

MEMBER DAY

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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CONTACT NUMBER: 202-225-5074

ROBERT EDMONSON, Minority Staff Director
CONTACT NUMBER: 202-225-5051

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The document listed above is available at: docs.house.gov.

MEMBER DAY

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2025

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
Washington, D.C.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:03 a.m., in HVC-210, U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, Hon. James Comer [Chairman of the Committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Comer, Gill, Garcia, and Tlaib.

Also present: Representatives Taylor, McCormick, and Foster.

Chairman COMER. All right. The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform will come to order. I want to welcome everyone here this morning.

Without objection, the Chair may declare a recess at any time.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN JAMES COMER REPRESENTATIVE FROM KENTUCKY

Pursuant to Section 3(r) of House Resolution 5, the Committee convenes this Member Day hearing of the 119th Congress. A Member Day hearing provides Members an opportunity to discuss legislation and Member priorities within the jurisdiction of the Oversight Committee. Today, I look forward to hearing from Members of the House, my colleagues, on the proposals they wish to bring before the consideration of this Committee. We have circulated a list of Members who will be speaking today, and any testimony provided by those Members will be added to the official record. Each Member will be given 5 minutes to discuss their proposals and field questions as needed.

I now recognize Representative Rashida Tlaib from Michigan.

STATEMENT OF HON. RASHIDA TLAIB REPRESENTATIVE FROM MICHIGAN

Ms. TLAIB. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity.

As you know, the Committee on House Oversight and Government Reform must do everything in its power to protect the lives and safety of Federal workers, and conduct investigations and adopt changes when current agency practices are failing to keep our workers safe.

I want to talk about Nicholas John Acker. He was a USPS Detroit Network Distribution Center worker, Allen Park, Michigan, and it was a tragic workplace accident. And, again, we do not

know, but we know it is heartbreaking and it is something that we believe is preventable. His body, Mr. Chair, trapped in a mail handling machine, and he had been dead for six to eight hours before he was found. He checked in at 11 a.m., and his body was not discovered until the following day at 12:30. His death is an unspeakable tragedy for his family, who his mother tearing up and just demanding, looking me in my eyes and said, "Please, please, find out what happened to my son." His fiancée, they had just gotten engaged, Mr. Speaker [sic], ten days before he was killed.

What is so heartbreaking and tragic about his death, too, is the fact that he served in our military, U.S. Air Force, for nine years. He was not killed serving there. He was killed being a U.S. postal worker. His death, again, is heartbreaking, and what we do know from his union is that there were previously raised concerns about safety measures and procedures at this facility and had recently filed a grievance about 90 days prior to his death. The grievance stated that the management was pressuring staff to look for letters while the handling machine was operating. Over a month after his death, more questions, again, remain unanswered.

[Photo]

Nicholas was someone's son, Mr. Speaker [sic]. Look how young he was. He was a brother, and he was a fiancé. Again, he was engaged only ten days before he was killed. They were planning to get married in the spring. Again, Nicholas served nine years in our U.S. Air Force. He was generous. He was a thoughtful person. He did not, again, die serving in our military, but here at home at a sorting facility at a U.S. Postal Service location in Allen Park. Shortly after his death, Representative Debbie Dingell and I wrote a letter to the Postmaster General demanding answers, and thus far, we have not received any responses. Please Mr. Chair, work with my team and I. If it is legislation that we need to do to make sure this is preventable in future, let us do that, but we cannot allow, again, this to happen.

Also, in the Committee, we know that we oversee a lot of important initiatives that impact prescription drugs, and so another matter, of course, and I know, Mr. Chair, you have been leading on this effort. I do want to enter into the record, if I may, a letter from Covenant Community Care. It is a federally qualified health center.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. TLAI. So, describing, again, their concerns with 340B. Mr. Chair, right now, Affiliated Pharmacies and Apothecaries, which presents more than 500 independent pharmacies across the country, including 150 pharmacies in my district, are literally demanding that we do something about the Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs), the actual cost of medication they dispense, again, driving the costs, many of them having to shut their doors. And these independent pharmacies, as you know, Mr. Chair, are anchors in our community. They are trusted by many of our residents that, again, are experiencing some of the worst health challenges from cancer and so many other diseases. Pharmacy deserts are growing, as we know, because of this, and patients are left without any options. So, again, community pharmacies are facing unsustainable losses, and we need to do more about it. We know that PBMs, and I like to name them because it is important, but CVS Caremark, Express

Scripts, and Optum Rx are reporting record profits because, again, they lack the transparency and accountability that is necessary.

