

Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers on my side, so I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, this bill is an important step toward modernizing the Federal Communications Commission. The FCC has served Americans since 1934, and over the past more than 80 years, this agency has been responsible for overseeing the evolving telecommunications sector, with collecting information and analyzing the state of competition, and the impact of these changes on consumers.

As society has moved from one technology to the next, the FCC has been asked to keep up with the changing technologies, and Congress has directed the Commission with reviewing data and reporting on everything from the telegraph, as Mr. SCALISE has indicated, and the AM radio to online video distributions like Hulu and Netflix. This bill will eliminate reports that are no longer necessary and waste time and resources on issues that are no longer critical to consumers.

The bill also recognizes that technology continues to progress and consumers are no longer served by separate voice, data, or video networks. Rather, providers are leveraging the same IP network to provide multiple services over the same network. Providers that were solely video providers now offer voice and data. Companies that thought of themselves as telephone providers are also offering video and broadband services. The game has changed, and we believe that the FCC should change its reporting to reflect the new reality.

This bill consolidates multiple annual or biennial reports that require the agency to evaluate competition in different sectors. We will no longer require a separate mobile wireless or a separate video competition report. Rather, the bill requires the Commission to evaluate the state of competition across multiple tech industries in a single biennial report on competition in the communications marketplace. Our policymakers should be looking at the world as it is, not the world that once existed.

I thank the majority whip for his leadership in sponsoring this bill. He has always shown a keen interest in modernizing the communications marketplace, and I welcome his continued engagement over the 115th Congress, where he serves with such distinction as our whip.

I also thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO), the former ranking member, for her work in ensuring that this bill is bipartisan in nature and is successful. I certainly thank Mr. DOYLE for his leadership as well.

I urge my colleagues to vote for this bill. I look forward to more bipartisan work on this and other issues in this Congress. I am hopeful that this bill will reach our new President's desk as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LANCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 599.

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.

KARI'S LAW ACT OF 2017

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 582) to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to require multi-line telephone systems to have a configuration that permits users to directly initiate a call to 9-1-1 without dialing any additional digit, code, prefix, or post-fix, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 582

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 "Kari's Law Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. CONFIGURATION OF MULTI-LINE TELEPHONE SYSTEMS FOR DIRECT DIALING OF 9-1-1.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title VII of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"SEC. 721. CONFIGURATION OF MULTI-LINE TELEPHONE SYSTEMS FOR DIRECT DIALING OF 9-1-1.

"(a) SYSTEM MANUFACTURE, IMPORTATION, SALE, AND LEASE.—A person engaged in the business of manufacturing, importing, selling, or leasing multi-line telephone systems may not manufacture or import for use in the United States, or sell or lease or offer to sell or lease in the United States, a multi-line telephone system, unless such system is pre-configured such that, when properly installed in accordance with subsection (b), a user may directly initiate a call to 9-1-1 from any station equipped with dialing facilities, without dialing any additional digit, code, prefix, or post-fix, including any trunk-access code such as the digit '9', regardless of whether the user is required to dial such a digit, code, prefix, or post-fix for other calls.

"(b) SYSTEM INSTALLATION, MANAGEMENT, AND OPERATION.—A person engaged in the business of installing, managing, or operating multi-line telephone systems may not install, manage, or operate for use in the United States such a system, unless such system is configured such that a user may directly initiate a call to 9-1-1 from any station equipped with dialing facilities, without dialing any additional digit, code, prefix, or post-fix, including any trunk-access code such as the digit '9', regardless of whether the user is required to dial such a digit, code, prefix, or post-fix for other calls.

"(c) ON-SITE NOTIFICATION.—A person engaged in the business of installing, managing, or operating multi-line telephone systems shall, in installing, managing, or operating such a system for use in the United States, configure the system to provide a notification to a central location at the facility where the system is installed or to another person or organization regardless of lo-

cation, if the system is able to be configured to provide the notification without an improvement to the hardware or software of the system.

"(d) EFFECT ON STATE LAW.—Nothing in this section is intended to alter the authority of State commissions or other State or local agencies with jurisdiction over emergency communications, if the exercise of such authority is not inconsistent with this Act.

"(e) ENFORCEMENT.—This section shall be enforced under title V, except that section 501 applies only to the extent that such section provides for the punishment of a fine.

"(f) MULTI-LINE TELEPHONE SYSTEM DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'multi-line telephone system' has the meaning given such term in section 6502 of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (47 U.S.C. 1471)."

