijah Alavi Foundation are among the champions of
695 this legislation.

696 In closing, Dillon's Law is more than just a legal
697 framework, it is a symbol of hope, compassion, and
698 preparedness. As we move forward, let us remember that those
699 can be ordinary people like you and me who can jump in if
700 something horrific would happen.

701 And what I will do, kind of depart from the comments
702 here is if you can imagine what it must be like to have a 13-
703 or 14-year-old child who dies of a bee sting or dies of a
704 food that he didn't know was there. It is just horrific.

705 And there is no reason why, in this country, we cannot
706 have thousands of people take these classes, be it service
707 clubs, be it first responders, be it medical staff, and if

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708 they have this epinephrine with them, they can spring into
709 action and save young lives.

710 And I will tell you, to this day it breaks my heart when
711 I see Dillon's mom and knowing what she had to go through
712 when she had a healthy, young, athletic guy and son and to
713 die of a bee sting, and we can do whatever we can to prevent
714 this sort of death that can happen to anybody with none of
715 their cause. Nothing they could do to avoid it; wouldn't it
716 be great if we could have thousands more people out there in
717 America ready to spring into action.

718 [The prepared statement of Mr. Grothman follows:]

719

720 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

721

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722 *The Chair. Thank you. Thank you for your testimony
723 and for making sure that we remember the legacy of Dillon
724 Mueller.

725 *Mr. Grothman. Thank you for having me.

726 *The Chair. Very good. Next, lady from Indiana,
727 Representative Spartz recognized for five minutes.

728 Welcome to Energy & Commerce Committee.

729

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730 STATEMENT OF THE HON. VICTORIA SPARTZ, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
731 CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF INDIANA

732

733 *Ms. Spartz. Thank you for having me. And thank you
734 for your willingness to deal with some tough issues that are
735 not maybe very, you know, very sexy to go on TV and tell how
736 you fight in the trenches, but it is in the trenches and the
737 issues that affect every American and not very positive right
738 now is the issue of (inaudible).

739 No matter where we stand on this issue, no matter what
740 solutions we are going to propose, but if we don't do
741 something about it, we are going to bankrupt our country, we
742 are going to bankrupt American families and a lot of lives
743 that we can save are not going to be saved.

744 So I think it is a very serious issue and I know that it
745 is not an easy one because there are a lot of groups that
746 like status quo and there is not one evil, but ultimately our
747 job is to challenge the status quo and find solutions.

748 So I appreciate that Speaker McCarthy was willing to
749 have a taskforce, Healthy Future Taskforce. I was part of it
750 on the Affordability Subcommittee and I generally look, as a

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751 free enterprise Republicans, I look what is the issues with
752 how we restrict competition for value, not for money and
753 people (inaudible), but actually for value and better
754 outcomes in healthcare and how we create perverse incentive
755 that destroy our healthcare, truly.

756 And in fact, I was so -- they are so magnificent that if
757 we don't deal with that, we are going to destroy our country.
758 And I am not saying this is without, you know, just for the
759 grandstanding, I truly, look at that bottom seven Americans
760 is that collection. How is it going to affect the future of
761 a lot of people for medical debt?

762 You know, a lot of Americans don't have proper access to
763 healthcare. A lot of Americans cannot afford basic services,
764 and it's not because we don't have the ability to be
765 innovative and have a competition and have this enormous
766 innovation that can happen, it's because we do a lot of
767 protectionism.

768 And I'm talking as an institution. And I'm not just
769 saying that this Congress, you know, causes all problems.
770 It's been created by a lot of other Congress's, but we are a
771 part of the problem or we decide to be part of the solution

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772 and make some incremental change.

773 So I wrote standalone seven bills just dealing with this
774 issue and five of those bills are in your Committee, so I
775 will just briefly talk about them. I am sure you are
776 familiar with them. I know you have been working on this
777 issue and I really appreciate it because I know challenging
778 Washington DC machine and it is not an easy thing to do on a
779 bipartisan basis. It is very hard to do.

780 Specifically challenging the Senate, I think. People
781 there totally forget where they come from because they don't
782 have to run every two years, unfortunately. The House is not
783 going to stand up, we are going to fail. The House will have
784 to win this battle.

785 So one of them, you know, some people call it site
786 neutrality, some people call it dishonest billing, but
787 ultimately, it's, you know, overbilling. I would say
788 dishonest, it is like fraudulent overbilling of Medicare.

789 You know, this is over \$200 billion of fraud in our
790 system and Medicare is going bankrupt within five years. And
791 this is what it means. It is going to hurt people that need
792 the services the most.

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793 So if we want to save Medicare for Seniors and things
794 that were promised for them, we need to have the backbone to
795 challenge. Some of these places are building big Taj Mahals,
796 executives making billions, have billions on Wall Street, so
797 we have to decide, are we for the Main Street or for the Wall
798 Street and not be hypocrites.

799 This is an issue that is as bipartisan as can be.
800 Families you say, support it, big labor, Heritage Foundation,
801 Americans for Prosperity, and Americans (inaudible) and
802 Bruhens. I mean, these are the issues that Trump and Obama
803 could agree on.

804 And you know, these are the issues that should not be,
805 you know, partisan. Well, you know, we have a problem with
806 the Senate. You know what? We have to challenge the Senate.
807 We have to stand up for the people. We are all the American
808 people have and we have to be able to win for the people.

809 There is another issue dealing with Anti-trust
810 enforcement. We don't even have jurisdiction over so-called
811 non-profit tax-exempt hospitals. We need to be able to see
812 when they abuse the system, how to deal with that issue.

813 We need how the states, you know, there are some states

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814 can be hypocrites too. What is the competition there?
815 Because they like to blame federal government, but sometimes
816 they are guilty, and I tell you as a former states Senate, it
817 is very difficult to deal.

818 How can physicians not be allowed to own hospitals? I
819 mean, this is a legal business. And these people in
820 practice, they will provide the most value. Why we do this
821 restriction? It doesn't make sense. They will be the ones
822 who want to provide the best value, know what's happening.

823 And then we have a lot of clauses. We did some
824 (inaudible) clauses, but there are more of the competitive
825 clauses and included inpatient on the list, which
826 unfortunately become politicized, but ultimately it is
827 between patients and doctors and people will provide the
828 value because this is where the people know what the best for
829 the people.

830 So I would appreciate your consideration. I appreciate
831 that you are moving, at least incrementally, on this issues,
832 and in any way I can support. I know it takes toughness, but
833 it will take tough people, like in this Committee, and I
834 appreciate it very much.

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835 [The prepared statement of Ms. Spartz follows:]

836

837 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

838

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839 *The Chair. Thank you very much. Appreciate your
840 testimony. This Congress we have been focusing on what is
841 driving the cost of healthcare and looking at the
842 consolidation within the healthcare system and the impact
843 that that is having.

844 We do have at least one provision in the Price
845 Transparency Bill that we are hoping that will be on the
846 floor today that includes site neutrality payments and we are
847 going to continue to look at all of the issues that you
848 outlined.

849 Appreciate your leadership and your passion for all of
850 these issues.

851 Okay. They have called votes and I think we should
852 recess and we will come back after votes and hear from more
853 members. Thank you everyone.

854 [Whereupon, at 2:42 a.m., the Committee was recessed.]

855 *The Chair. The Energy & Commerce Committee will come
856 to order.

857 We are going to hear now five minutes from the gentleman
858 from Guam, Rep Moylan.

859

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860 STATEMENT OF THE HON. JAMES MOYLAN, A DELEGATE IN CONGRESS
861 FROM THE TERRITORY OF GUAM

862

863 *Mr. Moylan. Madame Chair, thank you for the
864 opportunity to appear before the Energy & Commerce Committee.
865 So appreciate it and bringing up the issues that affect my
866 district in Guam.

867 Specifically, medical care is a big challenge for Guam.
868 And many specialists and facilities do not exist on Guam and
869 this is compelling my constituents to often seek medical care
870 in the Philippines.

871 So to enable more unencumbered access to medical care in
872 the Philippines, I have drafted legislation to enable the
873 portability of Medicare benefits to the Philippines.

874 So this legislation would allow Americans living in Guam
875 and the Philippines with more options to improve access to
876 high quality healthcare. VA benefits, Tricare, and Social
877 Security benefits are available to Americans living in the
878 Philippines now, so I believe adding Medicare to the list
879 would save taxpayers money due to the lower cost of
880 healthcare in the Philippines.

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881 I have also experienced a treatment myself there. It is
882 very effective, very good. It only takes a four-hour flight
883 to go to the Philippines. If you were to go from Guam to
884 Hawaii, that's eight hours and from Hawaii to LA that's
885 another five and a half hours, so really the closest in
886 proximity. It would be very helpful if we can get that
887 Medicare benefit portability to the Philippines. So that's
888 one.

889 The other issue we are facing in my district is the
890 resilience of our power grid. Although reliable access to
891 power for my constituents is top of my mind, this issue is
892 also a matter of national security because the military is
893 Guam's -- Guam Power Authority's largest customer.

894 So with the increasing irregularities and the intensity
895 of typhoons -- we just finished one super Typhoon Mawar,
896 undergrounding the power lines, and building and hardening
897 for Guam makes America stronger.

