

Opening Statement of Rep. Ryan Mackenzie (R-PA)

Workforce Protections Subcommittee

“Building a Safer Future: Private-Sector Strategies for Emerging Safety  
Issues”

May 13, 2026

(As prepared for delivery)

Today’s hearing will examine emerging workplace safety risks and the need for collaborative, practical policymaking to better prevent serious injuries and fatalities in the modern workplace.

The workplace has evolved dramatically in recent decades, bringing new risks to both employers and employees. Today, businesses must navigate an increasingly complex safety landscape shaped by rapidly changing technology, new worker arrangements such as remote work, and evolving operational demands. At the same time, long-standing safety concerns that once received limited attention are now at the forefront of workplace safety discussions. Yet, while the nature of work constantly changes, the regulatory framework governing workplace safety has often struggled to keep pace.

Although overall rates of workplace injuries and illnesses have declined, far too many workers and families are still impacted by serious injuries and fatalities each year. And while progress has been made, even one workplace injury or fatality is too many. To achieve further improvements, we must look to frontline workers, business owners, researchers, and safety experts who are developing innovative approaches to workplace safety.

Safety issues that may not have been part of the conversation decades ago are now crucial components of workplace safety programs and advocacy efforts. Vehicle-involved accidents, for example, have become one of the leading causes of workplace fatalities across many industries. Drivers—whether in construction, mining, utilities, delivery services, or sales—face significant risks every day simply doing their jobs and supporting their families.

In response, many industry leaders are adopting comprehensive safety management systems that go beyond regulatory requirements. These approaches may include leading indicators, behavioral safety programs, and advanced data analytics to identify serious injury and fatality risks before incidents occur. These efforts demonstrate how innovation and proactive safety practices can create safer workplaces.

As we look ahead, one thing is clear: effective workplace safety policy cannot be developed in isolation. Policymakers, workers, employers, safety professionals, and industry experts must all have a seat at the table. To truly improve safety outcomes, regulations must include meaningful input from the workers, employers, and safety professionals responsible for implementing them every day. Lasting workplace safety improvements require policies that both protect workers and remain practical, adaptable, and responsive to evolving risks.

Ultimately, the goal should be more than compliance alone. The goal should be to create safer workplaces through thoughtful and forward-looking policies that reflect the realities of modern work. This Subcommittee will always find opportunities to partner with the administration, workers, job creators, and safety experts to achieve this shared mission.