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), section 721 of the Communications Act of 1934, as added by subsection (a) of this section, shall apply beginning on the date that is 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) EXCEPTION.—Subsection (b) or (c) of such section 721 shall not apply to a multi-line telephone system that was installed before the date that is 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act if such system is not able to be configured to meet the requirement of such subsection (b) or (c), respectively, without an improvement to the hardware or software of the system.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LANCE) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous materials in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

At our subcommittee hearing last April, we heard the very moving testimony of Mr. Hank Hunt. Hank told us the story of how his daughter Kari was brutally murdered in a Texas motel bathroom in December 2013. As emotional as his story was, Hank continued with the gut wrenching details of how Kari's daughter frantically tried and failed to reach first responders.

The little girl had done as she was always taught, dial 911 for help. Tragically, as it turns out, that was her mistake. Due to the configuration of the phone installed in the motel room, she needed to dial 9 before dialing an outside number. Time after time she tried, but the call never went through. The first responders who could have attempted to save Kari's life were not reached in time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this commonsense bill that has the ability to save lives. Unfortunately, it

cost the life of Kari Hunt before the call for action was recognized.

Multiline telephone systems, like the one in that Texas motel room, are everywhere. Many businesses, including hotels, offices, and schools, use MLTS at their facilities across the country. They serve a very practical purpose and make connecting to other onsite users much easier. Unfortunately, many of these phones do not preset with the ability directly to dial 911.

It may be routine for someone who works in an office to know to dial 9 before dialing out, but would the instinct seem so natural during an emergency? Incidentally, I have telephones in offices here and in several district locations in New Jersey, and in some of those offices you dial 9 and in some you don't.

Moreover, our children should not have to be taught that sometimes they need to dial an extra number. 911 should mean 911. Those three numbers are one of the earliest things many parents teach their children. Kari's Law would require multiline telephone systems to be configured with the ability directly to dial 911 without any additional prefix.

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The law would also require that multiline phone systems be configured to notify a central location within the system's facility when someone initiates a call to 911. This provision will help ensure first responders have the information needed to better locate and assist the caller.

There are some businesses, including a number of hotel chains, who have shown initiative and applied these changes in their facilities already. I commend them, but there is more work to be done. These simple fixes should be adopted and implemented nationwide. When dialing to reach emergency responders, it needs to go through, period.

I thank Hank Hunt, Kari's father, who has been a tireless advocate for this legislation. He has brought this important issue to our attention. Kari's Law passed without objection twice last Congress, and I urge all of my colleagues to support Representative GOHMERT's bill once again. Representative GOHMERT has certainly taken the lead on this across the United States. He is an angel of mercy in this regard. I hope this legislation becomes law this year and will be signed into law by our new President because I think it is critical for the safety of the American people.

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

H.R. 582 KARI'S LAW ACT OF 2017

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

Multi-Line Telephone Systems (MLTS) serve multiple telephone users at a single site, often an office building, hotel, university campus, or similar location. One common feature of MLTS is the configuration that permits shorter dialing sequences within the system by requiring a user to dial a

digit or prefix to reach a number outside of the system—that is, dial “9” before reaching an outside line. Thus, on some MLTS a user may have to dial the prefix when attempting to make an emergency call. In December 2013, Kari Hunt was killed by her estranged husband in a motel room in Texas. Her daughter repeatedly attempted to dial 9-1-1 from the motel room, but was unable to reach emergency responders because the motel's MLTS required users to dial “9” to reach an outside line.

Kari's Law seeks to ensure that this situation does not result in confusion in the heat of an emergency, preventing others from accessing essential emergency services from an MLTS phone. While many hotels and office buildings have begun to make this change to their systems, this bill would make it a universal requirement. H.R. 582 requires that all MLTS have a default configuration that allows users to directly dial 9-1-1, without the need for any additional digit or prefix, from any phone with dialing facilities. In addition, the system must also be configured to notify a designated central point of contact when someone initiates a call to 9-1-1 using the system. By notifying a central point of contact, emergency responders are better able to access, locate, and assist a caller who initiates a 9-1-1 call within the MLTS.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS OF THE LEGISLATION

Section 1. Short title

Section 1 provides that the Act may be cited as the “Kari's Law Act of 2017.”

Section 2. Configuration of multi-line telephone systems for direct dialing of 9-1-1

Section 2(a) adds a new Section 721 to the Communications Act of 1934, as amended.

New Section 721(a) requires that any person manufacturing, selling, importing, or leasing multi-line telephone systems only do so if the system is pre-configured in a way that a user may directly initiate a call to 9-1-1 without dialing any additional digits or prefixes. This section applies to any system that is sold, leased, offered, or imported for use in the United States after the effective date. This includes systems that have call control located outside of the U.S., but have terminals or end points in the U.S. While systems are required to be pre-configured with the default dialing pattern described in this section, it does not preclude the inclusion of additional optional dialing patterns to reach 9-1-1 (e.g. (9)9-1-1). However, if the system is configured with these additional dialing patterns, they must be in addition to the default pattern.