898 And as I work with strengthening our power grid on Guam,
899 I look forward to working with the Committee seeking waivers
900 for the NDAA language and moving other legislations relating
901 to Guam power grid.

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

902 So I thank you, Madame Chair, for the opportunity
903 discussing portability of Medicare for Guam residents to the
904 Philippines and also hardening our power grid for the
905 residents of Guam, especially for our national defense.

906 Thank you, Madame Chair.

907 [The prepared statement of Mr. Moylan follows:]

908

909 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

910

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

911 *The Chair. Thank you. Thank you for raising those
912 issues. Appreciate it.

913 I don't have any questions?

914 *Mr. Soto. No questions. Just thank you. We
915 appreciate the heroic history of Guam and America and we have
916 a duty to you all.

917 *The Chair. Thank you. Thanks for taking the time.

918 Next, Representative Carey from Ohio. Five minutes.

919

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920 STATEMENT OF THE HON. MIKE CAREY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
921 CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OHIO

922

923 *Mr. Carey. Thank you, Chairwoman McMorris Rodgers and
924 Ranking Member Pallone for giving me the opportunity to
925 testify today.

926 I represent Columbus, Ohio, home of the Ohio State
927 University. So it won't surprise you that I am here to talk
928 about college sports. Specifically, I would like to discuss
929 name, image, and likeness or NIL.

930 As you know college athletes are now able to profit off
931 of their name, image, and likeness. Numerous states have
932 implemented NIL laws with conflicting rules, therefore making
933 the landscape for NIL hard to navigate for universities and
934 for our student athletes.

935 Numerous states have implemented these NIL laws and we,
936 in Congress, need to create one federal standard for the NIL
937 that protects student athletes and the future of college
938 sports.

939 Congressman Landsman, who is here with me today, and I
940 introduced the Student Athlete Level Playing Field Act

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941 earlier this year, and it is the first NIL bill that was
942 introduced into Congress and it is still the only bipartisan
943 NIL bill in the House.

944 Numerous other members of the House have since proposed
945 legislation to create one federal standard for the NIL,
946 including Commerce Subcommittee Chairman Bilirakis, who I am
947 sure you are all pretty familiar with.

948 His legislation, the Fairness Accountability and
949 Integrity in Representation of College Sports Act or the FAIR
950 Act, makes it a little simpler, shares many similarities with
951 the Student Athlete Level Playing Field Act, including the
952 FTC endorsement, enforcement against bad actors, requiring
953 student athletes to be enrolled in an institution before
954 signing an NIL deal, requiring the registering of agents, and
955 establishing a clearing house for NIL deals that will
956 increase transparency into the system.

957 I appreciate the Committees and Chairman Bilirakis'
958 efforts to include us in this process as we are encouraged to
959 see the provisions of our bill incorporated into the newest
960 discussion of the FAIR Act. I strongly believe we need to
961 pass NIL legislation this Congress while we have momentum in

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962 the House.

963 I would like to thank Representative Bilirakis, Cleaver,
964 and of course Greg Landsman and all my other colleagues who
965 have made it a priority to advocate for NIL legislation. I
966 look forward to continuing the work with you on all of these
967 issues.

968 I thank you for your time, the Committee's time, and I
969 yield back.

970 [The prepared statement of Mr. Carey follows:]

971

972 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

973

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

974 *The Chair. I appreciate the gentleman raising the
975 issue. Many on this Committee share your concern and belief
976 that we need to take action this Congress. We look forward
977 to working to with you and appreciate your work on the
978 legislation. We will keep on it.

979 *Mr. Soto. I thank the gentleman for a great
980 presentation. We in Florida love college sports, obviously,
981 and I believe a national standard would benefit all states
982 knowing that there is, right now, NIL is driving a lot more
983 of this than athleticism and we need to get back to the
984 original intent.

985 *The Chair. Thank you. Thanks for taking the time.

986 *Mr. Carey. Thank you.

987 *The Chair. Next, representing the PAC 2, Congressman
988 from Washington State, Representative Newhouse, recognized
989 for five minutes. Welcome.

990

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

991 STATEMENT OF THE HON. DAN NEWHOUSE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
992 CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

993

994 *Mr. Newhouse. Thank you, Chairwoman McMorris Rodgers
995 and Mr. Soto, and members of the Energy & Commerce Committee
996 for allowing me to speak on an important issue that impacts
997 communities all across our nation.

998 Just last year, as you probably know, over 100,000
999 people in the United States died from a drug overdose,
1000 largely driven by the rampant spread of illicit Fentanyl.
1001 That number exceeds, and I am from this generation, total
1002 casualties of the entire Vietnam war.

1003 While this spread continues to grow in urban
1004 neighborhoods, it is also spreading rapidly in rural
1005 communities like mine in Central Washington. We cannot stand
1006 idly by while this is happening.

1007 Earlier this year Mr. James Wonacott of Yakima reached
1008 out to my office and told me the tragic story of two of his
1009 sons, William, and James. Andy's son William passed away
1010 from a Fentanyl overdose in April of 2021, then the following
1011 year he lost his son James to the same tragic fate.

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

1012 After speaking to Andy, I knew something more must be
1013 done to address this crisis. I introduced H.R. 1597, The
1014 William and James Wonacott Act, which enhanced penalties for
1015 those who sell, give, or distribute any substance that
1016 contains 2 milligrams or more of illicit Fentanyl to another
1017 person without their knowledge.

1018 This legislation is critical and I strongly encourage my
1019 colleagues on this Committee to consider it as a means to
1020 hold bad actors accountable. While I believe that that is a
1021 positive step in the right direction towards holding drug
1022 dealers accountable, I realize more must be done.

1023 The solution requires an all-hands-on deck approach with
1024 a broad range of solutions and perspectives, which is why I
1025 created the Central Washington Fentanyl Taskforce and from
1026 what I have seen, correct me if I'm wrong, it is the first of
1027 its kind in the nation.

1028 This taskforce includes members of law enforcement,
1029 addiction treatment groups, medical professional, drug court
1030 officials, school resource officers, tribal leaders, elected
1031 officials, community leaders. Truly the best minds and
1032 resources to tackle this growing threat.

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

1033 We found that the mortality rate of illicit Fentanyl and
1034 synthetics among adolescents has increased dramatically in
1035 just the past few years. It is clear our police officers,
1036 our school resource officers need more resources.

1037 This week I'm introducing the Stop Overdose in Schools
1038 Act, which would address the skyrocketing adolescent overdose
1039 rate. Specifically, this legislation sets aside funds for
1040 Naloxone training and purchasing. It increases Naloxone
1041 access for school resource officers, security personnel, and
1042 school nurses.

1043 To ensure these resources are targeted to the
1044 appropriate communities, the bill requires that 50 percent of
1045 the grants be awarded to school districts in rural areas, as
1046 well as the other 50 percent to be dedicated to school
1047 districts located in areas with high rates of drug-related
1048 overdoses by youth.

1049 This legislation will be critical in helping our
1050 frontline workers to prevent drug related overdoses of
1051 American youth. I urge my leadership on this Committee to
1052 swiftly schedule this bill for a hearing and give it strong
1053 bipartisan support.

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

1054 You know while there is no silver bullet to solving this
1055 crisis, I am confident, if enacted, commonsense legislation
1056 can play a vital role in creating a safer future for our
1057 families and four our communities.

1058 And so thank you, Chairwoman McMorris Rodgers for giving
1059 me the time to discuss something that is so important to our
1060 region and our entire country, and also thank you for your
1061 leadership. I yield back.

1062 [The prepared statement of Mr. Newhouse follows:]

1063

1064 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

1065

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1066 *The Chair. Thank you. Thank you for your work on this
1067 legislation and your leadership in Central Washington. It is
1068 a very important issue. Very important issue to the
1069 Committee. We have families that are being torn apart, as
1070 well as communities with all of the overdoses.

1071 So we will take a look at those bills. Thank you.

1072 *Mr. Soto. We know drug overdoses top cause of death
1073 for folks between 24 years of age in America right now and we
1074 have to help treat those who are addicted to prevent those
1075 young people from getting addiction, go after drug dealers,
1076 and also make sure we are improving the amount of funding for
1077 our ports of entry and at our border for high-tech solutions
1078 to help stop this from coming into the country. Too. Thanks
1079 for your great legislation.

1080 *The Chair. Thanks for being here.

1081 Next, we will hear from the lady from Michigan, Ms.
1082 McClain for five minutes.

1083

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1084 STATEMENT OF THE HON. LISA MCCLAIN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
1085 CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

1086

1087 *Ms. McClain. Thank you, Chairwoman Rodgers, and thank
1088 you Mr. Soto for allowing me the opportunity to discuss my
1089 bill H.R. 5220, The Accountability in Foreign Animal Research
1090 Act.

1091 The AFAR Act is a bipartisan, bicameral, and I thank my
1092 colleagues Rep. Don Davis and Senator Joni Ernst for being
1093 great partners on this.

1094 The bill is really simple. It prevents our tax dollars
1095 from funding animal research experimentation in adversarial
1096 countries, China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea or any labs
1097 that are controlled by these countries.

1098 China has 26 labs, most with ties to CCP that the NIH
1099 has approved to receive taxpayer funding for research in
1100 which we have no control.

1101 Prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, there were four
1102 labs approved for funding inside Russia. Let's first talk
1103 about China and the damages they pose.

1104 I strongly believe and others, such as the FBI and

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1105 Department of Energy, and scientific experts increasingly
1106 agree that COVID-19 virus originated in the Wuhan Institute
1107 of Virology and was likely caused by NIH-funded gain of
1108 function research.

1109 This lab was completely unaccountable for the dangerous
1110 research they conducted, which was prohibited under US Policy
1111 at the time.

1112 Now, regardless of whether or not you believe that this
1113 virus originated from this lab or by any other means, one
1114 thing is obvious, the Chinese have proven they should never
1115 receive one cent more of funding for animal research from our
1116 US and our US taxpaying citizens.

1117 In fact, HHS just announced it was suspending federal
1118 funding to and proposed the Department of the Wuhan Lab,
1119 however, records show that as recent as last year, the NIH
1120 lobbied against efforts to cut off funding for the Wuhan Lab
1121 and millions of US tax dollars are still being sent to other
1122 Chinese labs.

1123 Look at what Russia did with their funding. One
1124 experiment 18 healthy cats had portions of their brains
1125 removed with electrodes implanted in their spines. The cats

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1126 were then subsequently forced to walk on treadmills for
1127 spinal cord experiments.

1128 When this was revealed in the aftermaths of Russia's
1129 invasion by the White Coat Waste Project, a non-partisan
1130 watchdog organization who had worked with the Republicans and
1131 Democrats on this Committee, I immediately sent a letter to
1132 President Biden demanding he take swift and decisive action
1133 to block any further US tax dollars from going to Russian
1134 labs.

1135 Funding to these four labs has since been banned. I
1136 understand that some may have concerns that banning animal
1137 experiments may put research on life-changing and life-saving
1138 medication at risk.

1139 However, this bill does not place a total ban on all
1140 animal research. There are roughly 190 other countries,
1141 including our own, that would still be eligible. Can't we
1142 all agree that these four countries, in particular, should
1143 not receive taxpayer funding?

1144 These four countries have been singled out in numerous
1145 statutes as countries of concern. Language similar to this
1146 was included in FY 2023 appropriation bills. This year

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1147 language similar to AFAR was included in numerous
1148 appropriation bills passed out of committee. This shows
1149 there is bipartisan, bicameral support to take away funding
1150 to only these four countries.

1151 I thank the Committee again for your time and allowing
1152 me to speak about the AFAR Act and I hope that you consider
1153 this important measure and with that I am happy to answer any
1154 questions, but thank you again.

1155 [The prepared statement of Ms. McClain follows:]

1156

1157 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

1158

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

1159 *The Chair. Thank you for your testimony. We
1160 appreciate it.

1161 *Mr. Soto. Thank you.

1162 *The Chair. Very good. Next, the gentleman from New
1163 York, Mr. Williams or okay, Mr. Williams, yes, recognized for
1164 five minutes.

1165

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

1166 STATEMENT OF THE HON. BRANDON WILLIAMS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
1167 CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

1168

1169 *Mr. Williams. Thank you, Madame Chairwoman and Mr.
1170 Soto. It is an honor to be here.

1171 We must rebalance our nation's investment in our energy
1172 infrastructure. As you are aware, energy, in all of its many
1173 forms and uses, is fundamental to our economy and to our way
1174 of life.

1175 Recently, the world witnessed the terrible cost and
1176 consequences of Europe's overreliance on and overinvestment
1177 in renewable sources of energy as their access to natural gas
1178 from Russia was cut, energy costs rose rapidly and threatened
1179 households' ability to heat their homes. Factories shut
1180 down. Coal-fired power plants were resurrected to provide
1181 the basic power to keep Europe's economy intact.

1182 My favorite fact was that when the European Union
1183 discovered two new green energy sources in response to this
1184 crisis, natural gas, and nuclear power.

1185 Even with this dramatic real-life example in Europe,
1186 again, pointing out that the European Union has revived

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1187 investment in nuclear power and natural gas to keep energy
1188 affordable, reliable, responsible, and resilient, the United
1189 States appears to have learned nothing.

1190 Instead it is now estimated that America has embarked on
1191 a \$6.6 trillion investment in renewable energy, driven by the
1192 incentives baked into the deceptively named Inflation
1193 Reduction Act.

1194 This irresponsible distortion of energy investments in
1195 this country is leading the country toward energy poverty,
1196 not energy strength.

1197 Instead I would urge this Committee to urgently steer
1198 our nation toward a safe harbor of energy investment, one
1199 that balances affordability so working Americans are not
1200 unfairly punished by this unbalanced approach.

1201 Reliability, everyone knows we can't depend on
1202 renewables for baseload power. Renewables require backup
1203 sources to provide power when the wind doesn't blow and the
1204 sun doesn't shine.

1205 And battery technology is not nearly mature enough to
1206 affordably provide this backup. Resilience. Our power grid
1207 has to absorb changes in demand and interruption. Whether

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1208 it's storms of nature or acts of terrorism.

1209 And it must be responsible. America has reduced
1210 emissions from power generation steadily over the last 10 or
1211 more years, and I support continuing that trend well out into
1212 the future.

1213 In my role as the Chairman of the Energy Subcommittee
1214 for the House Space, Science, and Technology Committee, I
1215 have the privilege of touring many of our nation's energy
1216 research labs.

1217 The future of energy innovation has never been brighter,
1218 but we must make balanced investments in our energy future,
1219 specifically, we must play to our strengths. Natural gas,
1220 continued innovation and accelerating advanced nuclear.

1221 I will say again, the vast amount of federal incentives
1222 are exclusively going to renewable projects. We know that
1223 renewables aren't efficacious everywhere. I live near
1224 Syracuse. The second cloudiest city in America. We have let
1225 politics and not engineering and economic realities drive our
1226 strategy. It is not too late to turn this ship around.

1227 In closing, I would point out that the mantra of the
1228 green lobby has been all of the above, all of the above, but

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1229 like all the strategies of the progressive left, their
1230 message was a ruse. They have succeeded in directing
1231 trillions of dollars of investment to their corporate and
1232 political sponsors, many in Communist China.

1233 This is perhaps the true costs of the so-called Green
1234 New Deal. Our resources have been redirected to
1235 manufacturers, raw materials, and critical minerals that are
1236 far from our shores.

1237 All of the above means rebalancing our energy investment
1238 strategy. Thank you for this opportunity to address this
1239 Committee today, and I am happy to answer your questions.

1240

1241 [The prepared statement of Mr. Williams follows:]

1242

1243 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

1244

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

1245 *The Chair. Thank you for your testimony and thank you
1246 for your leadership on these important issues. It is very
1247 important that we get it right. American energy independence
1248 has been at the forefront of this Committee's work.

1249 *Mr. Williams. Thank you.

1250 *Mr. Soto. Happy to mention the Inflation Reduction Act
1251 includes an all above strategy, not only renewables but
1252 carbon capture and nuclear. I thank the gentleman for his
1253 time today.

1254 *Mr. Williams. You are welcome, and I think that you
1255 would find that the relative levels are grossly out of
1256 balance, in terms of what actually happens in our economy.
1257 That is really what I am drawing attention to.

1258 It is not that we don't support all of the above, it is
1259 simply out of balance.

1260 *The Chair. Thank you.

1261 Next, Mr. Landsman, from Ohio. Welcome to the Energy &
1262 Commerce Committee. You are recognized for five minutes.

1263

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1264 STATEMENT OF THE HON. GREG LANDSMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
1265 CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OHIO

1266

1267 *Mr. Landsman. Thank you, Chairwoman and to all the
1268 members of the Committee. It is wonderful to be able to
1269 testify today before all of you.

1270 I want to thank my colleague from Ohio, Representative
1271 Mike Carey and talk a little bit about this bipartisan bill
1272 to deal with the NIL issues in college athletics.

1273 You heard from Mr. Carey, so I just want to reiterate a
1274 few of the things that he mentioned. It was the first bill
1275 that was introduced. It's the only bipartisan bill, but
1276 perhaps more importantly it is a very straightforward, simple
1277 piece of legislation that will provide an important fix to
1278 the issue that is happening in college athletics.

1279 It creates the kind of structure and transparency that
1280 will both protect players and programs and by moving this
1281 bill along, it will demonstrate to the American people that
1282 this Congress can get things done on issues that matter and
1283 fixing what is broken in college athletics is something that
1284 does matter to the American people.

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1285 As you all know for a long time colleges have made
1286 billions off of student athletes and to protect these
1287 athletes and to make sure that they receive compensation for
1288 their name, image, and likeness is very important, and to
1289 have the kind of structure and transparency that this bills
1290 provides will help to clean things up.

1291 So it does two things. In particular one is all of
1292 these programs have a NIL Committee, there isn't a national
1293 NIL committee. This will provide that. And then two, it
1294 requires disclosure of these deals, which provides the
1295 transparency that will protect again players and programs.

1296 So I would just encourage the Committee to take the bill
1297 up. Again, it's the Student Athlete Level Playing Field
1298 Bill, very straightforward, bipartisan, and a good win for
1299 this Congress. So thank you and I yield back.