I hear about these harmful practices almost monthly from different independent pharmacies that continue, again, to have these challenges. Mr. Chair, from one pharmacy in Jordan, the pharmacist explained to me how he can see a \$60,000 to \$80,000 loss in a month, and again, it is not sustainable. It is also a pharmacy that has been part of the community for so long, so, again, community health centers also being impacted. But one of the things they continue to tell me is that, as a result, PBMs are trying to make medical and financial decisions on behalf of providers and the patients, and that is unchecked power. It should stay, again, with the person providing the care. So, Congress and this Committee, we need to act now. It is something that, again, both, I think, sides of the aisle have come and understand that, again, action needs to take place. So, the Pharmacists Fight Back Act, let us get that through this Committee, and let us work, again, incredibly hard to make prescription drugs much more affordable and protect our independent pharmacies.

With that Mr. Chair, I yield.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back, and thank you for bringing this to the Committee, the postal issue. My sincerest condolences to this family after such a horrific incident. We have been working with the Postal Service. Your staff and our staff have been communicating. We are trying to learn more about this and how to ensure that it will never happen again. I pledge to work with you and our staffs will continue to work to try to figure out what we can do to prevent this and see if we get any answers as to how it happened. So, thank you for bringing this to the attention, and, again, this is a terrible thing, and we will work together to find some resolution on it. You have my promise to that.

And secondly, as you know, I am a co-sponsor of the Pharmacists Fight Back Act with you. This is something that is a huge priority for me. We have had three good bipartisan investigative hearings and published a very substantive report on the abuses of the PBM from this Committee. So, I want to see legislation and more than self-governing oversight from the PBMs, who I do not trust, so I pledge to work with you to try to get the support to get this to not only pass the House, but pass the Senate and become law. So, I am with you on both issues and appreciate you coming here.

Do any other Members wish to speak or ask questions to Ms. Tlaib?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. All right. Thank you. I now recognize Representative David Taylor from Ohio.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DAVID J. TAYLOR
REPRESENTATIVE FROM OHIO**

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you, Chairman Comer and Ranking Member Garcia, for giving me this opportunity to speak here today, and thank you for the very hard work this Committee does. I represent a very rural Appalachian district in Southern Ohio, and I am here today to talk about two issues that directly impact many through-

out rural America: combating the fentanyl epidemic and out-of-control Federal regulations.

As you know, fentanyl is an extremely deadly substance that affects all our districts. While I applaud the Trump Administration's diligent work to secure our Southern border, Congress needs to pass legislation to protect our communities from illicit fentanyl that has already entered our country. Thankfully, there are programs, such as the National High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program, or HIDTA, that assist Federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies operating critical drug trafficking regions across the United States. With 33 HIDTA programs spanning across all 50 states, this program works with communities to dismantle and disrupt drug trafficking organizations, saving countless lives across the United States.

Last year alone, thanks to the hard work of our law enforcement officers and the training provided, the HIDTA program seized over 7,000 kilograms of fentanyl. That amount of fentanyl could potentially kill 3.5 billion people, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). The district I represent has been ground zero for the fentanyl epidemic, and this needs to change. With two HIDTA-designated counties in my district, I was proud to introduce the Fight Fentanyl Act to reauthorize to provide additional resources to the HIDTA program. This bill would not only better equip our law enforcement officers with the tools they need to seize more illicit drugs, but it will also help keep our country and communities safe. Additionally, my bill also allows the Attorney General to allocate additional resources to investigate and take drug traffickers and dealers to trial to remove these destructive criminals from our communities.

I want to thank our law enforcement officers who risk their lives every day for their work to combat fentanyl, and our HIDTA officers for the training and the work they do to keep our communities safe. I also want to thank Congressman Levin for co-leading the Fight Fentanyl Act with me, and I would love to work with you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, to provide our HIDTA program and law enforcement officers with the tools they need to keep our community safe. I appreciate your consideration of that issue.

The other issue I came here to speak about and I hear about from people across Southern Ohio is the overwhelming amount of Federal regulations that hurt businesses, farmers, and increase the cost of living for all of us. In my district, ridiculous regulations led to the closing of several critical businesses, including the coal plants, which provided affordable electricity to an entire region. As a small business owner myself, I know firsthand the impact that burdensome regulations can have on an economy. That is exactly why the first bill I introduced in Congress was the Regulation Decimation Act. This bill, which codifies an executive order from President Trump, would simply require agencies to find ten regulations to repeal for every new one promulgated.

The harsh reality is that no one even knows how many Federal regulations there are. The best guess we have to go off of is the number of pages in the Code of Federal Regulations, which had roughly 23,000 pages in 1960 but is now up to nearly 200,000, which is approximately a 769-percent increase. This is largely re-

flective of Congress slowly giving away all of its authority to unelected bureaucrats within Federal agencies, and we saw the impact of this during the Biden Administration with their de facto electric vehicle mandate and the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) Rule, which sought to punish nearly every business and farmer in the country. This needs to change. We cannot continue allowing such important decisions to be made by those who can never be held accountable. I applaud President Trump and his ten-to-one deregulatory agenda, and I am happy the Supreme Court struck down the Chevron deference, but Congress needs to act.