New Section 721(b) requires that any person who installs, operates, or manages a MLTS only do so if the system is configured such that a user may directly initiate a call to 9-1-1 without any additional digit or prefix. This section also applies to systems installed, managed, or operated for use in the United States.

New Section 721(c) requires that systems be configured to provide a notification to either a central location at the facility where the system is located, or to a contact person or organization regardless of location. This section is intended to assist first responders in their emergency response by providing access and information needed to locate the caller. This can be particularly important in large buildings like hotels, hospitals, and schools, where on-site personnel are uniquely suited to provide information about the building and its occupants. This provision requires the system to designate a central point of contact, but allows the MLTS owner or operator some flexibility in determining the most appropriate contact, whether in the building or otherwise.

This subsection only applies to systems where the configuration is achievable with-

out an improvement to the hardware or software of the system. The Committee intends this provision to include upgrades to the core systems of a MLTS, but not the addition of additional extensions or lines. The Committee also intends this provision to apply to substantial upgrades to the software, particularly those requiring a significant purchase. Minor software upgrades that are easily achieved or are made to improve the security of the system would not be considered an “improvement” for the purposes of this section. The legislation seeks to balance the need for an onsite notification with the goal of not placing an undue burden on MLTS owners or operators.

New Section 721(d) clarifies that this legislation does not alter the authority of state or local agencies with jurisdiction over emergency communications, as long as that authority isn't exercised in a manner inconsistent with this legislation.

New Section 721(e) allows for enforcement under Title V of the Communications Act, but only to the extent that the section allows for the imposition of a fine.

New Section 721(f) defines multi-line telephone system by crossreferencing the definition in Section 6502 of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012.

Section 2(b) sets an effective date for the changes at two years after the date of enactment of the Act.

Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in general support of H.R. 582. The primary sponsor is Representative GOHMERT.

This is a bill that passed the House last Congress by voice vote.

I agree that we must do all we can to make sure that consumers using multiline telephone systems can directly dial 911 without having to dial additional digits first. These are in many large office buildings and hotels. Many of these systems require consumers to dial an extra 9 before they get a dial tone. You have to hit 9 before you get your dial tone to get an outside line. Most of us know that, but too many people do not realize that this applies to 911. If you don't dial 9 first, you can't reach the emergency services.

Such a requirement led to a tragedy in Texas several years ago. Kari Dunn was killed while her 9-year-old daughter tried to call for help. She did what she was taught to do in an emergency. She dialed 911. But because the system she was using required her to dial a 9 first, she only heard silence on the other end of the line.

Building on the Herculean effort of Kari Dunn's family, we are one step closer to fixing this problem once and for all. H.R. 582 is an important step to making our systems work better in an emergency. But for all the good this bill does, it still leaves work to be done.

Specifically, these multiline systems still often fail to deliver accurate location information to first responders. That means that if somebody called 911 from this very building, for instance, precious minutes would tick by as emergency personnel struggle to figure out where the call came from in this

enormous complex. That delay could be the difference between life and death.

We have to correct this problem, too, because making sure the call goes through is only helpful if the public safety officials can find the caller. Democrats tried to include such a provision in the version of this bill from last Congress, and at that time we received a commitment from Chairman WALDEN to work together on a separate bill to address this concern.

We were not able to solve this problem in the last Congress, and we expect that commitment will carry over to this Congress. I urge Members to support H.R. 582.

Mr. Speaker, we have no other speakers on this side, so I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT), the sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful to Mr. LANCE for his great leadership on this issue. And I appreciate the comments of my friend across the aisle, Mr. DOYLE.

This did pass by voice vote.

One can't help but wonder: How many times has this played out that we don't know about? How many times has there been a child that tried to dial 911? How many times has a panicked adult dialed 911 not knowing?

And I was in a hotel the other day where you had to dial 7 to get out.

How many times has somebody been killed trying to dial 911?

We don't know. There is no way to know. But we do know that this is the right thing to do. And the only reason this came forward is after the tragic loss of Kari. Her death occurred over several minutes. Normally in a town like Marshall, especially in a town like that, the police are going to be there within a minute or two when something goes on this long. It was a beating; it was a stabbing; her daughter was trying to dial.

After Kari had left this world, her daughter was sitting in Hank Hunt's lap. She was crying saying: I did all I could. I kept dialing 911 and it wouldn't go through.

