

MEMBER DAY HEARING ON PROPOSED RULES CHANGES FOR THE 120TH CONGRESS

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON RULES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS SECOND SESSION _____ SEPTEMBER 2, 2026 _____



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MEMBER DAY HEARING ON PROPOSED RULES CHANGES FOR THE 120TH CONGRESS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2026

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON RULES,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:00 a.m., in Room H-313, The Capitol, Hon. Virginia Foxx [chairwoman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Foxx, Fischbach, Jack, McGovern, Scanlon, and Leger Fernández.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Good morning. The committee will come to order. I want to welcome as a special guest our former parliamentarian, Tom Wickham, and all of you for coming today.

Today's meeting in the Rules Committee will be a little bit different from how we normally operate. I believe everyone here enjoys a little bit of change from time to time.

All of us on the Rules Committee love a spirited debate—especially the ranking member, who is always so exuberant and bombastic, without fail—and it is because all of us value debating the issues, policies, and perspectives that we care about. We wouldn't be here in Congress if we didn't have strong feelings about things.

That said, today's meeting is an opportunity to look at ideas through a different lens than we normally do. Many people tend to forget that one of the other important jobs of the Rules Committee is to prepare changes to House rules based on the lessons learned from the current and previous Congresses.

That is exactly what we are here to accomplish today. We will hear our colleagues on both sides of the aisle offer their ideas on possible improvements to the rules of the House for the 120th Congress.

In the end, that is what good governance is all about. It is about taking a pulse check and making a deliberate effort to diagnose where we can improve, how we can improve, and the mechanisms through which we conduct our work.

Yes, we may not all agree on the issues of the day, and that is to be expected. That is the beauty of having an open exchange of ideas.

What we can reach agreement on, I believe, is how to improve the operating capacity of the institution so that it can make us better as legislators and help us deliver lasting positive results for those we are fortunate to represent.

I look forward to hearing from our colleagues today and listening to the solutions they are proud to put forward.

With that, I yield to the ranking member, Mr. McGovern.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Well, thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Member Day may not be the flashiest thing that we do around here, but these conversations really do matter. The rules of the House determine how Members participate in the lawmaking process—whether good ideas get a fair shot, whether the public can understand what we are doing, and ultimately whether this place can actually function.

And some of the best ideas for improving this institution come from Members who run into the same problem over and over and over again and finally say there has got to be a better way to do this.

That is why when I became chairman of this committee in 2019, one of the changes we put into our first rules package was a requirement that committees hold Member Day hearings like this one.

The idea was simple. You shouldn't have to sit on a particular committee to bring a good idea before it. And that was really part of a broader effort to open this place up a little bit more, to give Members a greater voice in how the House works, and to make that sure good ideas could come from anywhere.

Now, we have spent months working with Republicans and Democrats alike. We didn't agree on everything. No great surprise there. But we listened, incorporated ideas from both sides, and produced one of the most bipartisan rules packages in recent memory.

And Member Day worked. Members from both parties brought forward reforms. Some made their way into the rules package. That is why I believe in this process.

Not every proposal we hear today will wind up in the House rules, but we are seeing first-hand that opening the door to more ideas can make this institution work better.

Neither party has a monopoly on good ideas. Making the House work better shouldn't be some grand ideological fight. There ought to be plenty of room for common sense. We should want a House where Members can debate big ideas, where people have a real voice in the process, where the public can see and understand what we are doing, and where, every once in a while, we actually take on a big issue, have a real debate, cast a vote, and change something for the better. That is what this place is supposed to be for.

So I am looking forward to hearing what our colleagues have brought us today. There will be ideas we agree with, ideas we don't, and probably a few none of us have ever thought about before. That is the whole point. So I look forward to this discussion.

I thank the gentlelady for her opening remarks. I promise to be less bombastic. I am on my meds today, so I will be on my best behavior. But I look forward to this hearing.

I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. McGovern. We take our work seriously. We don't have to take ourselves so seriously.

So I now welcome to the witness table Mr. Min, Mr. Fine, Mr. Schneider, and Ms. Houlahan.

Without objection, any prepared statements our witnesses may have will be included in the record. And I have read over what you

all have suggested myself, and I feel certain that Mr. McGovern and Ms. Scanlon have also. So we have your prepared statements already.

But you are now recognized, Mr. Min.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. DAVE MIN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Mr. MIN. Thank you, Chair Foxx, Ranking Member McGovern, for the opportunity to speak before the House Rules Committee today.

I want to begin by recognizing the vital role this committee plays in safeguarding the integrity of the House, ensuring the House's standard rules are regularly updated, helping this institution stay ahead of emerging challenges, including adopting best practices, the work environment, and improving how technology is used to strengthen government transparency.

However, I believe one area that needs stark improvement is in prohibiting Members of Congress from using their offices for self-enrichment and personal gain.

Now, I began my career as a lawyer many years ago at the Securities and Exchange Commission. This was right after the Enron and WorldCom accounting scandals. I turned down lucrative Wall Street jobs because I believe it is really important that we uphold the integrity of capitalism.

The people that make the rules have to be above reproach, and the challenge right now is that people see us and they think we are fundamentally corrupt. They see people trading stocks actively, trading bonds and other securities, and making lots of money.

And the fact is that we in Congress receive access to information that would by any other standard be deemed material and inside information. People do trade on this, and I think it is a shame. It erodes public trust in our institution, and I think we have to do something about this.

And that is why several Members of this body, including myself, have introduced a range of legislative proposals to address this critical issue.

My legislation, H.R. 3779, otherwise known as the STOCK Act 2.0, would strengthen restrictions on individual stock trading by Members of Congress.

Critically, it builds on the important foundations of the original STOCK Act by prohibiting Members of Congress from trading individual stocks and securities, requiring Members of Congress and senior congressional staff to report received benefits of value, including contracts, grants, agricultural subsidies, and the like, increasing penalties for failure to file STOCK Act disclosures, and enabling increased oversight by relevant ethics agencies and offices.

This bill is supported by many important and leading good governance groups, and I want to thank them again for their support and for their technical assistance in developing and promoting this bill. These organizations include the Government Information Watch (GIW), Patriotic Millionaires, Oxfam America and Citizens United, Democracy Defenders Action (DDA), Public Citizen, Project on Government Oversight, and Fix the Court.

I introduced this legislation because I believe public service is a privilege that we have but should not be an opportunity for self-enrichment. I know people think when we trade stocks it is not hurting anybody. It hurts the integrity of the markets. That is why we have the Securities and Exchange Commission, because we had a history in this country of people using their positions to enrich themselves. It is fraud on the market, it hurts individual retail investors out there.

Now, Speaker Johnson has said repeatedly he would consider addressing this issue during this Congress, but he has refused to take any meaningful action. Instead, he has offered inconsistent and insufficient explanations for the delay.

If he does not bring my bill forward, then I would ask you to incorporate these provisions into the standing rules of the House in the 120th Congress. The full House must vote and be on the record on this issue.

I would like to end my remarks by once again thanking the Rules Committee for its work and consideration, and I yield back the remainder of my time.

[The statement of Mr. Min follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. DAVE MIN

- Thank you, Chairwoman Foxx and Ranking Member McGovern, for the opportunity to speak before the House Rules Committee today.

- I want to begin by recognizing the vital role this Committee plays in safeguarding the integrity of the House of Representatives. Ensuring that the House's standing rules are regularly updated helps the institution stay ahead of emerging challenges, including adopting best practices that promote safe work environments and improving how technology is used to strengthen government transparency.

- However, one area that this institution has fallen short, time and time again, is failing to adequately prohibit Members of Congress from using their office for self-enrichment and personal gain.

- In particular, the public and the media have—rightfully—identified Members of Congress in both parties who appear to have benefited from stock trades made while serving on committees with access to sensitive information.

- While public trust in government is at one of its lowest points, we must have the courage to confront this problem and take steps to restore the public's faith in the House of Representatives.

- That is why several Members of this body, including myself, have introduced a range of legislative proposals to address this critical issue.

- My legislation, H.R. 3779, otherwise known as the "STOCK Act 2.0", strengthens restrictions on individual stock trading by Members of Congress. Critically, it builds on the important foundation of the original STOCK Act by:

- Prohibiting Members of Congress from trading individual stocks;

- Requiring Members of Congress and senior congressional staff to report received benefits of value (contracts, grants, agricultural subsidies, etc.);

- Increasing penalties for failure to file STOCK Act disclosures; and
 - Enabling increased oversight by relevant ethics agencies and offices.
 - This bill is supported by many leading good governance groups, and I want to thank all of them again for their support and their technical assistance in developing and promoting this bill.
 - These organizations included the Government Information Watch (GIW), Patriotic Millionaires, Oxfam America, End Citizens United, Democracy Defenders Action (DDA), Public Citizen, Project on Government Oversight (POGO), and Fix the Court.
 - I introduced this legislation because I believe that public service is a privileged honor, not an opportunity for self-enrichment at the expense of constituents.
 - While Speaker Johnson has said he would consider addressing this issue during this Congress, he has not taken any meaningful action. Instead, he has offered inconsistent and insufficient explanations for the continued delay.
 - If he will not bring my bill forward this Congress, then we must incorporate these provisions into the standing rules of the House for the 120th Congress. The full House must vote—and be on the record—on this issue.
 - I built my career at the SEC holding the rich and powerful accountable, prosecuting corporate fraud and insider trading. Members of Congress should not be allowed to rip off taxpayers by trading on the inside information they have because of their positions. Enough is enough.
 - I'd like to end my remarks by once again thanking the Rules Committee for its work and consideration.
 - I yield back the remainder of my time.
- The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you, Mr. Min.
Mr. Schneider.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. BRADLEY SCOTT SCHNEIDER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Thank you, Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member McGovern, and the whole committee. I want to thank you for inviting me to share my thoughts as the Committee on Rules prepares for the upcoming 120th Congress.

I am here as chair of the New Democrat Coalition. Our 114 Members represent 31 States, plus Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Our coalition is committed to strengthening the effectiveness, transparency, and accessibility of the House of Representatives.

I am pleased to offer our support for several initiatives to reform House procedures and congressional conduct. We believe the following proposals would help modernize the institutions, improve Members' ability to serve their constituents, and foster greater public trust in Congress.

First, the House must do more to reinforce public confidence and trust. One priority should be addressing actual potential, and even perceived conflicts of interest, to ensure congressional decision-making remains above reproach.

I know the committee is already discussing how to address insider trading. We just heard from my friend and colleague, Mr. Min.

I am going to speak personally. I would take it a step further and establish within the Congress, as we have in the financial services firms and others, an office of compliance to enforce compliance and avoid insider trading.

We also believe the House should prohibit participation in prediction markets by Members of Congress, and where appropriate, congressional staff, consistent with similar ethics reforms adopted by the Senate.

Second, we propose restoring proxy voting for very limited special circumstances, such as pregnancy, childbirth, and paternity or maternity leave.

Carefully tailored proxy voting authority would allow Members to fulfill their constitutional responsibilities and ensure their constituents are represented while they navigate significant time-limited life events.

Third, we believe the House must do more to encourage collaboration across the aisle and better reflect the cooperative work, that despite what other people might believe, so often actually does happen during the legislative process.

We propose permitting legislation to have two bipartisan lead sponsors, a Republican and a Democrat, in line with House Resolution 501, the BUDS resolution.

Lastly, require committee meeting times be posted on a shared scheduling system to improve coordination, reduce conflicts, and create a more predictable schedule for Members and staff.

Rule X of the rules for the 97th Congress mandated the use of a shared scheduling service by committees, though this requirement was struck down in 1992.

Just for reference, in 1992, the cutting-edge handheld technology was the famous PalmPilot. Outlook wasn't introduced until 1997. And the first iPhone would not be introduced until 2007.

I think I can safely say that technology has come a long way in the 34 years since that rule was repealed. I think it is time for Congress to start to catch up.

We appreciate your consideration on these recommendations as you work to develop a vision for a House rules package for the 120th Congress. The New Democrat Coalition stands ready to work with you and our colleagues to advance reforms that strengthen the institution and improve our House's, the people's House, ability to serve the American people.

Thank you for your leadership and for your consideration of these recommendations. I yield back.

[The statement of Mr. Schneider follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. BRADLEY SCOTT SCHNEIDER

Chairwoman Foxx and Ranking Member McGovern, thank you for inviting me to share my thoughts as the Committee on Rules prepares for the 120th Congress.