1300 [The prepared statement of Mr. Landsman follows:]

1301

1302 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

1303

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

1304 *The Chair. Thank you for your testimony, for your
1305 work. You have the benefit of having the Subcommittee Mr.
1306 Bilirakis now in the room to hear directly. We have an open
1307 door. We believe that this is very important and want to
1308 work with you and Mr. Carey. This is important to student
1309 athletes all across the country. So thank you. Thank you
1310 for your work.

1311 *Mr. Soto. I thank the gentleman from Ohio for his
1312 bipartisan approach. We want to make sure college sports are
1313 decided by athleticism rather than differences in NIL. So
1314 thank you for the presentation.

1315 *Mr. Landsman. Thank you. Thank you all.

1316 *The Chair. Next up Mr. Levin from California.
1317 Welcome, you are recognized for five minutes.

1318

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1319 STATEMENT OF THE HON. MIKE LEVIN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
1320 CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

1321

1322 *Mr. Levin. Thank you, Chairwoman Rodgers, and
1323 distinguished members for the opportunity to testify today on
1324 behalf of my constituents in California's 49th District and
1325 share their priorities on energy issues.

1326 The communities I represent are already feeling the
1327 impacts of climate change. From raging wildfires, to rising
1328 sea levels tearing away at our coast. It is long past time
1329 that we take action on climate change that is commensurate
1330 with what the science demands.

1331 At issue in front of this Committee specifically is the
1332 equitable transition to a clean energy economy. Last
1333 Congress we passed the Inflation Reduction Act, making the
1334 single largest investment in climate action in US history and
1335 lowering energy costs for consumers.

1336 However, the next challenge to meeting our climate goals
1337 is the lack of electrical grid capacity to connect clean
1338 energy generation to the new demand that comes with economy-
1339 wide electrification.

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1340 To unlock the full potential of renewable energy and
1341 reduce costs for Americans, our grid needs new high-capacity
1342 long-distance transmission lines to transport electricity
1343 from where it is generated to the population centers which
1344 rely on that energy to power their homes.

1345 That is why I am pleased to be working on the Clean
1346 Energy and Transmission Acceleration Act with my friend
1347 Congressman Sean Casten, who you will hear from in a second,
1348 to support the equitable and efficient buildout of
1349 transmission and clean energy infrastructure to meet our
1350 climate goals.

1351 This legislation will support renewable energy
1352 deployment and increase the grid's reliability and resilience
1353 in the face of extreme weather events that are increasing in
1354 frequency and severity across the country.

1355 Further, history has taught us that when we build new
1356 infrastructure, we must engage with the communities who will
1357 be impacted and ensure that they have a seat at the table in
1358 the decision-making process. This not only helps to make
1359 projects successful, but it's also the only way we can ensure
1360 affected communities are treated fairly.

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1361 Community engagement is important to address potential
1362 concerns early and head off issues that may otherwise lead to
1363 time-consuming lawsuits. The Clean Energy and Transmission
1364 Acceleration Act will tackle this by expanding the role for
1365 disadvantaged communities to be meaningfully consulted as
1366 part of the permitting process and ensure an outcome that
1367 works for everyone.

1368 Additionally, the efficient and fair deployment of
1369 renewable energy on our nation's public lands will be crucial
1370 to reducing our emissions at the pace and scale necessary to
1371 combat climate change.

1372 This legislation will support renewable energy
1373 deployment in a responsible manner and ensure a fair return
1374 for impacted states and communities. I look forward to
1375 working with the Committee on the Clean Energy Transmission
1376 Acceleration Act to advance an equitable transition to a
1377 clean energy economy, lower costs for Americans, secure the
1378 long-term reliability of our grid, and combat the climate
1379 crisis.

1380 In addition to the importance of addressing climate
1381 change, another issue I hear about frequently from my

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1382 constituents is the persistent spent nuclear fuel crisis.

1383 Whenever we consider the prospect of nuclear energy, we
1384 must also consider policies that address the storage and
1385 disposal of our nation's spent nuclear fuel. I am fortunate
1386 to represent one of the most beautiful congressional
1387 districts in the United States. While we have many
1388 incredible resources, none is more important than our more
1389 than 50 miles of coast line.

1390 Directly threatening this resource is over 1,600 tons of
1391 spent nuclear fuel stored just 100 feet from the Pacific
1392 Ocean at the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station. Across
1393 the country there are more than 80 other sites in 36 states
1394 where spent nuclear fuel is stored temporarily.

1395 As co-chair of the bipartisan Spent Nuclear Fuel
1396 Solutions Caucus, a group of members who care about
1397 addressing our nation's spent fuel challenges, I think it is
1398 clear that Congress has kicked the can down the road on this
1399 issue for long enough.

1400 I am pleased about the incredible progress that we have
1401 made with the Department of Energy, restarting, and advancing
1402 the consent-based siting process for long-term disposal of

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1403 nuclear waste, however, we still have a long way to go.

1404 I have introduced a number of bills, which I hope to
1405 work with the Committee to advance, including the Nuclear
1406 Waste Taskforce Act to consider updating our laws to enable
1407 consent-based siting of long-term storage solutions for
1408 nuclear waste; the Bipartisan Spent Fuel Prioritization Act
1409 to prioritize the removal of spent nuclear fuel from
1410 decommissioned nuclear sites in areas with large populations
1411 and high seismic hazards, such as in my district; the Inspect
1412 Act to require the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to keep a
1413 resident inspector at decommissioning nuclear power plants
1414 until all spent fuel is transferred from its spent fuel pools
1415 to cannisters; The 100-year Cannister Life to require nuclear
1416 waste cannisters to have a design life of at least 100 years,
1417 more than doubling the current Nuclear Regulatory requirement
1418 of 40 years; and the NRC Office of Public Engagement and
1419 Participation Act, which would establish an Office of Public
1420 Engagement and Participation at the Nuclear Regulatory
1421 Commission.

1422 Congress absolutely cannot move legislation related to
1423 advance reactors and nuclear fuels without also fixing our

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1424 backend spent fuel problem and ensuring communities are
1425 consulted in a consent-based process.

1426 So in closing, I appreciate the work of this Committee
1427 in addressing the key energy issues we are facing. I thank
1428 my colleagues for the attention to the issues that I have
1429 highlighted today, and I will yield back.

1430 [The prepared statement of Mr. Levin follows:]

1431

1432 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

1433

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

1434 *The Chair. Thank you for your testimony and sharing
1435 your work.

1436 *Mr. Soto. I thank the gentleman from California.
1437 Interstate resilient power lines are going to be critical to
1438 21 Century renewable energy and also a fair way to dispose of
1439 spent nuclear waste will be critical for other areas that are
1440 going to be important for our 21st Century energy as well.

1441 *The Chair. Very good. Thank you.

1442 Mr. Casten, please forgive me for keeping you waiting.
1443 I messed up on the order of arrival. You are recognized for
1444 five minutes. Welcome.

1445

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1446 STATEMENT OF THE HON. SEAN CASTEN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
1447 CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

1448

1449 *Mr. Casten. Thank you, Chair Rodgers. Thank you
1450 acting Ranking Member Soto, and it is always a pleasure to
1451 follow Congressman Levin.

1452 So I am here today to talk about more detail about the
1453 Clean Electricity Transmission Acceleration Act that
1454 Congressman Levin and I have introduced. Mike talked a lot
1455 about some of the community involvement issues, I want to
1456 talk about the market issues.

1457 The purpose of this bill is to remove the permitting
1458 bottlenecks to transmission that are slowing the deployment
1459 of the cleanest and cheapest sources of energy on the grid to
1460 the benefit of consumers.

1461 We have worked on this bill over the course of about the
1462 last 12 months with lots of input from industry, more former
1463 FERC Commissioners than I can keep track of, developers,
1464 environmental groups, and I think also nontrivially, the 30
1465 plus years of past experience in the energy industry that
1466 Mike and I collectively bring between us before we had our

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1467 mid-life crisis and got into this line of work.

1468 I want to talk about the market issues and I hope this
1469 is particularly resident on this Committee because
1470 transmission is fundamentally different than natural gas
1471 pipeline.

1472 When you build a gas pipeline, you have a supplier at
1473 one end who has a field that is making something they want to
1474 sell. On the other end you have a local distribution
1475 company, an ONG terminal, perhaps a power plant who has
1476 something they want to buy. They have an alignment of
1477 economic interest and the debate is on the middle, about is
1478 the pipeline safe? Is it leak proof? It is an environmental
1479 permitting issue.

1480 Transmission is fundamentally different. At one of the
1481 wires you have somebody who is making something that they
1482 want to sell and at the other end of the wire you don't have
1483 a consumer, because the consumer doesn't have a voice in that
1484 process. What you have is an investor in utility, a regional
1485 transmission organization, somebody who has a bunch of
1486 capital tied up in a current power market that is going to
1487 have trouble competing if you bring cheaper power into that

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1488 market.

1489 And so you have this deep conflict of interest that is
1490 not really an environmental permitting issue, it is an
1491 economic conflict of interest. So what we like to say is
1492 that if you are going to address transmission permitting,
1493 then you have got to take the three p's in order.

1494 First fix the profit incentives. Second, take care of
1495 the participation, so that everybody has got a voice at that
1496 table, and then, deal with permitting.