Hank was torn up about it and got to investigating. That is when this was brought to light. When Hank brought it to my attention, we got to investigating. And we do have limits here in Congress. We are not supposed to go meddling, according to the 10th Amendment, in State and local affairs; but this is a matter of interstate communications. This is a matter for the Congress. This goes across State lines constantly. It is in the public domain across the country. If we don't do it when it involves interstate commerce, then nobody else has the authority to go across State lines.

I also thank the FCC Commissioner Pai, who I understand will soon be the chairman, for all his efforts because he truly participated.

We found out that there is really no cost. If we pass this law such as it is, then the companies that produce these phones would just set the default position so that when someone dials 911, it goes straight to an emergency operator without having to dial a prefix, whether it is 7, 9, 3, whatever. So there is no cost in that. It is just telling them how to do the default.

What about existing lines?

And then we found from people that have installed these multiphone lines that, actually, if somebody calls and says, "Hey, we need to get our phone system reset so you can dial 911 and it goes straight through," everyone that we have talked to that was in that business said, "Oh, we will come make that switch for free."

So we knew we had a bill here, we had a law—it goes across party lines, it goes across bicameral lines—we had an opportunity to pass a bill.

I am grateful to Senator KLOBUCHAR in the Senate and all the bipartisan support there. As my friend, Mr. DOYLE, pointed out, there is another push. Let's identify exactly where someone is within that multiline system. That will cost money.

There are some that have said: Look, if there is somebody that is making a secret call, they don't want the bad guys figuring out where the call is coming from.

So there are other issues involved here, but we have a bill that will save lives and it is agreeable across the aisle. It passed this manner in the past Congress. It will pass this way again today. So I urge not only our friends here in the House, but also my friends in the Senate, please pass this bill that we all agree on, save lives, and then let's have a full and thorough debate on the part that will cost money. We have some mom and pop hotels that say: If you make us buy a new phone system, the one we have won't be able to identify which room is making the call. You make us add to that, we are already in trouble. We are barely getting by. Please don't add more costs to what we are struggling to pay as it is.

Let's have that debate in a separate bill. Go in and pass this noncontroversial one for Kari's sake and for the sake of all of those that would come into the same situation. Let's just pass this bill. Kari, as her father and her daughters have said, will then not have died for nothing. Her loss of life will save lives in the future.

Again, I thank my friend, Mr. LANCE. What a great American, the way he pursues matters of conscience. I appreciate again my friend across the aisle, Mr. DOYLE.

I urge passage of this bill now, today.

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, we have no further speakers.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 582, the Kari's Law Act of 2017, which amends the Communications Act of 1934 to require multi-line telephone systems to have a configuration that permits

users to directly initiate a call 9–1–1 without dialing any additional digit, code, prefix, or post-fix.

As a senior member of the House Committees on Homeland Security and Judiciary, I am well aware of the importance of 9–1–1 services and some of the challenges of E–9–1–1 to ensure that those seeking emergency assistance receive the help they need.

H.R. 582 would create parity for landline "9–1–1 services" and smartphone E–9–1–1 services" so that emergency assistance request from either is treated the same.

The bill requires that those engaged in the manufacturing, importation, sale, and lease of telecommunication service or devices pre-configured technology to dial 9–1–1.

The goal of H.R. 582 is to ensure that all emergency calls regardless of the source are routed properly to emergency services.

Kari's Law is not intended to alter the authority of State commissions or other State or local agencies with jurisdiction over emergency communications.

The establishment of the Kari's Law Act acknowledges the importance of the configuration of multi-line telephones systems for direct dialing for 9–1–1.

Over the past two decades, the personal communications of Americans have changed.

The Wireless Association reported that the penetration of cellular devices surpassed 100 percent in 2012, and as of the latest 2014 report, penetration is now at 110 percent.

According to the Pew Research Center, 68 percent of U.S. adults have a smartphone, up from 35 percent in 2011, and tablet computer ownership has edged up to 45 percent among adults, according to newly released survey data from the Pew Research Center.

Smartphone ownership is nearing the saturation point with some groups: 86 percent of those ages 18 through 29 have a smartphone, as do 83 percent of those ages 30 through 49 and 87 percent of those living in households earning \$75,000 and up annually.

With so many mobile devices deployed the majority of calls to 911 emergency public safety answering points (PSAP) originate from them.

U.S. emergency dispatch agencies report that wireless callers are responsible for at least 80 percent of their emergency call volume.

For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to Support H.R. 582, Kari's Law Act of 2017.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LANCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 582.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.