

The National Suicide Hotline Designation Act is a necessary step in reducing suicide in the United States and will ultimately save lives.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act, which I have led in the House with my colleagues Congressmen CHRIS STEWART, SETH MOULTON, and GREG GIANFORTE. I am so pleased that we are considering this critical legislation on the floor today, in honor of September as Suicide Prevention Month.

As a former chief psychiatric nurse, I have spent my legislative career advocating for more accessible mental health resources in our communities, especially considering the significant needs in these difficult times. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that in late June, 40 percent of American adults struggled with mental health or substance abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, it reported that communities of color, essential workers, younger adults, and unpaid caregivers had disproportionately worse mental health outcomes and elevated suicidal ideation.

This is exactly why I am determined to pass this bill, as it directs the Federal Communications Commission to designate 9-8-8 for the national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system. It also provides the necessary state funding guidance, federal reporting, and specialized service training to effectively implement the new dialing code. This three-digit phone number—instead of a full ten-digit number—is much easier to remember, especially when you or a loved one are in a crisis and in need of help. As such, this redesigned and upgraded suicide prevention lifeline will save lives.

As the country's mental health and suicide crises have worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress has an urgent responsibility to fulfill the promise of 9-8-8 and develop a modern mental health and suicide prevention crisis hotline system. I am especially proud of the efforts in this legislation to support communities at higher risk of suicide, including veterans and LGBTQ youth. This new system will include the Veterans Crisis Line to specifically support veterans seeking mental health support. The bill also authorizes states to collect a fee designated solely to supporting local crisis call centers affiliated within the national network, which includes the Suicide and Crisis Center of North Texas in my district. This provision will ensure that the local call centers experiencing increased call volume due to the more accessible dialing code will have the financial resources needed to expand their operations and serve all who are seeking help.

We must not allow the tragedies of this coronavirus to be compounded by preventable losses of life due to mental health distress. As a former mental health professional, I am proud to support the passage of the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act, and I thank my colleagues for their collaboration on such a critical and timely effort. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill.

□ 1715

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from California (Mr. MCNERNEY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 2661.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DIRECTING FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION TO ISSUE REPORTS AFTER ACTIVATION OF DISASTER INFORMATION REPORTING SYSTEM

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5918) to direct the Federal Communications Commission to issue reports after activation of the Disaster Information Reporting System and to make improvements to network outage reporting, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5918

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. REPORTS AFTER ACTIVATION OF DISASTER INFORMATION REPORTING SYSTEM; IMPROVEMENTS TO NETWORK OUTAGE REPORTING.

(a) REPORTS AFTER ACTIVATION OF DISASTER INFORMATION REPORTING SYSTEM.—

(1) PRELIMINARY REPORT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 6 weeks after the deactivation of the Disaster Information Reporting System with respect to an event for which the System was activated for at least 7 days, the Commission shall issue a preliminary report on, with respect to such event and to the extent known—

(i) the number and duration of any outages of—

(I) broadband internet access service;

(II) interconnected VoIP service;

(III) commercial mobile service; and

(IV) commercial mobile data service;

(ii) the approximate number of users or the amount of communications infrastructure potentially affected by an outage described in clause (i);

(iii) the number and duration of any outages at public safety answering points that prevent public safety answering points from receiving emergency calls and routing such calls to emergency service personnel; and

(iv) any additional information determined appropriate by the Commission.

(B) DEVELOPMENT OF REPORT.—The Commission shall develop the report required by subparagraph (A) using information collected by the Commission, including information collected by the Commission through the System.

(2) PUBLIC FIELD HEARINGS.—

(A) REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 8 months after the deactivation of the Disaster Information Reporting System with respect to an event for which the System was activated for at least 7 days, the Commission shall hold at least 1 public field hearing in the area affected by such event.

(B) INCLUSION OF CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS IN HEARINGS.—For each public field hearing held under subparagraph (A), the Commission shall consider including—

(i) representatives of State government, local government, or Indian Tribal governments in areas affected by such event;

(ii) residents of the areas affected by such event, or consumer advocates;

(iii) providers of communications services affected by such event;

(iv) faculty of institutions of higher education;

(v) representatives of other Federal agencies;

(vi) electric utility providers;

(vii) communications infrastructure companies; and

(viii) first responders, emergency managers, or 9-1-1 directors in areas affected by such event.