Mr. Chairman, I am happy to collaborate with you on the best ways to cut regulations and restore responsibility to Congress to fulfill its constitutionally mandated duties. I appreciate you letting me share my perspective today, and I am looking forward to working with you on my bill and this issue. Thank you guys, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Thank you for your testimony today, and I was proud to sponsor the reauthorization of the Office of National Drug Control Policy last Congress, which passed the House in a bipartisan manner. It went to the Senate, and my junior senator from Kentucky held it up in the end and it did not become law, even though I think there was overwhelming support in the Senate. So, that may be someone you need to talk to about that, and that is where the HIDTA funding comes through, the Office of National Drug Control Policy. So, it is a big issue in my district. My law enforcement officers support that as well, so we will work with you to try to get that funded, but I think the problem is in the Senate with that, so.

So, do any other Members seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none, thank you Representative Taylor. I now recognize Representative McCormick from Georgia.

**STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD MCCORMICK
REPRESENTATIVE FROM GEORGIA**

Mr. MCCORMICK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Ranking Member, for having me here today. This is an issue near and dear to my heart, something I have come to your office for.

Chairman COMER. Yes.

Mr. MCCORMICK. And I am happy to come to the Democrats for the same reason. I think this could be a bipartisan solution. We know what the problem is. Everybody is now recognizing that paying \$1 trillion of interest payment on basically \$38 trillion of debt is unsustainable. As we continue to be downgraded as a currency, we are going to end up being at about \$2 trillion, especially when we see Medicare and Social Security, objectively, predictably becoming bankrupt probably in the next presidency. This is an unfortunate byproduct of not having the foresight to do something different than we normally do. My bill is very simple. We know that we have had almost a 52-percent increase in Federal spending just since 2019. We know that during that period, we have also had about an 86-percent increase in deficit spending. We cannot continue doing this. My bill is very succinct, very simple. As a matter

of fact, it has been reviewed by leadership as saying this sounds too good to be true, that why haven't we done this sooner?

Typically, in a budget, and I came up with this idea about 30 years ago when I was a logistics officer for my squadron and realized at the end of my year, when I have ten percent in reserve for my emergency spending, that all of a sudden I have to spend a bunch of money. And we see this in the military, but also through every bureaucracy in America where, if we do not spend it, we lose it. Somebody else spends it anyways, and they will actually reduce your budget because you obviously did not need it. So, we all got in the habit of doing something we know is wrong, we know is wasteful, and we know is built in by the American Government to be wrong: we are spending money we do not need to spend.

My bill says instead of use it or lose it, which is what we have now—a stick to do the wrong thing—instead, whatever you do not spend for that year, 49 percent of that goes back toward debt and deficit. Not to the Speaker, not to the President, not to hire headquarters—debt and deficit, a real problem. Forty-nine percent rolls forward to the next fiscal year. So, instead of being penalized with a smaller budget, you actually get a larger budget. And then two percent goes back to reward the people who are being effective and efficient in that department with bonuses up to ten percent of their salary as retention. It is three carrots to do the right thing instead of two sticks to do the wrong thing.

I think this should be bipartisan—gentlemen, bipartisan—that we can actually say this is entirely voluntary and non-punitive. There is no downside for it. There is no way the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) can score it wrong. I am a big critic of the CBO. How could you do anything other than save money on a voluntary basis? It gives you an option to not be penalized, but to be rewarded for saving the American taxpayer money, to save our children money on interest payments. Why wouldn't we do something so common sense? Why wouldn't this be bipartisan? Why wouldn't this be a good solution? Can we not reinvent the way we look at government?

I hope that everybody in both sides of the House can actually get it behind this bill. It is called the Incentivize Savings Act. I think it is going to be great for America. It is going to be great in the way we approach government. I think it will be great for approaching debt and deficit and responsible thinking without having a DOGE stepping in and making the decision for you. You are in charge of your own self-determination of your department and what you save money on, and you get rewarded for doing the right thing. Please, I encourage you to all sign on to the Incentivize Savings Act. It is the right thing to do, it is common sense, and I know it sounds too good to be true, but it is not.

