

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Donald M. Payne, Jr.

Subcommittee Markup of HR 3283, HR 4263, HR 4289

Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications

March 27, 2014

I would like to thank Chairwoman Brooks for convening today's markup to consider three bipartisan bills that advance the mission of this Subcommittee: improving emergency communications.

With every disaster, Americans get another opportunity to learn where we are, how far we have come, and how far we still need to go to ensure that, during an emergency, critical information is shared with the public and among Federal, State, and local responders.

In the past year, we have had a number of teachable moments. From the Boston Marathon Bombings, to the Moore, Oklahoma tornados, to the shooting at LAX – there are lessons to be learned about emergency communications from each incident.

The bills we are considering today—the “Integrated Public Alert and Warning System Modernization Act of 2013,” the “Social Media Working Group Act of 2014,” and the “Department of Homeland Security Interoperable Communications Act” each address lessons learned and should help improve future responses.

The measures we will be considering today, if enacted, will ensure that we effectively access technology at our disposal to alert those in danger's path, innovate to use social media more effectively, and move DHS forward in its efforts at achieving interoperability.