(3) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 12 months after the deactivation of the Disaster Information Reporting System with respect to an event for which the System was activated for at least 7 days, the Commission shall issue a final report that includes, with respect to such event—

(A) the information described under paragraph (1)(A); and

(B) any recommendations of the Commission on how to improve the resiliency of affected communications or networks recovery efforts.

(4) DEVELOPMENT OF REPORTS.—In developing a report required under this subsection, the Commission shall consider information collected by the Commission, including information collected by the Commission through the System, and any public hearing described in paragraph (2) with respect to the applicable event.

(5) PUBLICATION.—The Commission shall publish each report, excluding information that is otherwise exempt from public disclosure under the rules of the Commission, issued under this subsection on the website of the Commission upon the issuance of such report.

(b) IMPROVEMENTS TO NETWORK OUTAGE REPORTING.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commission shall conduct a proceeding and, after public notice and an opportunity for comment, adopt rules to—

(1) determine the circumstances under which to require service providers subject to the 9-1-1 regulations established under part 9 of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations, to submit a timely notification, (in an easily accessible format that facilitates situational awareness) to public safety answering points regarding communications service disruptions within the assigned territories of such public safety answering points that prevent—

(A) the origination of 9-1-1 calls;

(B) the delivery of Automatic Location Information; or

(C) Automatic Number Identification;

(2) require such notifications to be made; and

(3) specify the appropriate timing of such notification.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) AUTOMATIC LOCATION INFORMATION; AUTOMATIC NUMBER IDENTIFICATION.—The terms “Automatic Location Information” and “Automatic Number Identification” have the meaning given those terms in section 9.3 of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor regulation.

(2) BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS SERVICE.—The term “broadband internet access service” has the meaning given such term in section 8.1(b) of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor regulation.

(3) COMMERCIAL MOBILE SERVICE.—The term “commercial mobile service” has the meaning given such term in section 332(d) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 332(d)).

(4) COMMERCIAL MOBILE DATA SERVICE.—The term “commercial mobile data service” has the meaning given such term in section 6001 of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (47 U.S.C. 1401).

(5) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission” means the Federal Communications Commission.

(6) INDIAN TRIBAL GOVERNMENT; LOCAL GOVERNMENT.—The terms “Indian Tribal government” and “Indian Tribal Government” have the meaning given those terms in section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121).

(7) INTERCONNECTED VOIP SERVICE.—The term “interconnected VoIP service” has the meaning given such term in section 3 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 153).

(8) *PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT.*—The term “public safety answering point” has the meaning given such term in section 222 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 222).

(9) *STATE.*—The term “State” has the meaning given such term in section 3 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 153).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. McNERNEY) and the gentleman from Montana (Mr. GIANFORTE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. McNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 5918.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. McNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of H.R. 5918.

In times of crisis, Americans rely on communications systems to stay informed, check on loved ones, and access emergency assistance. As the agency in charge of overseeing our Nation’s communications systems, it is the responsibility of the FCC, the Federal Communications Commission, to ensure that Americans stay connected when it matters most and that the communications providers are prepared for whatever disasters may come their way.

Keeping networks online through the course of a hurricane or a wildfire is a difficult task, but the fact of the matter is network outages occur far too frequently. That reality is due in large part to climate change. According to the National Climate Assessment, the recent trends of increasingly severe storms and disasters are only expected to continue.

While we are not here asking the FCC or even the communications providers to solve the problem of climate change, we do expect them, as stewards of our communications systems and networks, to adapt with the times. To make progress in this regard we need to start with data.

The Disaster Information Reporting System, or DIRS, was launched by the FCC in 2007 so that communications providers could report the status of communications systems during disasters. In some cases, DIRS is activated in advance of a potential storm or as a precautionary measure.

In more extreme cases, DIRS is activated in the lead-up to a disaster and stays active for days on end. That is because a network can go on and offline even after a storm’s end. It is usually a sign that the event is so severe that it knocks out commercial power, takes down lines and poles, or some combination of the two.

Those are the storms that are expected to continue and grow with each

year, and that is why this bill comes at a crucial time. Under this bill, the FCC would be required to conduct a deep and thorough analysis of any disaster or event for which DIRS is activated by the FCC and stays active for a minimum of 7 days.