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I am pleased to offer our support for several initiatives to reform House procedures and congressional conduct. We believe the following proposals would help modernize the institution, improve Members' ability to serve their constituents, and foster greater public trust in Congress:

- First, the House must do more to reinforce public confidence and trust. One priority should be addressing actual, potential, and even perceived conflicts of interest to ensure congressional decision-making remains above reproach. I know the committee is already discussing how to address insider trading. We believe the House should also prohibit participation in prediction markets by Members of Congress and, where appropriate, congressional staff, consistent with similar ethics reforms adopted by the Senate.
- Second, we propose restoring proxy voting for very limited special circumstances such as pregnancy, childbirth, and paternity or maternity leave. Carefully tailored proxy voting authority would allow Members to fulfill their constitutional responsibilities and ensure their constituents are represented while they navigate significant, time-limited, life events.
- Third, we believe the House must do more to encourage collaboration across the aisle and better reflect the cooperative work that so often occurs during the legislative process. We propose permitting legislation to have two bipartisan lead sponsors, in line with H. Res. 501 the BUDS Resolution.
- Lastly, require committee meeting times be posted on a shared scheduling system to improve coordination, reduce conflicts, and create a more predictable schedule for Members and staff. Rule X of the Rules for the 97th Congress mandated the use of a scheduling service by committees, though this requirement was struck in 1992.

For reference, in 1992 the cutting-edge handheld technology was the Palm Pilot. Outlook was introduced in 1997, and the first iPhone would not be introduced until 2007. Technology has come a long way in 34 years. We think it's time for Congress to start to catch up.

We appreciate your consideration of these recommendations as you work to develop a vision for the House Rules Package in the 120th Congress. The New Democrat Coalition stands ready to work with you and our colleagues to advance reforms that strengthen the institution and improve the House's ability to serve the American people.

Thank you for your leadership and for your consideration of these recommendations.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you, Mr. Schneider.

Ms. Houlihan, you are recognized.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. CRISSY HOULAHAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA

Ms. HOULAHAN. Thank you. Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Ranking Member, and thank you to all the members of the committee. Thanks for the opportunity to speak today.

I think that we can all agree that business as usual in Congress is a lot less sustainable. Less legislation is making it to the floor, including bipartisan and otherwise noncontroversial legislation.

Members of this Congress have had less time to work, less time together, and less time to participate in committee events. Bipartisan efforts are not prioritized. And worst of all, national security information is routinely leaked or mishandled by Members and staff alike.

The changes to the rules package that I am proposing today are not designed to undermine the majority or to restrict the minority. Instead, they are a very few steps towards a more efficient, more bipartisan, and more trustworthy Congress.

First, as a national security Democrat who has spent the majority of my time and career in classified settings, and now who sits on two security-focused committees, I am routinely exposed to classified materials. However, despite having access to some of the most restrictive and secret information that our government maintains, Members of Congress currently receive no formal training on how to manage it or on how to safeguard this material.

None of us in this room actually has had a background check or holds a clearance. And unless you have previously served, as I have, you have not ever been trained on how to handle classified materials as a Member of Congress. And if the American people really understood the gravity of what that meant, they would be mortified and horrified.

The most that Members are required to do at this point in time is literally sign an oath swearing not to disclose national security information, and that standard is horrifyingly, unbearably low.

My proposal would bring to Congress training and would bring Congress in line with the rest of the government who handles this material, required training on classification levels, on security, and on counterintelligence awareness as well.

Secondly, the congressional calendar just does not favor district work or legislative work. It really favors travel days and travel days alone.

For some like me, travel days are not too onerous. Pennsylvania is, fortunately, within driving distance. But for most, this involves twice weekly flights to and from the capital.

The calendar also forces committee work to overlap with votes. The calendar is simply not efficient.

So I propose longer district and legislative work periods, fewer travel days, and protected committee time, all of which that would strengthen opportunities for bipartisanship.

Speaking of bipartisanship, there are fewer and fewer incentives to work across the aisle. In the current rules, there are no structural incentives that support bipartisan legislation.

I support previous proposals from colleagues, including Representative Emanuel Cleaver, who have tirelessly pushed for the right to have two sponsors on legislation from different parties.

I further propose that any legislation voted out of committee with bipartisan support be brought to the floor for consideration of the whole House.

We were sent to Washington by our constituents to enact legislation, not to obstruct it. By allowing these noncontroversial, bipartisan measures before the House, more legislation will be reviewed, adopted, or rejected. We will do more work together, and our constituents back home will benefit.

These proposals do not benefit one party over the other. They do not limit or encourage the views of the extremes in either of our parties. Instead, they make Congress be a much more serious place of business and a place that does the work that our constituents demand of us. We can and must do better.

I appreciate so much the time that you have allowed us for this opportunity to speak on this, and I yield.

[The statement of Ms. Houlahan follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. CRISSY HOULAHAN

Chair, Ranking Member, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

I think we can all agree that business as usual in Congress is unsustainable. Less legislation is making it onto the Floor, including bipartisan and otherwise non-controversial legislation. Members of Congress have less and less time to work together and participate in committee events. Bipartisan efforts are not prioritized. And worst of all, national security information is routinely leaked or mishandled by Members and Staff alike.

The changes to the rules package I am proposing today are not designed to undermine the majority or restrict the minority. Instead, they are a few steps towards a more efficient, bipartisan, and trustworthy Congress.

First, as a national security Democrat who has spent the majority of my career in classified settings and now sits on two security-focused committees, I am routinely exposed to classified materials.

However, despite having access to some of the most restrictive and secret information our government maintains, Members of Congress receive no formal training, instructions, or guidance on how to safeguard this material.

None of us in this room hold a clearance, and unless you have previously served, as I have, you have not been trained on how to handle classified materials. And if the American people really understood what that meant, they'd shake in their boots.

The most that Members are required to do is sign an oath, swearing not to disclose national security information.

That standard is unbearably low.

My proposal brings Congress in line with the rest of the government: required training on classifications, security, and counter-intelligence awareness.

Second, the Congressional calendar does not favor district work, or legislative work—it favors travel days.

For some, like me, travel days are not too onerous—Pennsylvania is fortunately within driving distance.

But for most, this involves twice-weekly flights to and from the Capitol.

The calendar also forces committee work to overlap with votes. The calendar is simply not efficient. I propose longer district and legislative work periods, fewer travel days, and protected committee time—all of which will strengthen opportunities for bipartisanship.

Speaking of bipartisanship, there are fewer and fewer incentives to work across the aisle. In the current rules, there are no structural incentives that support bipartisan legislation.

I support previous proposals from colleagues including Rep. Emmanuel Cleaver who have tirelessly pushed for the right to have two sponsors on legislation from different parties.

I further propose that any legislation voted out of committee with bipartisan support be brought to the Floor for consideration of the whole House. We were sent to Washington by our constituents to enact legislation, not to obstruct it. By allowing these non-controversial, bipartisan measures before the House, more legislation will be reviewed, adopted or rejected. We will do more work together, and our constituents back home will benefit.

These proposals do not benefit one party over the other. They do not limit or encourage views of the extremes in either party. Instead, these proposals make Congress a more serious place of business, a place that does the work our constituents expect from us.

We can and must do better.

Thank you, and I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Fine, you are recognized.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. RANDY FINE, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA**

Mr. FINE. Well, thank you, Madam Chairman, gentlewoman.

And I actually start with a sigh of relief. I actually really appreciate your remarks.

I thought I didn't get any training on classified information because I came in in a special election, and I actually couldn't agree more with what you said. In fact, because I have never dealt with it before, I don't talk about anything. They could say the sky is blue in one of those hearings because no one ever says what you can talk about and what you can't talk about. So whatever they say in that room I never reveal any of it. And I couldn't agree more with the idea of training. It is a great idea.

But, ironically, we didn't coordinate our remarks. The two ideas that I brought today are very similar to a couple of yours, and actually speak to what Mr. McGovern talked about, which is the need for debate, which in my 17 months in this Chamber I have found does not happen a whole lot, unless you like doing it in empty rooms.

And so I have also observed that we are very inefficient, as you spoke about, that we spend as much time sitting on airplanes as we do here.

So the two ideas that I am bringing forward today aren't partisan, but I think they are intended to foster more debate and more efficiency, which I think would be good for all Members.

The first is a very specific idea, that when we come to Washington we come for a week, and that the weeks start Monday at 9 and they end Friday at 5. But in return for coming for a whole week, that the following week would then be a week that we could spend in our districts.

Now, I have done the math on this. If we actually did this, a week here and a week home, we would actually spend more time working in Washington, we would spend more time working in our districts, and we would spend less time sitting on airplanes and traveling, because when you think about our weeks, which are largely four-day weeks, two of the four days are largely spent on travel. Two of the days end up being jam-packed with so many things that it doesn't facilitate the kind of debate because everyone has so many things to do.

So regular Americans work Monday to Friday 9 to 5, we should do it one week on and then one week back in our districts. It is better for our families, better for our constituents, better for everyone up here. That is idea number one.

Idea number two would facilitate more time for Members to interact in committees, which from my time in the legislature was where I found that I was able to work with my colleagues more.

Now, when you have 12 things to do at once, you may not be sitting in a room with other people, and all too often we have floor time that overlaps with committee time.

And the second idea would simply say, in one of those five days, that can only be for committee meetings. In one of those five days, however the committee meetings are structured, it would just be committee meetings. The other four days there could be floor time and committees, but one of the five days every week would simply be allowed for committee hearings, which would remove one of the many time burdens that we have on our time.

The reason more people aren't in this room, the reason more people aren't in many rooms, is not because they don't want to be there, but it is because there are too many things going on simultaneously.

I think both of these ideas would facilitate more efficiency, more working together, more time to learn about the issues, and I think it would make the job, frankly, more pleasant for everyone involved as well.

Those are my two ideas. I appreciate you considering them. And I yield back my time.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Fine.

Mr. Jack, do you have any questions you would like to ask of the panel?

Mr. JACK. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Yes, I am curious, to Representative Schneider, you mentioned that in 1992, I was intrigued by your idea about the committee meeting times being consolidated. You mentioned in 1992 that was struck down. Do you have any context as to why it was removed from the rules package that year?

Mr. SCHNEIDER. I don't. What I do know is it was introduced, I forget which number Congress, about a decade prior, and then removed. I have a hypothesis, which is not certain, but this was the Clinton era, you had a different Congress. It could have been a function of that. But I don't know why.

Mr. JACK. Thank you.

That is it, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. McGovern.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I want to thank all of you for your ideas. I think they are all legitimate, and I think we ought to figure out whether we can incorporate them into our House rules.

And, Mr. Fine, I agree with you, I want this place to be a place where we debate more. One of my frustrations is that we have broken all kinds of records in terms of closed rules where you can't offer amendments and we limit debate. In fact, this rule that people voted for yesterday basically shuts down debate. You can't amend anything. I mean, it doesn't seem like that is appropriate in a body like this, but those who voted for that rule voted to basically shut down debate. No amendments, nothing. And, again, we had a bunch of "gotcha" bills that were brought to the floor.

But I hope that—and, again, when we were in charge—there is a role for closed rules, and when we were in charge we had some closed rules, but nothing like this Congress, 168 completely closed rules.

So I think that one of the things we have to strive for is understanding when we bring bills to the floor, that there are different ideas, ideas that I agree with and ideas that I don't agree with, and the floor ought to be a place where those ideas can be discussed.

But I think what you proposed here today makes sense to me. I also think the idea of making sure that there is a higher standard when it comes to viewing classified materials. I probably couldn't pass a background check, so I don't know, I probably won't be able to read any classified material. But I do think that that is not an unreasonable request.

And on the stock trading stuff, I am in agreement with you on that. We have to figure out how to get that right.

But, in any event, I thank all of you for being here.

And I will yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mrs. Fischbach, you are recognized.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. I will yield back, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Scanlon, you are recognized.

Ms. SCANLON. I want to thank you all for coming.

It is interesting to hear how many of the suggestions are reflected in the work that the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress did a couple years ago. And I think whoever is drafting rules packages should look at those findings as conclusions. And we have got to find ways to make this place work better.

Thank you. I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you, Ms. Scanlon.

I want to thank you all for coming today, too. As I said, I have read over what you have submitted to the Rules Committee, and I am impressed at the thoughtfulness and the detail with which

many of you submitted comments to the Rules Committee for consideration for the next rules package.

And I appreciate the work that Mr. McGovern did before. I know that in 2011 we had a bipartisan committee that worked very, very hard on the calendar because there was a lot of concern with how we were operating, and a lot of good changes got made to the calendar.