1497 And so we have tried to approach this with that in mind.
1498 And I think intuitively we kind of know that because when is
1499 the last time you have heard of an investor-owned utility who
1500 said, I would like to build a new power plant in my district,
1501 but I just can't get it through the interconnection que?

1502 When is the last time you have heard of a regional
1503 transmission organization who said, we are really struggling
1504 to build transmission within my territory? It is the
1505 interregional stuff that matters.

1506 It is not because they are bad people, it is because
1507 their economic incentives are misaligned. And frankly, I
1508 think this Committee has proven the way through that. One of

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1509 the prior commentators mentioned about how much we have
1510 decarbonized our grid.

1511 That is a direct result of the 1992 Energy Policy Act
1512 that came out of this Committee because for the first time,
1513 after that Act was passed, players in the energy space had an
1514 economic incentive to preferentially operate their lower cost
1515 assets. So we saw a flood of investments in more efficient
1516 natural gas. You saw the nuclear fleet go from 60 to 90
1517 percent capacity factor. You saw prices fall and you saw the
1518 US power grid drop from 1,300 pounds a megawatt hour to less
1519 than 900.

1520 That is a success. It is a win/win that we can take
1521 charge of. So what we have done in this bill is, among other
1522 things, to say let's update some of the market reform
1523 processes at FERC. We have power markets that dispatch based
1524 on the lowest marginal cost provider.

1525 Those market structures don't work in a world that is
1526 awash with zero marginal cost generation, like solar, like
1527 wind, like geothermal, basically like nuclear.

1528 Let's factor in performance-based rates. So instead of
1529 having this fight between two ends of the wire, we can say to

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1530 folks at the other end, if you are actively working to
1531 decongest nodes on your grid, to shorten the interconnection
1532 que, to help your state meet their clean energy targets,
1533 let's increase your return on equity.

1534 Let's get everybody aligned so that we can, instead of
1535 giving everybody a slice of pie as we make the pie higher, as
1536 some folks a couple of miles from here once said. Let's
1537 address the Cost Allocation Rule so that everybody who
1538 actually benefits from these investments also participates in
1539 the cost (inaudible) ledger.

1540 Let's deal with minimal interregional transfer and once
1541 we do all those things FERC sole-source authority to approve
1542 these permits just like they currently have for natural gas.

1543 It is a market-forward approach. It is an approach that
1544 puts consumers first. It is an approach that gives us the
1545 win/win and it is squarely within the jurisdiction of this
1546 Committee and I hope you would consider taking it up for
1547 debate in a markup and try to bring it forward.

1548 Appreciate your time again and I yield back.

1549 [The prepared statement of Mr. Casten follows:]

1550

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1551 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

1552

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

1553 *The Chair. Thank you. Thank you for your testimony
1554 and sharing your insights. Very good.

1555 *Mr. Soto. Thanks for the thoughtful analysis,
1556 Representative Casten. Appreciate that deep dive. That is
1557 going to be very helpful for us.

1558 *The Chair. Very good. Thank you.

1559 Next, Representative Houchin from Indiana. Five
1560 minutes.

1561

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1562 STATEMENT FROM THE HON. ERIN HOUCHIN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
1563 CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF INDIANA

1564

1565 *Ms. Houchin. Thank you, Chairwoman Rodgers, and Acting
1566 Ranking Member Soto for hosting this member day. Thank you
1567 for allowing me time to address the Committee.

1568 I know it is toward the end of the day, I am going to
1569 get right to it. While Energy & Commerce jurisdiction is
1570 broad, I want to zero in on one issue that is of great
1571 importance to my constituents and that is broadband internet
1572 access.

1573 As a former Indiana State Senator, I worked tirelessly
1574 to expand broadband and internet service to rural communities
1575 across Indiana. My district was one of the most unserved
1576 areas of the state of Indiana and I made it my mission to
1577 work toward access for all.

1578 As the Committee understands, Americans rely on internet
1579 access for telehealth services, to operate and grow their
1580 businesses, to connect to educational services, and for
1581 precision agriculture.

1582 We must make sure that no matter where you choose to

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1583 reside, whether it's Indianapolis or Salem, Indiana, you have
1584 access to the global economy.

1585 I am on this mission as part of an effort to ensure that
1586 rural areas of this country do not get left behind. That is
1587 why, in my former legislative role, I worked to pass
1588 legislation to prioritize broadband internet access to
1589 unserved communities first.

1590 I am proud of these efforts and Indiana's leadership in
1591 investing millions of dollars toward broadband deployment.
1592 We are laser-focused on connecting these areas of zero access
1593 and happy to report that our actions are already making a
1594 difference.

1595 Indiana's Broadband Ready Communities Program and the
1596 Next Level Connections Program are examples of success at the
1597 state level as we continue our work. It is important to
1598 ensure that Congress and our agencies are always a partner,
1599 not a hinderance, to states trying to connect their citizens.

1600 As a new member of Congress broadband connectivity
1601 issues continue to remain a focus for me. That is why
1602 earlier this month I sent a letter to the National
1603 Telecommunications and Information Administration's

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1604 Administrator Davidson to express my concern with their
1605 recent notice of funding opportunity for the Broadband Equity
1606 Access and Deployment or BEAD Program.

1607 While I was pleased to see Indiana allocated
1608 approximately \$868 million in funding, the NOFO associated
1609 with these funds raises concerns for efficient deployment
1610 and, as written, could result in expending vital funding
1611 resources for overbuilding in areas that already have access.

1612 We have previously seen this happen when funds for
1613 broadband were provided to states during the Obama
1614 Administration and priorities did not require unserved areas
1615 to be connected first.

1616 It is one of the first lessons I learned as a state
1617 legislator that there is a difference between unserved and
1618 underserved and we must first focus on the unserved.

1619 As this Committee has likely recognized, the NOFO
1620 contains several sections related to labor requirements and
1621 mandates. Specifically those related to affordability and
1622 rate regulation as well as sections related to climate change
1623 and certain supply chain and other issues that, I fear, may
1624 unnecessarily slow deployment.

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1625 Like I said in my letter to the administrator, our focus
1626 should be on getting all Americans connected to the internet
1627 utilizing a strategy that's focused on quickly and
1628 efficiently reaching the greatest number of homes for the
1629 least cost with an emphasis on providing adequate speeds and
1630 service.

1631 We should not be enacting a political agenda that is out
1632 of touch with the needs of states, including my home state of
1633 Indiana. The NOFO in that regard is too prescriptive and
1634 full of priorities from the left, rather than placing an
1635 emphasis an efficient and thoughtful deployment.

1636 Our job is simple, connect people to this vital service.
1637 There is no room for politics when it comes to connecting
1638 America. We shouldn't be politicizing a program that has
1639 broad bipartisan support. End of story.

1640 Additionally, Chairwoman Rodgers, I want to thank your
1641 Committee staff for working with mine on ways to effectively
1642 measure just how successful our various broadband programs
1643 are at connecting our constituents.

1644 Since many of our broadband programs receive significant
1645 investments of taxpayer money, we have a responsibility to

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1646 ensure that these investments are carried out responsibly.
1647 Thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to speak on
1648 this issue today. I look forward to continuing to work with
1649 you and the Committee and your staff on these efforts and I
1650 yield back the balance of my time.

1651 [The prepared statement of Ms. Houchin follows:]

1652

1653 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

1654

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

1655 *The Chair. Thank you. Thank you for your testimony
1656 and sharing the Indiana example. I share your commitment to
1657 ensuring that we don't miss this opportunity to really focus
1658 on the truly unserved all across the country.

1659 So we are going to stay on this. We will work with you
1660 on it.

1661 *Mr. Soto. I was proud to cast my vote for the
1662 bipartisan Infrastructure and Investment Act and we
1663 definitely need to prioritize unserved communities, including
1664 those in both of our districts, among others across the
1665 nation.

1666 Many of us have rural areas and this is critical for
1667 everything from economics to healthcare.

1668 *Ms. Houchin. Thank you.

1669 *The Chair. Very good. Thank you.

1670 Next, representative from California, Mr. Khanna, you
1671 are recognized for five minutes. Welcome to E&C.

1672

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1673 STATEMENT OF THE HON. ROHIT KHANNA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
1674 CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

1675

1676 *Mr. Khanna. Thank you, Chair Rodgers, and thank you
1677 Acting Ranking Member Soto. Thank you both for the
1678 opportunity to testify about my bill with Representative
1679 Buddy Carter the Stop Institutional Child Abuse Act.

1680 As you know Buddy Carter has been an active member of
1681 the Energy & Commerce Committee and he has been a co-equal
1682 partner on this. When Paris Hilton first approached our
1683 offices and asked us to introduce this legislation regarding
1684 the troubled teen industry, I actually wasn't familiar with
1685 the issue.

1686 But after hearing her story and the story of so many
1687 survivors, it has become clear that Congress needs to act
1688 with urgency. There are currently at least 120,000 minors in
1689 these youth residential programs across the United States.

1690 And unfortunately, many of these facilities have been
1691 hotbeds of institutional child abuse, neglect, and sexual
1692 abuse. The lack of transparency and accountability for care
1693 has led to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse of

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1694 vulnerable children. It is unacceptable.