First, the FCC would be required to issue a preliminary report within 6 weeks after the date DIRS is deactivated. This report would include detailed information about the number of outages, whether communications infrastructure was affected, and how many 911 centers were affected by service outages.

This bill would then require the FCC to hold a field hearing no later than 8 months after the Commission deactivates DIRS. By requiring the FCC to get out of Washington and see and hear real stories on the ground, the FCC will get an opportunity to examine these events, the outages they cause, and how we can prevent them from happening in the future.

Last week, the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology held a productive and informative FCC oversight hearing. At the hearing, Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel stressed to the committee that we need to update our playbook for communications in disasters. She is right, and this bill is how we move forward to get that goal.

We rely on our devices, and we count on having a signal or connection in our time of need. In fact, right now in California, folks are using their devices to track fast-moving wildfires, ready to drop everything and evacuate if there is an unexpected shift in the fire’s path.

In our world today, connectivity is not a luxury; it is essential to ensuring our collective safety. Often it can make a difference between life and death.

I commend Representative DORIS MATSUI for her leadership on this bill, especially as her constituents and mine all across California continue to grapple with these fires.

I also want to thank Ranking Member WALDEN and subcommittee Ranking Member LATTI for working with us to move this bill through the Energy and Commerce Committee on a bipartisan basis. And, of course, I would like to thank Communications and Technology Subcommittee Chairman MIKE DOYLE and full committee Chairman FRANK PALLONE for their leadership in getting us all there.

This is a good bill that will help us make our communications systems more resilient in the future. I look forward to its consideration by the Senate and the President.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5918, the Emergency Reporting Act, which was introduced by Rep-

resentatives MATSUI, ESHOO, THOMPSON, and HUFFMAN.

Today’s legislation will allow 911 centers across the country to have access to confidential information on potential 911 outages, subject to appropriate safeguards.

In times of disaster, 911 public safety answering points do not always know that 911 calls may not be going through. The FCC currently collects information on the status of communications infrastructure and communications network outage information. They make that information available to the Department of Homeland Security to coordinate overall emergency response efforts within a State between State and local first responders.

Given the sensitive nature of this data to both national security and commercial competitiveness, this information is confidential. However, as first responders work to ensure the 911 system can seamlessly get back online and route calls to neighboring call centers, access to this confidential information is important.

This bill would help make timely outage information available to help first responders on the ground restore service as quickly as possible. The bill also requires the FCC to hold a field hearing in areas in which the Commission’s Disaster Information Reporting System was activated for 7 or more days and to provide an initial and final report on the status of communications networks.

The FCC only activates the DIRS system for significant natural disasters, such as Hurricane Sally or the wildfires out West. The bill limits these types of reports to only areas where damage was significant and sustained.

This is an important bill to the resiliency of our public safety networks, and I urge my colleagues to support the measure.

Mr. Speaker, I reiterate my support for this bill. I urge adoption, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. McNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, as California has grappled with devastating wildfires, we must do everything possible to help them stay connected during these events, when connectivity can mean the difference between life and death.

H.R. 5918 is a critical part of this effort. I urge my colleagues to support it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5918, the Emergency Reporting Act.

The human impacts of natural disasters are worsened when our communications infrastructure is not resilient, and this is an issue Californians know all too well.

On October 28, 2019, 874 cell towers were out in California, caused by wildfires and power shutoffs. My constituents were worried they wouldn’t be able to call 9–1–1 during emergencies, receive emergency alerts, download evacuation maps, or check-in on loved ones. This horrific situation led my good friend, Congresswoman MATSUI, and me to work on this legislation.

H.R. 5918, the Emergency Reporting Act, requires the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to hold field hearings after disasters, issue preliminary and final reports about each disaster, and ensure 9–1–1 centers know when outages will impact calls they may receive.

Wildfires are becoming more intense and more frequent because of climate change, and this wildfire season is now a historic one, with the expected peak of the season yet to occur. Over a month ago a siege of lightning strikes ignited the CZU Lightning Complex fire in my congressional district, and it is now the tenth most destructive wildfire in California's history. The fire has destroyed nearly a thousand homes in my district and forced 77,000 of my constituents to evacuate.

Last year, I asked FCC Chairman Ajit Pai to visit California and hold a field hearing following the fires and associated power shutoffs in California, and many of my colleagues from California did the same. The Chairman agreed to do so at the request of Republican Leader KEVIN MCCARTHY. While Chairman Pai never visited California, learning about communications outages shouldn't be a matter of political pressure. At a Hearing of the House Subcommittee on Communications and Technology on September 17, 2020, I reissued my request of Chairman Pai to visit California and hear directly from the people impacted by the wildfires.