My second piece of legislation, H.R. 6211, the Medical Professional Access Act, which just simply allows people during times of emergency, whether it be something catastrophic, a hurricane or whatever, when you cross boundaries and state lines—I am a physician—and you have credentialing issues between states because that is what we do, but they are not that much different from each other. And in times of emergency where there is need, it is, basically, a Good Samaritan law that says we do not have to go

through another credentialing process, that you are allowed to practice there during that emergent time. If there is a declaration of emergency by that Governor or by the President, you are allowed to practice there without consequences, without review, because we do not have time. This is just a commonsense approach to solving a very real problem when you need people to help others in the healthcare industry during an emergency.

I highly encourage you also to sign on to H.R. 6211 in order to help people in times of emergency. And with that, gentlemen, I yield

Chairman COMER. Thank you, again, for coming by the office and explaining that. That sounds like common sense to me, and we appreciate it and look forward to working with you in the next year. Does any other Member seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. All right. We will suspend momentarily as we move to the second panel.

[Pause.]

Chairman COMER. All right. We will now move to Panel Two. Mr. Mfume may be en route. When he gets here, we will let him participate, but I now recognize Representative Bill Foster from Illinois.

**STATEMENT OF HON. BILL FOSTER
REPRESENTATIVE FROM ILLINOIS**

Mr. FOSTER. Thank you, Chairman Comer, Ranking Member Garcia, and Members of the Committee. I am here today to request your support for H.R. 6571, the Responsible and Ethical AI Labeling Act—the REAL Act—which will require government agencies and officers to include a disclaimer on public-facing communications that are created or generated with artificial intelligence. I am happy to introduce the commonsense bipartisan bill with the support of your Chairman of Government Operations Subcommittee, Congressman Pete Sessions of Texas. I want to start by thanking Congressman Sessions for his partnership on this important bill to strengthen trust and accountability in government communications.

In short, the REAL Act would require Federal agencies and officers, from junior level staff to the very top, to clearly label any official content distributed through official channels that has been generated or manipulated using generative artificial intelligence. Specifically, it would require Federal agencies and officers to label AI-generated images, audio, videos, and any AI generated texts that is not reviewed by a human prior to publication. The Office of Management and Budget would be tasked with developing uniform rules for labeling AI content across the agencies to ensure that labels are clear, prominently displayed, written in plain language, easily understandable to the public. Each label would clearly inform the reader that content was manipulated with AI and include a brief description of how the content was changed and which tools were used.

This bill includes certain exemptions that are meant to protect the internal use of low-impact AI tools by Federal agencies and to protect personal communications of Federal officers that are unre-

lated to their official responsibilities. First, agencies will not be required to label AI content that is circulated internally and not intended for public release. Second, content that is created for classified purposes will not require labeling. However, agencies will be required to label classified content for any unclassified release of that content. Third, the bill exempts basic graphics and visual elements, such as text overlay or formatting, and minor visual adjustments, such as brightness or cropping, if those adjustments do not materially alter the meaning or context of the underlying content. Fourth, the use of certain text drafting tools is exempt as long as the content is reviewed for accuracy and by human agency staff prior to publication. This exemption is meant to preserve internal use of AI by agencies while ensuring a robust review of AI content and requiring labeling for automated messaging systems, like chatbots.

Importantly, this bill does not apply to any of the bill's requirements for public-facing content that is not related to official duties of a Federal officer, as long as it is published using a personal, non-government social media account or other unofficial medium. This bill includes clear guidelines to correct communications that fail to include the appropriate disclaimer. If an agency determines or is found to have issued a communication in violation of this act, that agency will be required to retract the communication and publish a corrected version of the communication on their website and, to the extent possible, to the same audience that received the initial communication. This bill also includes appropriate penalties for noncompliance by agencies and contractors, including the adoption of remediation plans or potential oversight by the GAO.

In an age of disinformation, Americans should be able to trust that information coming from official government sources is legitimate and based on reality. With rapid proliferation of AI-generated content, there must be clear guidelines to ensure that our Federal agencies are not using AI in a way that could purposefully or inadvertently mislead the American public. This legislation is about ensuring transparency and trust in Federal communications. The REAL Act does not prohibit the use of AI or the distribution of AI content. It simply requires official channels to clearly indicate whether the content being shared has been created or altered using AI.

Well, thank you for holding this Member Day hearing, and I thank, again, Congressman Sessions for co-leading this effort. I encourage all Members of this Committee to support and advance the REAL Act to ensure that AI tools are responsibly used in government communications. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Thank you. Huge issue, and we certainly look forward to working with you in the future on this issue.

Any other Members seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. All right. Well, thank you very much.

Mr. FOSTER. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. That concludes our Member Day. In closing, I want to thank the Members for their testimony. Would you like to add anything?

Mr. GARCIA. No, I am good.

Chairman COMER. With that, and without objection, all Members have five legislative days within which to submit additional testimony.

If there is no further business, without objection, the Committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 9:28 a.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