And, Mr. Fine, I will tell you, when I got elected, that Howard Coble said to me, the worst part of this job is the travel back and forth, and I certainly agree with you.

I don't know the answer to a lot of these issues that we are facing, but it is heartening to know that there are a lot of people agreeing and feeling the same way. So I promise you we will take these issues into consideration as we talk about what to propose for the next Congress.

So thank you all very much for being here.

And there being no further questions, you are dismissed.

I would like to ask the other Members to come forth, Ms. Jacobs, Ms. Pettersen, Ms. Titus, Mrs. Kiggans, Ms. Gluesenkamp Perez, and Ms. Scholten.

Sure. Sit wherever. I called you up in the order in which you came, except I understood Ms. Jacobs wanted to wait until there were two of you. So I will go across the table now.

So Ms. Gluesenkamp Perez.

Ms. PEREZ. [Inaudible.]

The CHAIRWOMAN. You want to wait.

Ms. PEREZ. [Inaudible.]

The CHAIRWOMAN. That is perfectly fine. Okay. Happy to accommodate you.

Ms. TITUS.

Ms. TITUS. [Inaudible.]

The CHAIRWOMAN. I can just keep in order. It is a little easier than jumping around. Okay.

Ms. TITUS. I am ready.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Okay. Go ahead.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. DINA TITUS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEVADA

Ms. TITUS. Okay. Thank you.

Well, thank you, Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member McGovern, all the members of the committee, for giving us an opportunity to have input into the rules. And I am here today to testify in support of including House Resolution 1248 that I introduced in the upcoming package.

The principle behind this resolution is really simple: Public service should never provide an opportunity for private financial gain based on privileged access to information.

Now, Members of Congress and congressional staff are routinely entrusted with information that is not available to the public. We participate, as you heard before, in classified briefings, we receive information from Federal agencies, and we work on legislation and government actions before they are announced publicly.

Prediction markets now create a new and particularly concerning opportunity to monetize such information that we have access to.

These markets increasingly allow participants to wager on matters that are directly related to government action. That includes elections, legislation, who is going to be speaking when and what they are going to be talking about, among other things.

Now, recent events have shown that this concern is not hypothetical, it is very real. I will just give you a couple of examples.

In the days leading up to the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, traders placed sizable wagers on whether Maduro would leave office before the end of January 2026. One of those traders was a soldier who was later arrested and charged with using nonpublic information to proffit reportedly more than \$400,000.

Now, this Maduro case is not an isolated event. More recently we have seen the story about a White House teleprompter operator who settled a Federal investigation after regulators determined that he used advance access to President Trump's prepared remarks to place wagers on what the President would say, reportedly making over \$100,000 on the Kalshi market.

So the lesson is really very clear: You don't have to be President or a Cabinet member to possess valuable nonpublic information. Just being close to a government decision sometimes gives you an opportunity to proffit, and that is not right.

The American people should never have to wonder whether a Member of Congress or congressional employee is placing a financial wager based on information obtained through public service, and they should never have to question whether an official government action could affect someone's financial position.

And that is why I think Congress needs to act now, be proactive on this. We don't need to wait for another case to come out in the headlines before we establish some ethical rules.

Now, the Senate has already recognized this concern, and they amended their rules to prohibit Senators and Senate staff from participating in prediction markets, and I believe the House should do the same.

That is why on April 30 of this year I introduced House Resolution 1248. It is a bipartisan resolution. It is cosponsored by 28 Members of Congress. It would simply amend the rules of the House to prohibit Members, officers, and employees from the House from participating in prediction markets related to political events.

We already impose restrictions on Members and employees when the unique access and responsibility of their public service creates conflicts of interest, and this is just an extension of that.

The resolution applies to the same principles of a new emerging financial activity, and it gives a direct incentive to misuse non-public government information, creating, I believe, a similar conflict of interest.

So I would urge the committee to include this resolution in an upcoming rules package. I think doing so would strengthen the confidence that the American people place in this institution, and it would make clear that public service should not be used as a vehicle for personal financial gain.

So thank you for this opportunity, and I hope you will consider it.

I yield back.

[The statement of Ms. Titus follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. DINA TITUS

- Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member McGovern, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of including *H. Res. 1248* in an upcoming Rules package.
- The principle behind this resolution is simple: Public service should never provide an opportunity for private financial gain based on privileged access to information.
- Members of Congress and congressional staff are routinely entrusted with information that is not available to the public. We participate in classified briefings, receive information from federal agencies, and work on legislation and government actions before they are announced publicly.
- Prediction markets create a new and particularly concerning opportunity to monetize such information. These markets increasingly allow participants to wager on matters directly related to government action, including elections, legislation, and even statements made by public officials.
- Recent events have demonstrated that these concerns are not hypothetical:
 - In the days leading up to the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, traders placed sizable wagers on whether Maduro would leave office before the end of January 2026.
 - One of those traders was a soldier who was later arrested and charged with using nonpublic information to reportedly profit more than \$400,000.
 - And this Maduro case is not an isolated incident.
 - More recently, a White House teleprompter operator settled a federal investigation after regulators determined that he used advance access to President Trump's prepared remarks to place wagers on what the President would say, reportedly making over \$100,000.
 - Again, the lesson here is clear.
 - You do not have to be the President or a Cabinet Member to possess valuable nonpublic information. Sometimes, simply being close to government decision making can provide an opportunity to profit.
 - The American people should never have to wonder whether a Member of Congress or congressional employee is placing a financial wager based on information they obtained through public service. And they should never have to question whether an official government action could affect someone's personal financial position.
 - That is why Congress must act proactively.
 - We should not wait for another case to make headlines before establishing clear ethical rules.
 - The Senate has already recognized this concern by amending its rules to prohibit Senators and Senate staff from participating in prediction markets.
 - The House must do the same.
 - That is why, on April 30, 2026, I introduced *H. Res. 1248*, a bipartisan resolution cosponsored by 28 Members of Congress, that would amend the Rules of the House to prohibit Members, officers,

and employees of the House from participating in prediction markets.

- We already impose restrictions on Members and congressional employees when the unique access and responsibility of public service create conflicts of interest. This resolution applies that same principle to an emerging financial activity that can create direct incentive to misuse nonpublic government information.