1695 These facilities are entrusted with caring with some of
1696 the most vulnerable children in America. My bill with
1697 Congressman Carter addresses directly this issue. It seeks
1698 to create actual transparency around youth experiences in
1699 congregate care facilities and to study best practices to
1700 prevent institutional abuse.

1701 It will have a group of experts establish what these
1702 practices should be. We also need estimates on how many
1703 youth are actually in these facilities. The bill also
1704 directs a study on exactly how federal funding is currently
1705 being used in these facilities.

1706 The bill has 45 co-sponsors and a bipartisan basis, nine
1707 of them from the Energy & Commerce Committee and we have also
1708 been working with Senators Merkley and Senator Cornyn who
1709 have introduced this on a bipartisan basis in the Senate.

1710 And Chair Rodgers, your staff has been incredibly
1711 helpful to us as we made progress on this as is the minority
1712 staff. This is an institution in dire need of transparency.
1713 I don't believe the bill will score very high at all on the
1714 CBO. It is more about setting standards and I am really

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

1715 grateful to the survivors who have come forward and, of
1716 course, to Representative Carter for truly making this a
1717 bipartisan effort.

1718 I look forward to working with the Committee and would
1719 hope, when appropriate, if we could have a markup and hearing
1720 on the bill. Thanks for your consideration.

1721

1722

1723 [The prepared statement of Mr. Khanna follows:]

1724

1725 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

1726

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

1727 *The Chair. Thank you. Thank you for your testimony.
1728 We look forward to working with you on it.
1729 *Mr. Soto. Thanks, Representative Khanna, for your and
1730 Rep Carter's amazing leadership to help protect our kids.
1731 *Mr. Khanna. Thank you.
1732 *The Chair. Okay. Next, Representative Chavez-Deremer
1733 recognized for five minutes.
1734

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

1735 STATEMENT OF THE HON. LORI MICHELLE CHAVEZ-DEREMER, A
1736 REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OREGON
1737

1738 *Ms. Chavez-DeRemer. Well, good afternoon, Chairwoman
1739 Rodgers, and Mr. Soto. Thanks for holding this session today
1740 for members.

1741 Throughout the country neighborhoods have been
1742 experiencing an unprecedented homelessness crisis. In Oregon
1743 this crisis has persisted at a level far outpacing other
1744 states.

1745 There isn't a single person, I believe, who doesn't want
1746 to fix the problem, who doesn't want to help our homeless
1747 neighbors find stability, but the approach has been too
1748 narrow. Hyperfixated on housing.

1749 Housing undeniably is the biggest factor to consider
1750 when examining the issue, but it is not the only one. If
1751 someone you know is trapped in the spiraling cycle of dual
1752 diagnosis condition being addicted to a drug, while also
1753 fighting a mental health disorder and that person is going
1754 without care, how could you expect them to transition into
1755 sustained and stable housing?

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1756 Our homeless community is going without access to real
1757 and direct healthcare, yet, we maintain an expectation that
1758 if you just build the housing their very real health
1759 problems, which often are the causes for their homelessness,
1760 will no longer be an issue affecting their living situation.

1761 Providing healthcare to this vulnerable community is the
1762 missing piece in fixing this crisis. Doing so isn't going to
1763 solve the issue by itself, but you cannot end this crisis
1764 without it.

1765 However, we cannot do this within a system that is not
1766 designed for the homeless. A system which currently requires
1767 homeless individuals to travel miles from where they live,
1768 risking their property being stolen, to receive care at a
1769 brick-and-mortar clinic.

1770 And if that is if they have the money for a bus ride, or
1771 even if they can walk. And oftentimes, our veterans are in
1772 that category.

1773 That is why I, alongside Congresswoman Summer Lee have
1774 introduced the Direct Care for the Homeless Act. This
1775 necessary legislation would provide accessible and direct
1776 healthcare to our homeless neighbors right where they live.

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1777 Helping them transition off the streets. It does so by
1778 creating a four-year pilot program, expanding the homeless
1779 access to street medicine providers. Street medicine
1780 providers fill the need for care by going directly to the
1781 patients.

1782 Providing care on the streets and encampments and any
1783 place a homeless patient lives. This direct approach
1784 streamlines access to dual diagnosis care, primary care, and
1785 any other untreated healthcare need which is keeping a person
1786 trapped on the streets.

1787 Our pilot program will be available for credentialled
1788 street medicine providers who work in cities or counties
1789 experiencing the homelessness crisis at serious levels. It
1790 will establish a reimbursement process for these providers.

1791 So it is practical for the doctors who participate. But
1792 it explicitly prohibits reimbursements for supervised
1793 conception of Schedule 1 drugs, Fentanyl, Cocaine, and Meth.

1794 The program would also grow the needed workforce to
1795 sustain an effective street medicine approach. Street
1796 medicine providers will be eligible for the Public Health
1797 Loan Repayment Program.

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1798 Medical students and residents who serve in the program
1799 focused at all on street medicine will be eligible for a
1800 pause on both their student loan payments and accrued
1801 interest, and perhaps, most importantly, community service
1802 officers employed by local law enforcement will be eligible
1803 for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

1804 I want to place a particular emphasis on this provision.
1805 In every city and county dealing with the homelessness
1806 crisis, cops are stretched thin responding to calls about a
1807 homeless person sleeping outside of an encampment in front
1808 row or a local business.

1809 It shouldn't be police officers dealing with these
1810 calls. Their work hours need to be reserved for immediate
1811 life-threatening emergencies. That is why I am proud to have
1812 the support of law enforcement in putting this bill forward.

1813 An influx of Community Service Officers will free up the
1814 lives of cops and notably improve conditions for both the
1815 homeless and their neighbors. Our bill also improves
1816 conditions in homeless shelters by requiring that menstrual
1817 products be available and that basic security cameras, which
1818 can be bought, oftentimes on Amazon for a very low cost, will

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1819 be placed in these non-invasive areas of the shelter.

1820 In providing healthcare to help people transition off
1821 the streets, we do need to make sure that the temporary
1822 housing options are real options. Too often women will opt
1823 to live out of their car instead of staying in a shelter
1824 because of how dangerous some shelters can be.

1825 This results in piled up parking and trespassing ticket,
1826 which create both insurmountable debt and criminal record,
1827 which makes it near impossible to find a job. The crisis can
1828 and must be fixed. No person often chooses to be homeless.

1829 The stigmas, years of inaction, narrow approaches to
1830 helping this community have nothing to improve these
1831 conditions. Please let's stop this pattern of failure.
1832 Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions, but I
1833 do thank the Committee for this testimony and I look forward
1834 to working with the Committee and the Chairwoman, and the
1835 Acting Chairman to move this further down the road on a
1836 bipartisan level.

1837 [The prepared statement of Ms. Chavez-Deremer follows:]

1838

1839 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

1840

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

1841 *Mr. Latta. [Presiding] Well, thank you very much for
1842 coming in before us today. We greatly appreciate it and
1843 especially your work on the area because we know that the
1844 homelessness and what is going on out there on the streets
1845 takes up a lot of resources, but it is also very important
1846 that we get the resources out to the people that need them.

1847 The gentleman from Florida.

1848 *Mr. Soto. I thank the gentlelady from Oregon for
1849 bringing forward this bipartisan out of the box approach to
1850 help homeless individuals where they are at on healthcare and
1851 mental health and look forward to hearing the bill.

1852 *Mr. Latta. Thank you.

1853 The gentleman from Mississippi is recognized for five
1854 minutes.

1855

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1856 STATEMENT OF THE HON. MIKE EZELL, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
1857 CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

1858

1859 *Mr. Ezell. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member
1860 and I would like to say, I would be glad to help you. I
1861 spent 42 years in police service and that is just exactly
1862 about some of the things I am going to talk about today.

1863 So I would be glad to share any knowledge that I may or
1864 may not have.

1865 So I thank you for giving me an opportunity to come
1866 before the Committee today and share some of the issues that
1867 are facing Mississippi's 4th Congressional District.

1868 Coming before you today I bring with me a unique
1869 perspective on healthcare shaped by my experience as a
1870 sheriff, a police chief, and a police officer for 42 years of
1871 my life.

1872 In my previous role I witnessed many, many connections
1873 between public safety and healthcare, an experience that
1874 underscored the significant effect of quality healthcare on
1875 the well-being of our communities.

1876 This includes a dire need for the attention of mental

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1877 health, substance abuse, and the overall delivery of care.
1878 Mental health issues and substance abuse do not discriminate.
1879 They affect every facet of our communities.

1880 Time and time again I saw these take these tolls, issues
1881 to not just on individuals but on families, our communities,
1882 jails, and our hospitals.

1883 It became abundantly clear that our most vulnerable
1884 communities lack the resources necessary to address these
1885 challenges. Additionally, the continuous failure to look at
1886 these issues collectively puts the health and safety of our
1887 communities at grave risk, a risk that people of South
1888 Mississippi simply cannot afford.

1889 I commend this Committee for its longstanding bipartisan
1890 efforts to bridge the gap between these critical issues, most
1891 recently demonstrated through the Support Act
1892 Reauthorization.

1893 However, we must recognize there's still much work to be
1894 done. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the vital importance
1895 of healthcare in our society while showcasing vulnerabilities
1896 that warranted innovative approaches to care delivery, such
1897 as telehealth.

