

Support Bipartisan Rules Reforms in the 116th Congress

Sending Office: Honorable Derek Kilmer

Current cosigners: *Kilmer, Buck, Rice, Bergman, Bustos, Gallagher, Bera, Biggs, Welch, Moulton, Cooper, Meadows, Jeffries, Dingell, Aguilar, Peters, Banks, and Himes.*

Dear Colleague,

We invite you to join us in sending a bipartisan letter to House and Rules Committee leadership outlining a suite of goals and specific reform proposals for improving House process and procedures in the 116th Congress. With Congress's [approval rating](#) continuing to hover below 20%, we have an obligation to take meaningful steps to improve how this body operates in order to serve the interests of the American people.

To that end, this letter outlines a number of overarching goals, supported by [a package](#) of detailed reform proposals, which include:

1. The establishment of a bipartisan Select Committee on improving the ability of Congress to fulfill its Article I duties;
2. Recommendations to reinforce the role of Committees to review and craft legislation;
3. Strategies to promote “regular order” for the consideration of bills on the floor; and
4. Measures to empower individual Members to contribute fully to the legislative and oversight processes.

By signing on to this letter, you are expressing support for the four overarching goals outlined above and you are acknowledging that the package of specified proposals presents an effective starting point for leadership to consider now and for the Select Committee to consider once formed. The ideas and recommendations outlined in this letter and the package of proposed reforms are the result of more than 130 deliberative group and one-on-one meetings with more than 60 Members of Congress from across the political spectrum, and include feedback received from a broad range of rules and legislative specialists. While this package is by no means a comprehensive list of all the potential reforms the House may or should consider, we believe this package does represent a solid foundation for beginning those discussions.

To add your support to this bipartisan letter, please contact Rep. Kilmer's office or Rep. Buck's office by **COB Tuesday, October 23rd.**

Sincerely,

Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress

Ken Buck
Member of Congress

The Honorable Paul Ryan

Speaker, U.S. House of
Representatives

H-232, The Capitol

Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi

Minority Leader, U.S. House of
Representatives

H-204, The Capitol

Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Pete Sessions

Chairman, House Committee on Rules

H-312, The Capitol

Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jim McGovern

Ranking Member, House Committee on Rules

1116 Longworth House Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan, Leader Pelosi, Chairman Sessions, and Ranking Member McGovern,

For the past several months, Members from across the political spectrum have been discussing ideas about how best to improve the ability of Members to serve as effective representatives of their districts and how to ensure that Congress as a whole, and the House in particular, functions in a more equal and bipartisan manner. To that end, the XX undersigned Members have developed a list of goals and priorities that we believe should be supported as the House looks to modernize their rules and procedures for the 116th Congress, including:

1. **Establish a bipartisan Select Committee on improving the ability of Congress to fulfill its Article I duties.** Every few decades there have been efforts to ensure that Congress is meeting the challenges of the current day. In some cases, the changes have been imposed by the majority party, but in the 1940s, 1960s, and 1990s, Congress created Joint Committees on the

Organization of Congress to review its norms and procedures to ensure its continued effectiveness as the relevant institution envisioned by the Constitution. We believe it is time again for such a critical review to ensure that this institution is prepared for the realities of this century. The Select Committee should be tasked with reviewing and making recommendations on broader, systemic reforms that would help the House function in a more equitable, ethical, and bipartisan manner.

2. **Reinforce the role of Committees to review and craft legislation**, by enacting reforms that reinforce traditional norms of due process and collaboration on those Committees. We firmly believe that the legislative process is best served by Chairs and Ranking Members working together to identify legislative goals, structure informative hearings, draft workable bills, and conduct orderly and collaborative markups.
3. **Promote “regular order” for the consideration of bills on the floor** to allow a majority of the body to work its will with due deliberation and consideration of all reasonable and germane amendments.
4. **Empower individual Members to contribute fully to the legislative and oversight processes**, bringing their expertise, insight, and independent judgment to bear in the best interests of their constituents and the country as a whole.

In order to further the goals outlined above, the undersigned encourage you to consider [this package](#) of well-considered proposals. While this package is by no means a complete list of all the potential reforms the House may consider in support the goals listed above, we believe it does represent a solid foundation for beginning those discussions and we welcome the opportunity to work with you to develop a robust set of reforms that will help restore America’s faith in our institution.

We also recognize that elections have consequences and that the House is a majoritarian institution. We believe these proposals acknowledge those realities, while improving each Representative’s ability to fulfill our obligations to our constituents. Regardless of which party controls the House majority after the November elections, we urge you to seriously consider adopting reforms that support the goals outlined above in both the House Rules package and other appropriate enabling legislation to be adopted at the beginning of the 116th Congress.

We stand ready to discuss these bipartisan goals with you and answer any questions you may have. We also commit to be a constructive part of the effort to ensure that the First Branch of our government is fully prepared to take on the 21st Century challenges facing our nation.

Sincerely,