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Opening Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce Full Committee Mark-up October 15, 2009

Today the Committee is meeting to consider four bills:

- H.R. 2994, the Satellite Home Viewer Reauthorization Act;
- H.R. 1147, the Local Community Radio Act;
- H.R. 3633, the Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grant Program Extension Act; and
- H.R. 3792, the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Extension Act

The first bill we will be considering is H.R. 2994, the Satellite Home Viewer Reauthorization Act, or "SHVRA." SHVRA grew out of the competing policy goals of promoting competition for pay-television service and protecting our nationwide system of free, local over-the-air broadcast television.

I am pleased that H.R. 2994 strikes the proper balance between these competing policy goals. Notably, for the first time ever – thanks to incentives included in H.R. 2994, and the Judiciary Committee's portion of this bill, we may be able to provide satellite service to all 210 television markets, including highly rural areas.

The Committee started its work on this bill in February and since that time it has gone forward in a uniquely bipartisan manner. I would like to thank Chairman Boucher for his leadership in this effort. As a member of both the Commerce Committee and the Judiciary Committee, Chairman Boucher's expertise has been instrumental in moving this bill towards the House floor. Mr. Boucher's subcommittee counsel, Amy Levine, also deserves high praise for her efforts and knowledge of this arcane area of law. I would also like to thank Tim Powderly of the committee staff for his tireless efforts.

Ranking Member Stearns and his staff, particularly Neil Fried, also deserve thanks for their hard work in bringing this bill forward. This could not be processed through the subcommittee and now the Committee without their dedication and expertise.

Finally, I would like to thank the National Association of Broadcasters, Direct TV and DISH Network for their contributions to this effort. A bill of this complexity involves a balancing of issues involving content creation, technology, diversity, and competition. This cannot be written without the cooperation of all affected interests in order to serve the larger public interest. We look forward to continuing to work with the satellite and broadcast industries as we resolve outstanding issues while this bill moves towards consideration by the House.

Chairman Boucher will be offering a bipartisan manager's amendment in the nature of a substitute that makes a number of changes to H.R. 2994, which he will explain in more detail upon introduction.

We will also consider H.R. 1147, the Local Community Radio Act. As a long-time advocate of expanding Low-Power FM radio services, and the dynamic contribution they make to localism, a bedrock of our communications laws, I am pleased that the Committee is acting on this important bipartisan measure. Low-Power FM stations provide diverse, locally-originated programming that serves the needs of the community.

I would like to recognize Mr. Doyle and Mr. Terry for their leadership on this issue and thank National Public Radio for working with the Committee in a constructive manner to strengthen the interference protection measures contained in the bill.

Our final communications related measure is H.R. 3633, the Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grant Program Extension Act, introduced by Representative Harman. H.R. 3633 has strong bipartisan support as well as the enthusiastic endorsement of leading public safety organizations, the National Governor's Association and several state public safety officials, including the City of Los Angeles.

The PSIC grant program funds state projects that provide public safety personnel with interoperable communications equipment and training for system users. In our current fiscal environment, public safety needs this assistance more than ever.

Unfortunately, under current law, funding for these critical interoperability projects will expire in September 2010.

Given the enormous importance of interoperable public safety communications during times of crisis, we need to allow states the time and funds necessary to complete projects already underway or in planning stages. If adopted, Representative Harman's legislation will provide this necessary time.

With regard to health legislation before us today, Chairman Pallone, Ranking Member Deal, Ranking Member Barton and I have worked in a bipartisan and bicameral fashion to present the health related legislation before you today, H.R. 3792, the Ryan White HIV/AIDS

Extension Act of 2009.

The Ryan White Program has been serving people living with HIV and AIDS for nearly twenty years. The program provides care, treatment and support services to nearly half a million people.

After our hearing last month, we came together with our Senate colleagues to find common ground to ensure that the program could continue uninterrupted.

To reach consensus, we all had to compromise. Because this bill reflects that approach, it doesn't contain all of the provisions I would have liked to see. However, I believe we have arrived at good, solid positions that will strengthen the Ryan White Program for the next four years.

I urge my colleagues to support each of these bipartisan measures and I look forward to further discussion of them during today's markup.