

United States Senate

February 25, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer:

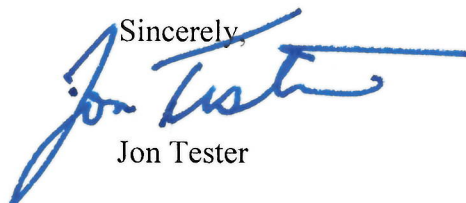
I write today about the importance of maintaining the integrity America's telecommunication networks. I am specifically concerned about the continued use of Chinese telecommunications equipment in our networks that pose a threat to our national security and the American public. That's why I support Congressional action to rip and replace telecommunications equipment deemed a security risk by our national security experts. I respectfully request immediate Senate consideration of the bipartisan Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act (H.R. 4998), which will jumpstart the process of removing dangerous equipment without disrupting access to rural broadband.

Our nation's security advisors make a clear and convincing case that telecommunication equipment from Chinese companies, such as Huawei, pose national security risks. Maintaining and expanding Huawei equipment in our telecommunication networks leaves the US vulnerable to Chinese access to US intelligence, information that could be leveraged against American citizens, and intellectual property. I have deep concerns about letting a company with such close ties to the Chinese government build our nation's communication infrastructure. H.R. 4998 would strengthen our networks by prohibiting the use of federal funds to subsidize the use of equipment from foreign companies that put our national security in jeopardy.

In addition, H.R. 4998 would authorize funding to help rural wireless carriers rip out gear from untrustworthy foreign providers and replace with secure communications equipment. These small rural carriers provide the backbone to rural economies, serving areas that often the national carriers will not. If Congress does not act, many of these small carriers may not be able to expand their business or serve rural areas at all.

Given the urgent security implications, I request the Senate quickly take up the Secure and Trusted Communications Network act and pass this bipartisan bill.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester