

**Opening Statement of Chairman Walden
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
“Oversight of the Federal Communications Commission”
July 25, 2018**

Thank you, Madame Chair,

I want to thank you for your leadership on these topics. Specifically, I want to thank you for highlighting the improving emergency alert and 911 services as well as your outreach to the minority on the NTIA reauthorization. We’ve reauthorized the FCC for the first time in 28 years under the RAY BAUM’S Act, in fact, I think that’s the last time you were here to testify before us Mr. Chairman.

The commission’s efforts in wildfire and hurricane response, its focus on emergency alerts and implementing improved call routing, location accuracy, are key priorities for all of us. We reauthorized the FCC for the first time in two decades. We appreciated the commissions’ input on our work, and thanks to the hard work of everyone on the committee, we were able to incorporate provisions from 18 bipartisan bills that now form RAY BAUM’S Act. That is law. So, here we do try to work together whenever we can, on these issues -18 bipartisan bills, the RAY BAUM’S Act, and I think we did 57 bills on opioids- virtually all of which were bipartisan.

I look forward to hearing about the FCC’s progress in implementing this important law, such as the broadcast repack. The commission’s been very busy doing good work on the repack. We provided an extra billion dollars and fixed some of the issues that were there to make sure that translators and FM radio stations could get their antennas moved or

equipment moved so that we can free up that spectrum. I know that the commission under your leadership and others successfully pulled off the biggest reverse auction in history.

You brought to our attention, Mr. Chairman, the issue involving the illegality of the funds that came to the commission - you couldn't put them anywhere legally - even though your predecessor did, and so we fixed that. I think that was important to take care of. I want to thank you for coming out to my district last month, we traveled around, we saw health clinics and what telehealth means.

I want to commend the commission for the decision to lift the cap on the rural health telemedicine piece. That made a huge and positive difference for our rural clinics, when you added \$171 million over the \$400 million cap. You heard it firsthand when you were out there meeting with the clinic, and I appreciated the discussion that we had with the broadcasters, the small ISPs, and I think you got a taste for what the 7th or 8th largest congressional district in the country is even though we never got out of one county, but we were there all day.

Commissioner O'Rielly and I have recently had conversations about the uphill challenge facing our radio industry, which I have some experience. Radio, as you know, was my original story and my father's as well and I think it's a really important part of our country's framework and fabric of sharing information and entertainment.

That fraternity of voices is sharing in the same fate as newspapers, unfortunately, which never gained the benefits of cross ownership relief under the Commission for some fifteen years – entities captured once again by regulations from another time. We seem trapped in this

constant time warp that regulations of the 1970s, or the 1930s for that matter, somehow work for the present day or beyond. And some, obviously, wanted to take us back to the regime of the 1930s.

We'll discuss the changing media landscape today as well, another sector that 'edge providers' are disrupting, which is great news. It's yet another example of why I put the call out a year ago, and then a few months ago, inviting the CEOs of some of America's greatest innovative technology companies to please come here and share with us, before this committee, their concerns and recommendations on a wide range of topics.

The rhetoric around these issues have become like watching the opening of an old television show, waiting to get to the main programming. We sit here and listen to the same old falsehoods that we ripped away privacy and net neutrality protections, while the reality is, all we have done is restore a bipartisan equilibrium and regulatory framework that existed just three years ago.

Old "Mom and Pop" startups kind of found their way through a light-touch regulatory framework. We would now know those as, oh, Facebook, Google, Netflix -you name it - all grew up in a light touch framework, not with the 1930s way we regulated telephones.

In this committee room, we do have the benefit of hearing our critics speak out loud, though, unlike other corrosive voices that seek to destroy our daily discourse. As Chairman Pai knows all too well, be fearful if you are a conservative and let your views be known.

I'm sorry for what you and your family's gone through. Whether you're on the right or the left, somewhere here we have to get back our humanity where we're not shouting at each other and threatening each other, but instead trying to work out our differences. We do that a lot in this committee and we will continue to.

So, with that, Madame Chair, thank you for this hearing, and I yield back the balance of my time.