- I, therefore, urge the Committee to include my resolution in an upcoming Rules package. Doing so would strengthen the confidence that the American people place in this institution and make clear that public service should never be used as a vehicle for personal financial gain.

- Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and I look forward to working with the Committee on this important issue.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Jacobs, Ms. Pettersen, do you all want to speak as a team or individually.

Ms. JACOBS. We will go individually.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Okay. You are recognized.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. SARA JACOBS, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Ms. JACOBS. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman and Ranking Member McGovern.

As we look forward to the 120th Congress, I am hopeful that this body can take some reasonable steps forward to modernize Congress, and I have been really impressed with all of the proposals that have been submitted so far.

One of the things that Representative Pettersen and I really want to focus on is making this a place that is more accessible to parents and more representative of the American people. And I think a great place to start is by including our bipartisan resolution that would allow proxy voting for 12 weeks for Members after they or their spouse have given birth.

Now, I know that there are some objections to proxy voting. I know it has been abused by both sides of the aisle. I was here for those very long vote series while we were waiting for all of the proxy votes to be done. But you can't fake being pregnant or giving birth, and I trust that the future parents of this body will recognize this privilege and treat it as such.

With this resolution, we can help make this institution a little more representative of the American people so we can work toward passing legislation that reflects the everyday experiences of half our country, from childcare to fertility access and more.

So right now in the 119th Congress we actually have 23 percent of Members who are fathers with young children, compared with 15 percent of American adults. But for women, only 7 percent of Members, or 39 lawmakers, are moms with young children, compared to 18 percent of American adults. And only 15 women in the history of Congress, the 250 years of American Congress, have ever given birth while in Congress.

Those numbers don't surprise me. I don't think they surprise many of you. It is hard to be a parent while serving here, and it is even harder to give birth while serving here.

As many of you know, I have frozen my eggs because I know I want to be a parent, but I also know that the logistics of doing it in this job are really, really hard. And I really take my hat off to people like Brittany and Kat and Anna who have figured out how to do it and made it work for themselves, their kids, and their families.

But I don't believe we should impose these kinds of restrictions and barriers on new parents when we don't have to and when we have the technology and the communication to make it work.

For many of us on the West Coast, we are on round-trip flights for 12 hours total often two, three, sometimes four times a month. You literally are not allowed to fly at some point in your pregnancy. Imagine doing that with a newborn who needs their parent around.

Including our resolution in next year's rules package would have other benefits, too. It would help shake up the status quo of Congress and bring in new perspectives.

It is not a secret that Congress has a wildly low approval rating. The American people are angry about systems that don't actually help them and politicians who want to keep things the way they are.

One of the best ways to get new ideas and new solutions is with new, younger Members. And, honestly, this place doesn't really work for younger people. It doesn't really support families. It doesn't welcome women. And it is far beyond time that we adapt the way we govern to reflect our goals.

If we want more young people and more women in Congress, which I think we all do, then we must remove the barriers that are keeping them out. Members should have the flexibility they need after giving birth so they don't have to choose between their job and taking care of their family, so they don't have to choose between whether their constituents get representation or whether they can do what they need and create a family.

The Federal workforce already gets 12 weeks of paid family leave thanks to congressional action in 2019. This is why proxy voting is so important. For me, it is literally going to decide if or when I can start my own family, and I know that is true for many others.

Anna, Brittany, and I have already done the hard work of finding bipartisan agreement, so I am hopeful that we can include this resolution in the rules package next year.

Thank you so much. I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Pettersen.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF COLORADO

Ms. PETTERSEN. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. It is so great to be with you all today.

I am here to advocate for our bipartisan proposal to change our rules to address the challenges and barriers that people face while being pregnant, and also post giving birth, and making sure that we don't have to choose between whether or not we are going to

be here and fulfill our constitutional duty or if we are going to be home taking care of our newborns.

This is not just moms and women coming together. This was men, parents who have had to go through difficulties post birth of their child being in the NICU and worrying about whether or not they were going to be there when they needed them most or fly back here to Washington.

I stood before you, actually, 2 years ago, I was pregnant with Sam, and I asked for these changes. We were able to come together to provide a path forward that aligned with Federal policies for workers. It was aligned with the paid family leave policies to ensure that people have up to 12 weeks, whether that is before giving birth or after, that their vote could still be represented even if they couldn't be here in person, making sure that we are recognizing how important that time is for the safety of our babies, our families, and, also the importance of our constituents being represented.

I am really proud that we were able to get 175 cosponsors, wide bipartisan support for this measure. It was deeply disappointing that we were unable to get it done.

And nothing put a finer point on the struggles of what that meant and the challenges you face as a parent going through this than giving birth to Sam that January. I remember when we were still fighting to get these changes done I thought that I might be able to have my constituents represented during that time.

Ultimately, that did not come to fruition and I was forced with a choice, with an incredibly important bill for my constituents to be here to vote on, and my baby who was only four weeks old, and whether or not I was going to be home with him or I was going to come here to represent my constituents.

I remember going back and forth that day 20 times on whether or not I should leave Sam at home, what that meant. I was nursing. I didn't know if we would be stuck in D.C. for days on end. I knew that my newborn needed me, and I also knew that my constituents needed me.

So I had no choice but to take Sam with me. And we know that with a new baby, you are terrified of everything, going to the grocery store and exposure to germs. You want to be home where they are safe and protected.

In this situation I was bringing my newborn on into the airport, on the plane, coming to the House floor. I am grateful for the love and support, but he was passed around to many people here. And so the worry and concern is definitely front and center as a parent.

So I ultimately brought Sam here. We were able to join together in representing our constituents. He was actually the first baby to be held on the House floor while speaking against the bill that we came to fight against.

That just marked the beginning of the challenges that we faced. I continued to come back for every vote that I needed to be here for. Before Sam was 6 months old he took 24 flights, more than most adults have taken in their life that I talk to.

That is the path that I have chosen. We were waiting on childcare wait lists like so many parents across the country and had no other option because I had another child at home who was in preschool.

So this place does not work for young families. That is a detriment. I am telling my story because the systemic barriers that we have the ability to change. This place does not have to work this way. We haven't adjusted in 250 years the way that we do things here.

At the beginning of this country, women weren't even allowed to vote, let alone were thought about when it came to serving here in Congress.

