

Opening Statement of Republican Leader Bilirakis

**Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce hearing
entitled, “Investing in American Jobs: Legislation to Strengthen
Manufacturing and Competitiveness”**

October 14th, 2021

As Prepared For Delivery

Good morning everyone,

Thank you Madam Chair, for holding this legislative hearing and thank you to the witnesses for sharing your expertise today. There is a lot to cover with the four of you, so we appreciate your willingness to participate.

To begin, I want to commend my friend Chair Schakowsky for her leadership on the INFORM Consumers Act and working with me to reach a strong bipartisan agreement. This legislation will create a uniform national standard to provide consumers with clarity, transparency, and enhanced protections from malicious actors online who look to pawn stolen goods or sell dangerous counterfeits. The consensus we have reached amongst stakeholders will benefit not just our constituents so they are protected from counterfeit or stolen products, but will also serve the marketplaces and their sellers well as they do business in all fifty states with a single set of rules.

The world as we know changed drastically since the pandemic, and our reliance on e-commerce platforms has grown dramatically. That unfortunately means criminals are finding new ways to prey upon innocent consumers. That makes the INFORM Consumers Act a timely piece of legislation given the restrictions on visiting our favorite local retailers. This is a sound solution that

protects consumers online, while also protecting the private information of small online entrepreneurs who are looking to make a little extra money in this tough economy.

This Committee also comes together in the name of promoting the economic drivers that employ so many of our constituents in the tourism sector. I am glad to see the *Restoring Brand USA Act* on the docket today that I introduced with my friend Peter Welch, and I thank him for his support on this legislation. We worked closely to reauthorize this program last Congress, but no one could have foreseen that the matching fund requirement would create an impediment for companies trying to find an avenue back to normal from the COVID-19 pandemic. This legislation will release the dollars already collected for the Brand USA program to help return our travel and tourism industry back to its former glory.

As I mentioned during a hearing with Secretary Raimondo earlier this year, the COVID-19 pandemic has drastically impacted the travel and tourism industry, a market that has contributed billions of dollars to local economies and created countless American jobs. This was an easy bipartisan win for our Committee last Congress, so there is no reason we cannot get this bill across the finish line again this year. [Madam Chair, I also ask for unanimous consent to enter into the record a letter of support from the US Travel Association for the Brand USA program].

Given the title and purpose of this hearing, I would be remised if I didn't highlight three bills introduced by my colleagues that would improve American competitiveness in emerging technologies, remove barriers prohibiting the

growth and creation of American jobs, and incentivize investment into American companies. The Advancing Tech Startups Act lead by Representatives Johnson, Rush, and Phillips, the Advancing Gig Economy Act by Representative Joyce, and the Global Investment in American Jobs Act of 2021 led by Representatives Pence and Rush, are three bills that promote American leadership in emerging technologies and investment into new jobs and companies.

I look forward to the discussion today so we can move to a markup, and as we review the docket I encourage everyone to think about how we need to be thoughtful and purposeful in how we legislate, especially when it comes to the use of American taxpayer dollars and the future prosperity of our country. I am hopeful we will continue with a regular order process on these bills so we can put them through the kind of scrutiny and improvement this Committee has demonstrated in the past.

Thank you again Madam Chair and I yield back.