

Statement for the Record of Rep. Anna G. Eshoo
House Energy and Commerce Committee
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
“Solutions to Strengthen U.S. Public Safety Communications”
2322 Rayburn House Office Building
September 26th, 2018

Madame Chairwoman, thank you for holding this hearing today. It comes at a time when we recall the public safety lessons we learned when our country was attacked seventeen years ago. At the same time, in the midst of another hurricane season we are aware that we must be proactive to ensure the ongoing integrity of our public safety networks.

I believe the bills before the Committee today will bolster America’s public safety communications networks, and I’m proud to be an original cosponsor of two of them.

The ‘9-1-1 Fee Integrity Act’ ensures that states use 9-1-1 fees charged to consumers intended to improve 9-1-1 emergency communications systems for that purpose and that purpose only. Our 9-1-1 call centers are the first point of contact in emergency situations, but many of these call centers rely on technology that’s been in place since the time of the first 9-1-1 call 50 years ago. 9-1-1 fees collected by states should only be used to upgrade our 9-1-1 infrastructure, not diverted to the general coffers of state governments. It’s our responsibility to make sure our constituents’ dollars are being used as intended – especially when it comes to keeping them safe.

The second bill is the other side of the same public safety coin and I’m also pleased to partner with Representative Brooks as an original cosponsor of the ‘National Non-Emergency Number Act’. Often when drivers see a fellow traveler in need of assistance, or another issue of concern, they aren’t sure how to help, so they default to calling 911. This can have the unfortunate effect of diverting much-needed emergency resources to important but non-dire situations. This bill provides the dual benefit of streamlining travelers’ access to assistance when they need it, while allowing emergency workers to focus on urgent matters when lives are on the line, reducing traveler confusion and hastening response times across the board.

Thank you again for bringing these bipartisan bills before the Committee today. I encourage the Committee to continue moving this legislation forward in a timely manner because together, these bills can further our collective goal of more efficient, reliable, and cost-effective safety services for all Americans.