So it is time that we adjust for the workforce needs of today because the American people deserve representation of people who understand the struggles that they are going through right now, not what it was like in decades past. Families have never needed representation more than the challenges that they are facing today.

And so our proposal is simple. It aligns with the paid family and medical leave that Federal workers get, it is up to 12 weeks where our voices can be represented.

This does not count towards—proxy voting would not count towards having a quorum. We know that, being challenged time and time again in the courts, has been proven to be constitutional, and is in alignment with the family values, American values.

When I brought Sam, the reason we got national attention is because I think that Americans were shocked that we don't accommodate for anything for somebody in the position that we were at. And people who have gone through this recognize the challenges that you are facing with a newborn. It is when they are the most vulnerable, where they need their parents to be there with them, and we shouldn't have to decide between the health and well-being of our babies and our constituents.

So thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. We must do better because it matters for representation and the issues that we advocate for here in Congress.

[The statement of Ms. Pettersen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

- Thank you, Chairwoman. I am grateful to be here and appreciate the opportunity to testify as part of this Member Day Hearing.

- Today, I want to speak about my proposed rule change—one that goes to the heart of whether Congress truly reflects the people it serves.

- At the start of my second term, my husband and I welcomed our second baby boy, Sam. With his arrival, I joined an extraordinarily small group of women who have given birth while serving in Congress—just 14 voting Members in American history. When Sam was born in January 2025, I became part of the 0.1 % of Members who have experienced childbirth while fulfilling their constitutional duties.

- Those numbers alone tell a story. Of the Members currently serving in both chambers—only 38 are moms with young children.

- That disparity reflects systemic barriers that make it harder for parents with young children to serve. And when Congress does not look like America, America is not fully represented.

- Serving in Congress has been one of the great honors of my lifetime. But after Sam's birth, the realities facing new parents in this institution became impossible to ignore.

- At just four weeks old, Sam became the first child ever held by a speaking Member of Congress on the House floor. I remember packing his tiny diaper bag—bottles, burp cloths—before heading in to vote and speak for my constituents. I cherish every moment with my newborn, but this wasn't a choice. I had to bring my newborn with me to Washington in order to fulfill my duties as a Member.

- Late in pregnancy, I also faced the fear of not being able to safely travel at all. Like so many parents, I was juggling doctors appointments, childcare for my older son, and the constant calculation of how to keep my family safe while still doing my job.

- Members should never have to choose between representing their constituents and being a parent.

- If we want a future where working parents can serve, we must remove the barriers that force pregnant Members or those with newborns to choose between their families and their responsibilities.

- That is why I have worked on a bipartisan effort to propose a narrow exception to the current prohibition on proxy voting while Members are on parental leave. This is not a broad rewrite of House rules. It is a targeted, commonsense fix that mirrors the 12 weeks of parental leave guaranteed under the Family and Medical Leave Act.

- This exception would allow pregnant Members or new parents to vote by proxy on the House floor and in Committee for up to 12 weeks while on parental leave.

- It would also allow limited proxy voting before birth if a pregnant Member has a serious medical condition that makes travel unsafe, with any pre-birth leave deducted from the total 12 weeks. No leave under this exception would count toward establishing a quorum.

- This should also apply to new parents who are adopting, fostering, or welcoming a child through surrogacy.

- Last year, along with Representatives Luna, Jacobs, and Lawler—a group of parents I was proud to work with—I introduced a bipartisan resolution outlining this proposal. It now has 175 cosponsors, a clear sign that Members across the political spectrum understand the need for modernization.

- But this effort is bigger than party. It is about whether this body is willing to confront outdated policies that shut out people who know firsthand the challenges everyday families are facing.

- When Congress looks like America, we all benefit. As new generations of men and women run for office, it is time we adapt so no one has to choose between caring for their family and caring for their country.

- If Congress wants to stand with mothers and fathers and support growing families, then it must adopt policies that allow its own Members to do the same. We cannot credibly legislate for families while maintaining rules that exclude the very people who understand those challenges firsthand.

- Thank you again for this opportunity. With that, I yield my time back to the Chair and am happy to answer any questions.
- The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you very much.
Mrs. Kiggans, you are recognized.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. JENNIFER A. KIGGANS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF VIRGINIA

Mrs. KIGGANS. Thank you very much, Madam Chair and Ranking Member and committee, for having us today to be able to talk about our ideas for next Congress.

My resolution very closely aligns to what Congresswoman Houlahan was discussing about the need to protect our classified information. I remember as a Navy veteran, as a helicopter pilot married to an F-18 pilot, now a proud mom of a Naval aviator, how protected we kept our classified information when we were in the military.

So when I showed up here in Congress in January of 2023, that was one of the first questions I asked my staff: Where do I do my background check? When do I get the briefing? How do I make sure that? Because they offered me time in the SCIF, I sat on the Armed Services Committee, there was a lot of opportunities to be able to hear what is very important classified information, important to our national security and protection of our great country.

So when my staff told me there is no requirement, you were elected as a Member of Congress, you have immediate access to all classified information from top secret level on down, I was shocked, and have been shocked for 4 years now, that we do not handle our classified information any better.

This is obviously an extremely bipartisan issue with support on both sides of the aisle. Just watching, not just my family, but the constituents I represent in Virginia's Second District, in Hampton Roads, home to so many military, so much classified information, SEAL teams, watching and knowing what they go through on an annual basis to train and to safeguard our Nation's most precious secrets, and that we have none of that here in Congress, it is mind-boggling.

I think the words Ms. Houlahan used was that our constituents would be mortified and horrified to know that we had access, all 435 of us, to the most classified of classified information and that there is no training done.

So that is my ask. And our resolution really has four pillars.

Number one is an annual requirement. Watching, again, my military family and friends and the annual, they do a PowerPoint that has multiple exams and quizzes throughout the PowerPoint, and then they have to do in-person. My resolution also sets forth what some of that should contain.

And then also asks that people who are on committees of jurisdiction that handle more sensitive information, like Armed Services Committee, like Intelligence Committee, like Foreign Affairs Committee, might have a curtailed classified training that they have to do every year so that they can understand those repercussions.

And then it also has a little bit of teeth in it that is saying that if you do not do your and comply with your annual training, then you will no longer be able to access that classified information.

We have to start treating this information much more seriously. I am afraid for our national security that Members of Congress don't understand what this information, if it was to get out or leaked, what that would mean for the security of our country.