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1898 Telehealth has proven to be a lifeline for expanding
1899 care and providing for our most vulnerable populations. We
1900 must continue to build on this effort to grow access to care,
1901 ease the burden these crucial issues have on my district.

1902 Mississippi has been a leader in this delivery reform,
1903 standing up one of the most robust Telehealth systems in the
1904 country. One that has been modeled by many states coast to
1905 coast. This was a learning experience from the worst natural
1906 disaster in decades to ravage our communities was Hurricane
1907 Katrina back in 2005.

1908 We learned so many things from that dreadful storm and
1909 now Congress must acknowledge the delivery reforms that led
1910 to increased access to mental health and substance use care
1911 during the pandemic.

1912 I urge the Committee to continue their bipartisan
1913 efforts to expand access and exploring new delivery models
1914 and thank you, sir, I yield back.

1915 [The prepared statement of Mr. Ezell follows:]

1916

1917 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

1918

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

1919 *Mr. Latta. Well, and thank you for coming before us
1920 today. What you talk about on the Telehealth side, that was
1921 an issue especially that really came during COVID and I know
1922 I was on some calls prior to COVID saying that Telehealth
1923 would never work. Three weeks into COVID we were being told
1924 that if we didn't have Telehealth the system would have
1925 collapsed.

1926 Also thanks for your years in law enforcement. I know
1927 that when I am in my district talking to my sheriffs, our
1928 county jails are not our mental health institutions out there
1929 or places where people can get help. We are overwhelmed and
1930 I know talking with my sheriffs that they just need help.

1931 So we appreciate you coming before the Committee today.
1932 The gentleman from Florida.

1933 *Mr. Soto. I thank the gentleman from Mississippi for
1934 your commitment to Telehealth. It is particularly critical
1935 for those of representing rural areas and we passed that
1936 first waiver right in February/March of 2020, right here in
1937 this Committee to allow us to go boldly forth and we
1938 appreciate the innovation of states likes yours and on
1939 working on and continuing this expansion.

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1940 *Mr. Ezell. Thank you very much.

1941 *Mr. Latta. Thank you again. The gentleman from

1942 Michigan is recognized for five minutes.

1943

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1944 STATEMENT FROM THE HON. JOHN JAMES, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
1945 CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

1946

1947 *Mr. James. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Go Blue.

1948 On a much, much serious note. I am really glad that
1949 this Committee is on the topic and subject of mental health
1950 and substance abuse.

1951 Just yesterday a group of bipartisan legislators met on
1952 the House floor steps and we stood together in support of
1953 substance abuse awareness and mental health awareness and I
1954 so sincerely hope that we can remember that stand when
1955 legislation like my H.R. 4101, a bipartisan Road to Recovery
1956 Act comes to the floor.

1957 With the help of this Committee, I do believe that it
1958 can be possible. Opioids have left a trail of destruction,
1959 heartbreak, and broken families in its wake. And Americans
1960 caught in the middle of the opioid crisis need our help and
1961 support now.

1962 The opioid crisis impacts communities across the nation,
1963 but especially the communities in Michigan's 10th
1964 Congressional District. One of my constituents, a brave

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1965 mother from Rochester Hills testified in Congress about how
1966 the opioid crisis has impacted her family taking the lives of
1967 her sons far too soon.

1968 To the leaders in Congress and in the White House I ask
1969 you, was her testimony in vain? I certainly hope not.

1970 We all have a responsibility to end these tragedies that
1971 are going on each and every single day across America. We
1972 must be dedicated to doing the right thing to save lives. To
1973 put pragmatic policy making ahead of partisan politics.

1974 This is why I am proud to introduce, again, H.R. 4101,
1975 the Bipartisan Road to Recovery Act. This bill reauthorizes
1976 life-saving resources vital to addressing the opioid
1977 addiction and substance abuse crisis across the country.

1978 This will ensure that those dealing with mental health
1979 and/or substance abuse disorders have access to free
1980 confidential treatment, referral, and information service
1981 helplines.

1982 I want to thank my colleague, Rep Cardenas of California
1983 for his partnership on this bill and this proves that we can
1984 truly work together to benefit the American people when we
1985 try.

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1986 This opioid epidemic has reached every single one of us
1987 and we must make sure that we devote resources to help these
1988 families.

1989 Next, I want to discuss the disastrous EV transition
1990 this Administration continues to force on the American
1991 people. I wish I had all day to express the outrage of my
1992 constituents from automotive manufacturers, to suppliers, to
1993 dealers, but we don't have all day.

1994 Some have called this transition just plain bad policy.
1995 Others have called it the transition to hell. I agree with
1996 both characterizations. This Administration is taking away
1997 our choice and forcing a comply or die EV mandate.

1998 These mandates have already burned billions in American
1999 taxpayer dollars and on capacity that does not exist for
2000 autos that people can afford and demand that hasn't
2001 materialized yet.

2002 This infrastructure is currently not ready and this
2003 Administration is intent upon building the middle class and
2004 China on the backs of the middle class in America.

2005 Autoworkers in my district get up every morning and work
2006 hard for a living. They go to work, that's the Michigan way.

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2007 Meanwhile, coastal elites in the Biden Administration wake up
2008 and go to the couch where they work from home.

2009 Michiganders and people from all over the country who
2010 have to work hard each and every single day to put food on
2011 the table don't have that luxury. And while the
2012 Administration works from home in empty office buildings all
2013 around D.C., with the ever-ballooning cost of government and
2014 ever ballooning headcount in D.C., they are gutting our local
2015 economies by mandating an EV transitions that caves to the
2016 CCP and its chokehold on the American auto industry is being
2017 felt throughout every sector of America.

2018 This Administration is sacrificing the Michigan economy
2019 on the altar of their radical green agenda and it must stop.
2020 Michigan families and workers are being left holding the bag.
2021 So let me be crystal clear, there is nothing fair about this.
2022 There is nothing right about this. There is nothing just
2023 about this. There is nothing common-sense about this. There
2024 is nothing sustainable about this.

2025 This is about a radical EV transition. It is a race to
2026 the bottom for our working families and it has to stop right
2027 here. This is designated to create pain for autoworkers and

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2028 pain for people at home so they will go into vehicles that
2029 they cannot afford yet.

2030 This is designated to hurt, not to help, and we are here
2031 to help people. To make sure that we retain choice and that
2032 the government never forces itself upon the American people.

2033 I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman for the time here
2034 today to express the sentiments of my district and I want to
2035 thank you for your work on helping to end the opioid crisis.

2036 I, along with my staff, stand ready to continue working
2037 with this Committee and with this GOP-led Congress to do
2038 everything that we can to maintain our national security,
2039 retain our economic prosperity and strength, and to make sure
2040 we make a better future for the United States of America.

2041 With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

2042

2043

2044 [The prepared statement of Mr. James follows:]

2045

2046 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

2047

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

2048 *The Chair. [Presiding] I thank the gentleman for
2049 testifying and for your leadership on this issue. We will
2050 take that into strong consideration.

2051 *Mr. James. Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

2052 *Mr. Soto. I thank the gentleman for his bipartisan
2053 approach on combating the opioid crisis and we can agree to
2054 disagree on the other topics for today. Thanks for coming
2055 in.

2056 *The Chair. Thank you. Next, I am pleased to welcome
2057 to the Energy & Commerce Committee room the Chairman of the
2058 Resources Committee, appreciate your leadership,
2059 Representative Westerman. You are recognized for five
2060 minutes.

2061

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2062 STATEMENT OF THE HON. BRUCE WESTERMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
2063 CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ARKANSAS

2064

2065 *Mr. Westerman. Thank you, Chair Rodgers, and Ranking
2066 Member Soto. I appreciate you hosting today's member
2067 meeting. I know our Committees have worked closely together
2068 on a lot of energy stuff, but your Committee covers a lot of
2069 things who members, like myself, don't get a chance to work
2070 on as much.

2071 Issues that your Committee has jurisdiction over that
2072 are important to all of our country. So I appreciate the
2073 chance to get to come visit with you today.

2074 One of those issues that I know is front and center here
2075 is the dire need to reform our healthcare system and the
2076 federal government's role in healthcare.

2077 My district, the 4th District of Arkansas is large and
2078 rural and while I have the privilege of advocating for a wide
2079 variety of people from all walks of life, I think they would
2080 all tell you that they share in the frustration of a high
2081 cost of care.

2082 And in rural America we also face a high risk of losing

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2083 vital health services due to the unique challenges that rural
2084 areas face.

2085 Healthcare costs, as you know, continue to rise across
2086 the board and your Committee has done extraordinary work
2087 shining a light on the cost of care. I would say that if we
2088 truly want to address our fiscal situation that the federal
2089 government needs to address, then we have to address the
2090 rising cost of care because it is one of the largest drivers
2091 of the federal budget.

2092 There is a lot of finger pointing. There has always
2093 been a lot of finger pointing on healthcare and while the
2094 blame game will continue, I know that people in my District
2095 and Americans across the country are still struggling with
2096 high cost and that gets to the solution that I want to
2097 propose and not to point fingers or play the blame game, but
2098 look at how we can actually fix what is wrong with our
2099 healthcare system.

