

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 866, the ROUTERS Act, led by Chairman LATTA, my good friend.

Nearly everyone in America has a router or a modem in their home, but these devices can have security vulnerabilities that can be exploited by our adversaries, unfortunately.

The ROUTERS Act would direct the Department of Commerce to study the national security risks and cybersecurity vulnerabilities posed by routers and modems produced by companies with ties to foreign adversaries. This study will help Congress understand the security of these devices.

This legislation passed by voice vote last Congress, and I urge my colleagues to support it once again.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 866, the Removing Our Unsecure Technologies to Ensure Reliability and Security Act, or the ROUTERS Act.

This legislation is an important step to provide Americans with the confidence to trust that the devices they use in their homes to connect to the internet are free from the influence of our foreign adversaries.

H.R. 866 accomplishes this objective by requiring the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information, to study the national security risks and cybersecurity vulnerabilities in American homes posed by routers and modems manufactured or sold by entities with ties to our foreign adversary countries. The Secretary must also deliver a report to Congress of this study within 1 year.

It is crucial that we understand the cybersecurity and national security risks networks face from equipment that originates from our foreign adversaries. This is especially true given that our Nation's communication networks are an integral component of nearly every facet of American life, which also makes them prime targets for attack.

This legislation will help us better protect American families and our country from bad actors who want to carry out malicious attacks.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representatives KELLY and LATTA for their bipartisan work on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 866, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA).

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend, the chair of the subcommittee, for yielding.

I rise today in support of my legislation, H.R. 866, the ROUTERS Act.

Routers and modems play a key role in communications networks. They are the entry point through which the public accesses the internet. Thus, we make sure that they are secure.

Bad actors can exploit vulnerabilities in routers to infect users' computers, access their information, or disrupt their network.

National security agencies, including the Director of National Intelligence, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Homeland Security, have reported on the threat posed by vulnerabilities in routers and how some Chinese Communist Party-sponsored hackers have used these vulnerabilities to launch attacks. We should take these reports seriously.

Further, we know that companies with ties to the CCP could be forced to support Chinese intelligence activities. We can imagine how they could use vulnerabilities in their equipment to aid these efforts.

That is why I am pleased to sponsor the ROUTERS Act, which would direct the Secretary of Commerce through the Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information to study the national security risk posed by routers and modems produced by companies with ties to foreign adversaries. This study will help Congress understand the scope and risk of this threat and will inform whether we need to remove this equipment from our networks.

The legislation builds on our bipartisan efforts to remove untrusted equipment from our communications ecosystem. In the past 5 years, we passed the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act to remove Huawei and ZTE equipment from our networks and the Secure Equipment Act, which prohibits the Federal Communications Commission from authorizing equipment from untrusted vendors.

It is imperative we move forward with these efforts to mitigate the widespread availability of this equipment.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 866, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to protect American citizens and support the ROUTERS Act.

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I urge a "yes" vote on this particular vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 866, 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.

## RURAL BROADBAND PROTECTION ACT OF 2025

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2399) to require the Federal Communications Commission to establish a vetting process for prospective applicants for high-cost universal service program funding.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2399

*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 "Rural Broadband Protection Act of 2025".

### SEC. 2. VETTING PROCESS FOR PROSPECTIVE HIGH-COST UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND APPLICANTS.

Section 254 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 254) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(m) VETTING OF HIGH-COST FUND RECIPIENTS.—

"(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection—

"(A) the term 'covered funding' means any new offer of high-cost universal service program funding, including funding provided through a reverse competitive bidding mechanism provided under this section, for the deployment of a broadband-capable network and the provision of supported services over the network; and

"(B) the term 'new covered funding award' means an award of covered funding that is made based on an application submitted to the Commission on or after the date on which rules are promulgated under paragraph (2).

"(2) COMMISSION RULEMAKING.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Commission shall initiate a rulemaking proceeding to establish a vetting process for applicants for, and other recipients of, a new covered funding award.

"(3) CONTENTS.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—In promulgating rules under paragraph (2), the Commission shall provide that, consistent with principles of technology neutrality, the Commission will only award covered funding to applicants that can demonstrate that they meet the qualifications in subparagraph (B).

"(B) QUALIFICATIONS DESCRIBED.—An applicant for a new covered funding award shall include in the initial application a proposal containing sufficient detail and documentation for the Commission to ascertain that the applicant possesses the technical, financial, and operational capabilities, and has a reasonable business plan, to deploy the proposed network and deliver services with the relevant performance characteristics and requirements defined by the Commission and as pledged by the applicant.

"(C) EVALUATION OF PROPOSAL.—The Commission shall evaluate a proposal described in subparagraph (B) against—

"(i) reasonable and well-established technical, financial, and operational standards, including the technical standards adopted by the Commission in orders of the Commission relating to Establishing the Digital Opportunity Data Collection (WC Docket No. 19-195) (or orders of the Commission relating to modernizing any successor collection) for purposes of entities that must report broadband availability coverage; and

"(ii) the applicant's history of complying with requirements in the Commission and

other government broadband deployment funding programs.

