

**What:** Speech to Mike Regan Communications Forum Lunch

**When:** Tuesday, February 14, 12 Noon

**Where:** Thornton Room 11th Floor; Hyatt Capitol Hill

**Setting:** 20 minute speech followed by short Q&A. 80 in attendance. Off the record. The luncheon is an on-the-record affair and there will be working reporters in the room in addition to the luncheon sponsors and their guests. Mike Regan, who is now the chairman of the Institute's executive committee, will introduce at 12:15.

**Staff Contact:** Jordan Davis, Zach Hunter, Dan Schneider, David Redl, Grace Koh

**Remarks of Chairman Greg Walden  
Media Institute  
February 14, 2017**

Thank you, Mike, for that introduction and thank you all for having me here today.

We have hit the ground running over at the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. For the first time since 2007, Republicans maintain majorities in both the House and Senate and now control the White House. This is a rare opportunity, and we don't intend to waste it. There are scores of reforms that we have been waiting to put into place – in health care, energy, and technology – good ideas that would boost the economy, secure the future, and make American lives better.

Now it's just a matter of trying to get *all* of these important initiatives underway at the same time. Frankly, that's not a bad problem to have.

On the media and communications front, the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology, of which I had the honor of chairing for six years, has a full roster of members and a new Chairman – Representative Marsha Blackburn. One of our most important jobs is the reauthorization of the regulatory agencies such as the FCC and NTIA. There hasn't been a bill to reauthorize the FCC since 1992, and for NTIA 1994. Reauthorizations are long overdue and we must make sure they are well equipped to carry out their missions. Congress must exercise that right and responsibility or, as seen in the last FCC, agencies will overreach. We've already hit the ground running on reauthorizations as Marsha held the subcommittee's first meeting on the re-authorization of NTIA earlier this month.

To help curb jurisdictional excess, we will also continue to look for process reforms at the FCC. In January, the House passed my process reform bill for the fourth time. I believe that those reforms are important to enhance the public's trust and ensure a well-functioning FCC. I believed it when Democrats were in charge, and I believe it now. The policies in that legislation can restore the public faith in the commission's ability to do the people's business in the open and thankfully Chairman Pai has already begun to make many of these changes at the FCC, administratively.

I am impressed with Chairman Pai's commitment to process reform and his willingness to incorporate reasonable proposals from his colleagues on both sides of the aisle. And I know we are confident that he will continue to bring efficiency, transparency, and collegiality to the commission. Good government is good government.

Among the actions taken by Chairman Pai, there are at least two that I'm sure have piqued the interest of the companies in this room. The chairman rolled back the Media Bureau's guidance on the treatment of JSAs in mergers as well as the rejection of the petitions asking for reconsideration of the ownership reporting requirements for non-commercial and educational television stations.

I applaud these decisions, and his apparent intent to take a deregulatory approach to media businesses. I co-sponsored a bill in the last Congress to eliminate the newspaper broadcast cross-ownership bill. Today's broadcast media businesses cannot survive under unnecessary regulations that hamper their abilities to compete with newer media businesses. I believe we will see additional deregulation in this area to allow these businesses to compete and innovate.

We will also be engaged in oversight of the FCC following the conclusion of the incentive auctions for broadcaster spectrum. Although it took longer than expected, and the FCC certainly decided to do things its own way, the spectrum incentive auction did exactly what it was intended to do: determine the market value for broadcast spectrum. I thank the broadcasters and wireless bidders that ensured the auction was a success and are looking forward to the FCC working expeditiously to repack the remaining broadcasters without disruption.

Much of our agenda at the subcommittee will be focused on enabling the FCC to do its job and move forward with execution of the policies that Congress has already established. Our committee has already sent a letter informing the commission that we believe that the set-top box docket should be closed. As we stated in the letter, we think it's good process to signal clearly to consumers and industry that consideration of a particular proposal has come to an end. We are encouraged that Chairman Pai has already removed the proposal from circulation.

We also expect the FCC to move forward, and take the first step when it comes to repealing the reclassification of broadband service providers as Title II common carriers. That process may take some time, and, as I have repeated throughout the last Congress, Republicans are open to a legislative solution that

would remove the uncertainty that has hung over this issue. It's unclear what that legislative solution would look like; that will certainly depend on who comes to the table.

Also the subcommittee is considering ways to promote better cybersecurity policies across the board in public and private sectors. We've worked on cybersecurity issues for more than a decade here at the committee and in this increasingly connected world, we are finding that hacks and attacks do not simply result in the theft of identity or intellectual property. Bad actors can create effects in the real world with mere keystrokes on the electric grid, or in medical devices, or in the locks that guard our homes.

It is incumbent on policymakers to understand how best to prepare for these cyberattacks that will come, and how best to clearly incentivize the entire ecosystem to protect consumers against these attacks. I know that hackers and network defenders are racing neck and neck to outwit each other, and I know that government cannot keep pace with them. The committee is working to understand how government can give the good guys the right tools to defend against malicious acts. We've started with convening a series of roundtables to get the right people together in a room. We will also review the efforts of agencies within our

jurisdiction to secure their networks and promote cybersecurity within the scope of their authority. We expect to work with law enforcement as well as industry and civil society to determine the best approaches to balancing security and consumer expectations.

The subcommittee is also committed to increasing our efforts on deployment of broadband to rural areas. Members of the committee consistently hear from their constituents who feel that they are being left on the wrong side of the digital divide. Broadband is a rising tide that can lift all boats. For example, one recently commissioned study found that 5G wireless broadband deployment would bring up to 3 million new jobs in establishing and running smart cities. I believe we must work together to lower the costs of broadband deployment and bring this 21<sup>st</sup> Century infrastructure to every American. Again, we should focus first on what is best for the consumer and let the policy reforms flow from there.

If we all move together in the right direction, we can lower the costs of deployment by clearing bureaucratic red tape. We can roll back regulations that would undermine the return on investment, making it more attractive for broadband providers to serve folks. And we can target ratepayer dollars in a manner that befits good stewards toward areas that are truly underserved.

These are, in a nutshell, some of the priorities that we have set for ourselves at Energy and Commerce. I am fortunate and excited to be in a position that can influence the path of media and technology for the next few years. The committee is already hard at work, and we are looking forward to the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress.

I'll be happy to take a few questions.