2100 And I have a bill called the Fair Care Act. It returns
2101 competition to the healthcare marketplace, lowers prices for
2102 drugs, coverage, and care, and gives every American the
2103 ability to take control of decisions affecting their

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2104 healthcare.

2105 I am proud to have seen so many policies similar to
2106 Fair Care become part of other legislative packages that have
2107 passed committee with resounding bipartisanship such as your
2108 very own recently introduced Lower Cost More Transparency
2109 Act.

2110 While price transparency is a necessary first step, I
2111 believe there is still more that has to be fixed to correct
2112 the deeply embedded faults that lie within the system if we
2113 truly want to empower the consumer and the patient.

2114 The Fair Care Acts answer to our nation's healthcare
2115 crisis, I believe, is the most comprehensive bipartisan
2116 package that addresses the root causes of many of the
2117 perverse incentives and burdensome regulations that plague
2118 our system and it could actually pass the Senate and become
2119 law.

2120 This bill has been in the making for over five years.
2121 Even though I am not on this Committee or Ways & Means, I
2122 have been continually working on this bill and I can't take
2123 credit for all of it, because what we have done is taken a
2124 collection of bipartisan bills that have three objectives,

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2125 cover more people, cover pre-existing conditions, and lower
2126 costs.

2127 Now, who couldn't be for that? And we found that there
2128 is a lot of individual bills in the House and the Senate that
2129 address those things. We put them together in the Fair Care
2130 Act and a lot of those individuals measures have been passed
2131 over the years.

2132 I will briefly tell you there is four main parts to the
2133 bill. The first modernizes Health Savings Accounts by
2134 combining the various savings accounts from HSA's to MSA's
2135 into one pre-tax Healthcare Spending Account that can be used
2136 for a broad range of medical expenses, including insurance
2137 premiums and direct primary care.

2138 The second part improves private health insurance by
2139 strengthening market-based exchanges and lowering premiums to
2140 give more personalized health plan options.

2141 The third and fourth parts reform hospital provider
2142 insurer and prescription drug prices, as well as Medicare and
2143 Medicaid to further increase transparency, lower costs, and
2144 ensure program solvency.

2145 These broad-ranging solutions come from many pieces of

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2146 legislations, as I mentioned, from stakeholder input, and
2147 have been reviewed and refined by several healthcare policy
2148 experts.

2149 I hope this legislation can stimulate conversation and
2150 serve as a starting point for how we can take the next steps
2151 to reform our broken healthcare system.

2152 Thank you again for welcoming me today and I look
2153 forward to working with you to solve the problems, not only
2154 for our current constituents, but as a solid foundation for
2155 those to come. I yield back.

2156 [The prepared statement of Mr. Westerman follows:]

2157

2158 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

2159

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

2160 *Mr. Latta. [Presiding] Well, we thank the Chairman
2161 for coming before us today and the passion he showed because
2162 this is an issue that this Committee has been working on and
2163 we have got a lot of work to do into the future, but
2164 appreciate your work on it and, again, thank you for being
2165 with us and I recognize the gentleman from Florida.

2166 *Mr. Soto. Chairman, it was a honor to serve with you
2167 on Natural Resources in the last six years and I appreciate
2168 finding common ground like we are doing here on both price
2169 transparency and on lowering costs with several bills, as you
2170 mentioned, that have passed through.

2171 So appreciate your suggestions today.

2172 *Mr. Westerman. Thank you and we have got your bill on
2173 markup tomorrow.

2174 *Mr. Latta. Well, thank you.

2175 The gentleman from New York is recognized for five
2176 minutes.

2177

This is an unedited transcript. The statements within may be inaccurate, incomplete, or misattributed to the speaker.

2178 STATEMENT FROM THE HON. MARC MOLINARO, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
2179 CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

2180

2181 *Mr. Molinaro. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate
2182 the opportunity to present to the Committee today and
2183 certainly appreciate your leadership and the leadership of
2184 the Chairwoman.

2185 I would like to discuss just a couple of items that are
2186 of significant importance to me and the folks in represent in
2187 the 19th District of New York.

2188 One of the top priorities I have brought forward here to
2189 Congress, and I know that the Chairwoman shares in both life
2190 experience and passion, is the support for those individuals
2191 with intellectual, physical, and developmental disabilities.

2192 Now, when I served as County Executive in Dutchess
2193 County, New York, in fact served there for 12 years, we
2194 launched the Think Differently Initiative to change the way
2195 in which individuals, businesses, and other community
2196 organizations relate to those with intellectual, physical,
2197 and developmental disabilities.

2198 Having personal experience in facing these challenges, I

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2199 raise and am the proud father of four children, one of whom,
2200 my daughter, the oldest, lives on the Autism Spectrum. She
2201 has helped to define our focus on this journey of advocacy as
2202 a family and for me as a public official.

2203 As a member of Congress I brought the Think Differently
2204 Initiative here to Washington and made it part of my federal
2205 platform.

2206 The first bill we introduced was the Think Differently
2207 Database Act, which creates a comprehensive and easy to
2208 access website and platform that includes support services
2209 and resources available for those with physical,
2210 intellectual, and developmental disabilities.

2211 And we are currently finalizing the details of this bill
2212 with Committee staff and hope to soon have it ready for a
2213 markup. This is my top legislative priority and very
2214 important to millions of individuals across this country
2215 living with disabilities.

2216 The bill was inspired by the Think Differently Website I
2217 created as County Executive, which is designed to intuitively
2218 point individuals and their families to the services and
2219 connections they need based on where they are located.

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2220 I am currently working on -- additionally, I am
2221 currently working on a bill that would require FEMA to
2222 conduct a review and report on resources provided to those
2223 with developmental disabilities affected by disasters.

2224 Additionally, we are working on legislation to ensure
2225 that Amtrack, which has notoriously not lived up to its
2226 obligations to meet ADA compliance, working on a bill to
2227 ensure Amtrak finally lives up to those ADA compliance
2228 obligations by submitting their progress to Congress.

2229 Now, I am proud of the work we have done to break down
2230 barriers and open opportunities to those with disabilities,
2231 however, as I know you know, there is so much more to be done
2232 to deliver comprehensive care and support that individuals
2233 with disabilities need.

2234 Another topic I am passionate about is how lawmakers can
2235 increase access to mental health services and support
2236 individuals living with Substance Use Disorder.

2237 Sullivan County, one of the counties in my district, in
2238 upstate New York has the highest rate of opioid deaths in the
2239 state of New York. This is, for me, a top priority to ensure
2240 that individuals receive the comprehensive support they need

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2241 to overcome addiction and go on to lead fulfilling lives,
2242 regardless of their zip code.

2243 As Dutchess County Executive, I developed a nationally
2244 recognized stabilization center that offered walk-in care for
2245 individuals with mental health and substance use disorders
2246 and the most comprehensive network of community-based mental
2247 health services of any county in America.

2248 Now, in Congress I remain committed to working with my
2249 colleagues across the aisle to combat our nation's dual
2250 crisis of substance use and mental illness.

2251 Lastly, the last topic I just want to highlight is also
2252 a priority and that is streamlining energy products and
2253 projects, lowering energy costs, and protecting the
2254 environment.

2255 We need to continue to work towards substantial
2256 permitting reform and reduce the red tape that often blocks
2257 natural gas and clean energy projects, especially in the
2258 state of New York, which is notorious for holding up projects
2259 through the NEPA process.

2260 Mr. Chairman, I thank you again for allowing me to share
2261 with the Committee some of my priorities and the issues that

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2262 are important to the constituents I represent in the 19th
2263 Congressional District and I look forward our continued work
2264 together to support those individuals with physical,
2265 developmental, and intellectual disabilities.

2266 I thank you very much and certainly welcome any
2267 comments.

2268 [The prepared statement of Mr. Molinaro follows:]

2269

2270 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

2271

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2272 *Mr. Latta. Well, we thank the gentleman for coming
2273 before us today and you are absolutely correct. The
2274 gentlelady from Washington, the Chair of the full Committee,
2275 is passionate working on issues for those with disabilities.
2276 You are absolutely correct too when it comes to finding
2277 resources. It is sometimes very difficult to find them out
2278 there. I know that when we worked on H.R. 6, several
2279 congresses ago, especially dealing with opioids, I had
2280 legislation that was included in there to establishing a
2281 dashboard to make sure that at least those that are out there
2282 in our communities can find those services.
2283 So it is absolutely important that we get these things
2284 done. Permitting is another issue that you bring up that the
2285 Committee has been working on because, again, we have got to
2286 move these projects along. We cannot have these things held
2287 up. So that is essential.
2288 So we appreciate you coming before us today.
2289 *Mr. Molinaro. Thank you.
2290 *Mr. Latta. The gentleman from Florida is recognized.
2291 *Mr. Soto. I thank the gentleman from New York for your
2292 passionate and personal story and your advocacy for Americans

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2293 with disabilities, as well as your work on mental health.

2294 Thank you for your presentation today.

2295 *Mr. Molinaro. Thank you.

2296 *Mr. Latta. Thank you, again.

2297 Seeing no other members wishing to give testimony before
2298 the Committee today, I ask unanimous consent to insert in the
2299 record the documents included on the staff hearing documents
2300 list.

2301 And without objection, so ordered.

2302 Without objection the Committee is adjourned.

2303 [Whereupon, at 4:58 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]