

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Full Committee Mark-up
HR 6511, HR 3325, HR 3891, HR 5306, HR 6733, HR 6753
September 13, 2018
Opening Statement of Honorable Joe Barton

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Today is a great day. Today we are here to vote on two bills that have great significance.

The First is HR 6511, which seeks to preserve and upgrade the nation's SPR infrastructure by allowing the Secretary of Energy to carry out a pilot program to lease underutilized SPR capacity that will become available under current, mandated drawdowns. Using this storage excess capacity through a leasing program could help the DOE to offset maintenance costs of the SPR, as well as invest in new infrastructure that would allow it to operate for decades to come.

The Second is HR 3325, The ACE Kids Act, a bi-partisan effort to improve the care of children with complex medical needs. This bill uses the successful and cost-efficient health home model to provide care coordination to these vulnerable children. These children have very serious chronic diseases that impact at least multiple vital organs. Successfully caring for these children requires many specialists and countless support services that few other children, or adults ever require. The ACE Kids Act provides a mechanism for states to voluntarily adopt the health home model to ensure these kids receive (1) the multiple levels of care they need, (2) care that is coordinated, (3) the care at the right time, and (4) care that avoids duplication.

The ACE health home model is proven to be successful both in terms of patient outcomes and cost savings. Preliminary data for recently completed demonstration projects showed a 32% reduction in inpatient hospital days and 26% reduction in emergency room visits. These results contributed to an over-all cost reduction of 2.6% after only one year of operation. These reductions are expected to continue. Over time the savings will far out-weigh the cost of the bill. That's REAL savings in a program that provides better care for very sick children. You just can't ask for a better outcome than that!

My sincere and heartfelt thanks go to my colleague Congresswoman Castor for being a staunch partner and unwavering advocate for ACE Kids throughout the

multi-year effort it took to bring this bi-partisan bill to a vote today. We now have 107 co-sponsors. I also want to thank all my staff who have worked on this bill: my Legislative Director, Krista Rosenthal, current and former staffers Michael Weems, Sophie Trainer, Gable Brady, Jeannine Bender – as well as Congresswoman Castor’s staff, the Committee staff and every patient and advocacy organization that has supported this effort thorough this long journey. In particular I want to thank the Children’s Hospital Association for stepping up and hitting a home run with their rock-solid research and data analysis which helped prove the cost effectiveness of this bill. Thank you.

Finally, the goal of the ACE Kids Act is, and always has been, to put kids and their families first, to make them the center of focus of a health home and care coordinator that improves their quality of life. HR 3325 as amended by the Health Sub-committee along with a few technical amendments that will be offered today holds true to that promise.

Mr. Chairman, we have a rare and golden opportunity to help children and their families by enacting bi-partisan, cost effective legislation.

I urge all my colleagues to approve HR 3325 as well as HR 6511.

Thank you.