“(D) PENALTIES FOR PRE-AUTHORIZATION DEFAULTS.—In adopting rules for any new covered funding award, the Commission shall set a penalty for pre-authorization defaults of at least \$9,000 per violation and may not limit the base forfeiture to an amount less than 30 percent of the applicant’s total support, unless the Commission demonstrates the need for lower penalties in a particular instance.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) and the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. DINGELL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material in the RECORD on this particular bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2399, the Rural Broadband Protection Act led by my good friend, Representative HOUCHIN.

The Federal Communications Commission’s Universal Service Fund provides funding for broadband networks in our rural communities.

The Rural Broadband Protection Act requires the FCC to establish a process for upfront vetting of providers seeking USF funds. It also directs the FCC to set penalties for providers that do not meet their commitments. This will ensure that USF recipients deliver on their promise to serve our rural communities.

I thank Representative HOUCHIN for leading this particular bill, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2399, the Rural Broadband Protection Act. This legislation would direct the Federal Communications Commission to establish a process to more thoroughly vet internet service providers participating in the Universal Service Fund’s high-cost program.

I have long advocated for reforms to combat waste, fraud, and abuse in the high-cost program. Following an investigation by Energy and Commerce Committee Democrats in 2017, we requested that the Government Accountability Office open its own inquiry into reports of abuse of high-cost support.

In a scathing report, GAO detailed a remarkable lack of oversight by the FCC, as well as the need for greater accountability to ensure precious USF dollars are spent on the mission of deploying high-speed broadband to unserved and underserved commu-

nities. Since then, we have seen modest progress to curb waste, fraud, and abuse in the high-cost program, but more accountability is needed.

I commend Representatives KELLY and HOUCHIN for their work on this legislation and appreciate their commitment to protecting unserved and underserved communities in need of high-speed connectivity.

However, I must note that this legislation was not considered as part of the Energy and Commerce Committee’s typical regular order process. It was not considered during a subcommittee legislative hearing or taken up in a subcommittee markup prior to being voted on by the full committee.

I am supporting the bill today, but I am disappointed that the Committee members were not afforded the opportunity to seek testimony from experts on this specific text of the legislation or inquire about the bill’s impact on the program and consumers as is our typical practice for legislative hearings.

Still, I believe this legislation will help address critical gaps in the vetting of high-cost recipients and will curb waste, fraud, and abuse in the program, so I urge our colleagues to support H.R. 2399.

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. HOUCHIN), an outstanding member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mrs. HOUCHIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, Mr. BILIRAKIS, for his leadership on this important issue. I also thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle for their support.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in proud support of H.R. 2399, the Rural Broadband Protection Act of 2025, a bill that I am proud to sponsor.

Across Indiana and throughout rural America, families, farmers, students, and small business owners still struggle with slow or unreliable internet access. It is not just inconvenient, it is a barrier to opportunity, to education, to healthcare, and to economic growth.

When Congress invests in rural broadband, we must ensure those dollars are getting where they are intended and that providers that are receiving those funds are capable of getting the job done.

That is exactly what the Rural Broadband Protection Act does. It puts accountability and transparency in the grant review process by requiring the Federal Communications Commission to vet applicants for broadband funding based on experience, capability, and performance.

As a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, this is a smart, bipartisan, commonsense piece of legislation, and I know my constituents back home agree.

That is why today I will be voting “yes” on the Rural Broadband Protection Act, and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support H.R. 2399, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I commend Representative HOUCHIN and Representative KELLY on this bipartisan bill. It is necessary that we pass this.

In closing, I encourage a “yes” vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2399.

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.

### FUTURE USES OF TECHNOLOGY UPHOLDING RELIABLE AND ENHANCED NETWORKS ACT

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2449) to direct the Federal Communications Commission to establish a task force to be known as the “6G Task Force”, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2449

*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 “Future Uses of Technology Upholding Reliable and Enhanced Networks Act” or the “FUTURE Networks Act”.

#### SEC. 2. 6G TASK FORCE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commission shall establish a task force to be known as the “6G Task Force”.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) APPOINTMENT.—The members of the Task Force shall be appointed by the Chair.

(2) COMPOSITION.—To the extent practicable, the membership of the Task Force shall be composed of the following:

(A) Representatives of companies in the communications industry, except companies that are determined by the Chair to be not trusted.

(B) Representatives of public interest organizations or academic institutions, except public interest organizations or academic institutions that are determined by the Chair to be not trusted.

(C) Representatives of the Federal Government, State governments, local governments, or Tribal Governments, with at least one member representing each such type of government.

(c) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date on which the Task Force is established under subsection (a), the Task Force shall publish in the Federal Register and on the website of the Commission, and submit to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and