



June 11, 2018

TO: Members, Subcommittee on Communications and Technology

FROM: Committee Majority Staff

RE: Subcommittee Markup

I. INTRODUCTION

The Subcommittee on Communications and Technology will meet in open markup session on Wednesday, June 13, 2018, at 10:00 a.m., in 2123 Rayburn House Office Building to consider the following:

- H.R. 2345, National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act of 2017;
- H.R. 5709, Preventing Illegal Radio Abuse Through Enforcement (PIRATE) Act;
- H.R. 3994, Advancing Critical Connectivity Expands Service, Small Businesses Resources, Opportunities, Access, and Data Based on Assessed Need and Demand (ACCESS BROADBAND) Act; and,
- H.R. 4881, Precision Agriculture Connectivity Act of 2018

II. EXPLANATION OF LEGISLATION

A. H.R. 2345, National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act of 2017

H.R. 2345 was introduced by Rep. Stewart (UT) on May 3, 2017. On March 22, 2018, the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology held a hearing examining the legislation. The bill would direct the FCC, in consultation with Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), to study and report on the feasibility of designating a three-digit dialing code to be used for a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system.

Abbreviated dialing codes allow users to connect to a location in the telephone network by dialing an “N11 code” instead of a 7- or 10-digit telephone number. An “N11 code” is a three-digit number, the first number of which is not “1” or “0” and the second two numbers are both “1,” that can be used to automatically route a call to an end-location on the network. Numerically, this leaves only 8 possible combinations; one of which is 9-1-1 and is used for emergency services. In 2000, the FCC issued a Report and Order on Reconsideration of the use

of N11 codes and other abbreviated dialing arrangements.¹ Currently, the FCC has designated codes for 2-1-1, 3-1-1, 5-1-1, 7-1-1, 8-1-1, and 9-1-1, and the Commission has the authority to designate a new N11 code by rulemaking.

H.R. 2345 would require the FCC-SAMHSA study to analyze the effectiveness of the current National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. This study would further analyze the potential impact of a N11 dialing code designation on suicide prevention, crises services, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, and the Veterans Crisis Line. In conducting this study, the FCC would be directed to consider each of the current N11 designations, to consult with the North American Numbering Council (NANC), and consult with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs with respect to how well the current National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is working to address the needs of veterans.

S. 1015, the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act, is the companion measure in the Senate. The Senate Commerce Committee reported that bill out of committee on October 31, 2017. The measure passed the Senate by unanimous consent on November 8, 2017.

B. H.R. 5709, Preventing Illegal Radio Abuse Through Enforcement (PIRATE) Act

H.R. 5709 was introduced by Rep. Lance (NJ) on May 8, 2018. On March 22, 2018, the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology held a hearing examining a discussion draft of the bill. H.R. 5709 is substantially similar to the discussion draft.

The bill would give the FCC additional authority to issue fines on any person who willfully and knowingly broadcasts radio transmissions over AM or FM frequencies without a license from the FCC or without complying with unlicensed operations rules defined in the Commission's rules.

Illegal pirate operations are common across the country, and disrupt the public's access to news, public affairs, and emergency alerts provided by legitimately licensed broadcasters. Interference with the Emergency Alert System (EAS) can disrupt the signals received by listeners, and can reduce the public's ability to prepare for emergencies. Furthermore, interference from illegal pirate operations can affect frequencies assigned to the Federal Aviation Administration for airport communications.

The bill would give the FCC additional tools to enforce penalties against pirate stations and protect the public services provided by legitimate, licensed broadcasters. The bill would raise the fine for rule violations to \$100,000 dollars per day per violation, up to a maximum of \$2,000,000 dollars. Additionally, the legislation requires enforcement sweeps in markets with significant illegal pirate operations, and empowers state and local governments to impose civil or criminal penalties for pirate radio broadcasting.

¹ *Use of N11 Codes and Other Abbreviated Dialing Arrangements*, Third Report and Order on Reconsideration, 15 FCC Rcd 16753 (2000), https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-00-256A1.pdf;

C. H.R. 3994, Advancing Critical Connectivity Expands Service, Small Businesses Resources, Opportunities, Access, and Data Based on Assessed Need and Demand (ACCESS BROADBAND) Act

H.R. 3994 was introduced by Rep. Paul Tonko (NY) on October 6, 2017. On January 30, 2018, the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology held a hearing to examine the legislation. The legislation would establish an office of Internet Connectivity and Growth at NTIA to coordinate and track federal funding for broadband across all agencies. This office would streamline the process of applying for federal funding for projects that expand broadband access.

D. H.R. 4881, Precision Agriculture Connectivity Act of 2018

H.R. 4881 was introduced by Rep. Robert E. Latta (OH) on January 25, 2018. On January 30, 2018, the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology held a hearing to examine the legislation. The legislation would require the FCC, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to form a task force to evaluate the best ways to meet the broadband needs of precision agriculture in the United States. The task force would focus on identifying and measuring gaps in broadband coverage, and developing policy recommendations to promote rapid, expanded deployment of broadband in agricultural areas.

III. STAFF CONTACTS

If you have any questions regarding this hearing, please contact Lauren McCarty, Tim Kurth, or Robin Colwell of the Committee staff at (202) 225-2927.