We need to learn from every disaster, especially by listening to and learning from local public safety leaders, municipal, county, and state officials, and members of the communities impacted. This should be required.

H.R. 5918 is critical legislation for Californians impacted by wildfires. It will also help those on the Gulf Coast victimized by hurricanes, Midwesterners who've had their communities destroyed by tornadoes, and those in the Northeast who have experienced far too many superstorms.

The Emergency Reporting Act is important legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. MCNERNEY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5918, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MEASURING THE ECONOMICS DRIVING INVESTMENTS AND ACCESS FOR DIVERSITY ACT OF 2020

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5567) to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to require the Federal Communications Commission to consider market entry barriers for socially disadvantaged individuals in the communications marketplace report under section 13 of such Act.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5567

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Measuring the Economics Driving Investments and Access for Diversity Act of 2020” or the “MEDIA Diversity Act of 2020”.

SEC. 2. CONSIDERING MARKET ENTRY BARRIERS FOR SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED INDIVIDUALS.

Section 13(d) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 163(d)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(4) CONSIDERING SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED INDIVIDUALS.—In assessing the state of competition under subsection (b)(1) and regulatory barriers under subsection (b)(3), the Commission, with the input of the Office of Communications Business Opportunities of the Commission, shall consider market entry barriers for socially disadvantaged individuals in the communications marketplace in accordance with the national policy under section 257(b).”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. MCNERNEY) and the gentleman from Montana (Mr. GIANFORTE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 5567.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5567, the Measuring the Economics Driving Investments and Access for Diversity Act of 2020, or, simply, the MEDIA Diversity Act of 2020.

This bill promotes much-needed diversity in the communications marketplace, and I commend Representatives VEASEY and LONG and their staffs for all their efforts towards this bipartisan bill.

I also, of course, want to thank Communications and Technology Subcommittee Chairman MIKE DOYLE, full committee Chairman PALLONE, Ranking Member WALDEN, and Ranking Member LATTA for their work in bringing this bipartisan legislation to the floor.

This bill requires the FCC to consider, with the input of its Office of Communications Business Opportunities, market entry barriers for socially disadvantaged individuals in the communications marketplace.

When Representatives LONG and VEASEY first introduced this bill in January of this year, it was, of course, a different time. The murder of George Floyd has since led to protests across the country, highlighting decades of racial inequalities.

Those inequalities exist in our communications marketplace. For exam-

ple, the owners of broadcast and cable media outlets do not reflect our diverse population. These media outlets can influence people's opinions and perceptions through educational, political, entertainment, and news programming.

Diversity in ownership of media outlets helps to ensure that programming offers different perspectives and that viewers have access to programming that is relevant to them.

Experts have also found that ownership diversity can provide financial and competitive benefits. But in a concentrated communications marketplace, barriers for entry still exist, and the Federal Communications Commission is already tasked with studying what those barriers are. This bill simply asks the FCC to also consider market entry barriers for socially disadvantaged individuals.

Creating ownership parity to reflect the country's diversity is a worthy goal, and this bipartisan effort is just a small step that can have a genuine impact in identifying market entry barriers.

To be clear, there is so much more that we need to do, and the Energy and Commerce Committee, 2 weeks ago, reported out two additional bills that also take important steps to diversify our media market, one of which my Republican colleagues unfortunately objected to.

I would call on my Republican colleagues to support those measures as well when they come to the floor. This is no time to say that our work is done. We must recognize that Americans need transformative change to meet this moment.

While incremental steps are crucial, we must do more. These additional measures that were just reported by the committee, like this one, are modest changes that will help begin the task of comprehensive reform.

I am proud of the good work done by the members of the committee, and I am proud of this bill. I hope we can come together as a committee and as a Congress and do the additional work that is needed.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support the MEDIA Diversity Act of 2020, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1730

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5567, the MEDIA Diversity Act, introduced by my friend from Missouri, Representative LONG.

This legislation represents another step forward to uplift minority voices and promote media diversity. I understand how important it is to serve communities with local programming that accurately reflects a community's population.

I have also seen the media industry make great strides to promote diversity and create new content to appeal