I know we already had issues on the Armed Services Committee. If you talk to Chairman Rogers, he will tell you his frustration as well, and we routinely get reminded about this information.

But we have to change that. I am still shocked and mortified and horrified, along with Congresswoman Houlahan, about the fact that we do not treat this with greater respect.

I would go so far as to at least consider even background checks for Members of Congress, but I think this is a good place to start for now.

So thank you very much for your time.

[The statement of Mrs. Kiggans follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JENNIFER A. KIGGANS

- Madam Chair, Ranking Member, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Rules Committee and to contribute to the update of the rules for the 120th Congress.

- I am before this Committee today to address a significant issue in how Congress protects classified information.

- Currently, Members of Congress need only take an oath and sign a piece of paper to be granted access to classified material.

- And yet, every Member of this body is entrusted with access to information whose exposure could put American lives, sources, and national security at risk.

- Unlike the men and women in our intelligence community, our military, and the executive branch who handle that same information, Members of Congress are not currently subject to a uniform, recurring training requirement to ensure we understand how to protect classified information.

- Unless a Member has previously served in a role that required this kind of training, many have received little to no practical, hands-on instruction in how to handle classified material once granted access.

- We are never walked through the mechanics of proper handling of classified information or given real-world scenarios on how foreign intelligence services attempt to target people in our position.

- This is a significant risk to our national security and one we have the power to close today. That is why I submit this proposal to strengthen classified information security training for Members of Congress.

- This resolution is straightforward, and it rests on four pillars:

- (1) First, it establishes an annual training requirement.

- a. Every Member with access to classified information would be required to complete a classified information security refresher course each year—not a one-time oath upon arrival, but an ongoing obligation.

- (2) Second, it sets a curriculum floor. That training must cover:

- a. the proper handling, marking, storage, and safeguarding of classified material
 - b. how to recognize and report foreign intelligence targeting—from social engineering and cyber phishing to suspicious contacts while traveling;
 - c. the rules governing personal phones and electronic devices around classified discussions;
 - d. and the criminal and administrative consequences of mishandling classified information.
 - Members should not be able to say they didn't know the rules. This proposal makes sure they do.
 - (3) Third, it recognizes that not every committee carries the same risk.
 - a. Members serving on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Armed Services, Foreign Affairs, and Homeland Security are exposed to more sensitive material, more often, and face more sophisticated adversaries as a result.
 - b. This proposal requires an additional, committee specific module for those Members.
 - (4) Fourth, and critically, it has teeth.
 - a. Training without enforcement is a suggestion, not a standard.
 - b. Under this proposal, a Member who fails to complete the required training and certification by the deadline would have their access to classified information suspended until they come into compliance.
 - c. And to make sure this isn't a paper requirement that quietly lapses, the Sergeant-at-Arms would track compliance and report quarterly to the Committee on House Administration, which in turn would report annually to the full House.
 - We ask servicemembers, intelligence officers, and federal employees across this government to retrain on handling classified information as a condition of keeping their clearance. We should hold ourselves to the same standard we hold them to—no less.
 - This is not about distrust of any Member; it's about institutionalizing a baseline of readiness so that human error does not become the vulnerability our adversaries exploit.
 - This proposal is a common-sense, good-governance reform.
 - It costs little, it asks nothing of Members that we don't already ask of the people who work for us and alongside us in classified spaces, and it closes a significant gap in how this institution safeguards our nation's secrets.
 - I urge the Committee to support this proposal, and I'm happy to answer any questions.
 - Thank you.
- The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you very much.
Ms. Scholten, you are recognized.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. HILLARY J. SCHOLTEN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

Ms. SCHOLTEN. Thank you so much, Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member McGovern, for holding this important hearing today so that we can weigh in on behalf of our constituents.

I am thrilled to be here today to propose a set of commonsense rules that would support good governance and transparency in the 120th Congress.

The House has the unique ability to establish its own rules and procedures. The power that we have to determine how we want to go forward should not be understated.

In the United States Government there is only one branch where the only way to serve is to be elected by the people, and so that power should not be taken for granted. It is given to us by the people, and we can set these rules to enhance our transparency and our accountability.

As vice chair of the Democratic Women's Caucus, I am really proud to support a comprehensive package of sexual misconduct reforms put forth by my good friend, our chairwoman, Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández, in addition to my own proposals.

Americans across the country are rightfully concerned about the scale, the scale of misconduct in this Chamber, and we have the power to do something about it. We can set our own rules. The striking lack of transparency and accountability is shocking.

That is why we must prohibit inappropriate sexual relationships between Members of Congress and House employees, ensure that House Ethics investigatory work isn't impacted by upcoming elections, and provide adequate resources, including sufficient training, to identify, prevent, and address sexual misconduct in the workplace.

In addition, I have submitted several proposals that seek to modernize Congress and strengthen good governance.

Nearly every Member of Congress will serve as a caregiver at some point in their lives. Many others will experience a period of bereavement, or serious illness, or assume significant family responsibilities following childbirth or adoption. I associate myself with the comments of Ms. Pettersen and Ms. Jacobs with respect to proxy voting.

And I just want to underscore the point that was made about the lack of representation of parents. While I did not give birth in Congress, I am the parent to school-age children, actively parenting my young children at this stage, and the demands on our time for being in this body and also being at home should not be overstated.

And I have heard many say, well, then maybe you should choose a different profession. That would be an incredible disservice to the American people. They are underserved when they don't have voices like ours in Congress to speak on them. We all know how busy we are, and any given day you are dealing with issues of the environment, education, immigration. It is the tyranny of the urgent.

And there are several moms sitting around this table right here who know what it is like when you are making choices at the grocery store about what you can and cannot afford. You are looking

at crumbling education systems, the threat of addictive patterns of online algorithms preyed on by predatory social media users.

It is up to us who feel those threats every single day to respond with the urgency that those threats demand. That is what representation is all about, and that is what we do here in this body.

Allowing parents the ability to actively parent and take the issues that they see back home and turn it into legislative priorities is what we should be doing to best serve the American people.

I am also supportive of reforms to House expulsion and censure procedures. As we have seen over the last year, our current system can fall short when it comes to holding bad actors accountable, and also can be used as a political tool when it is not necessarily intended for that purpose.

We need more intentional and deliberative process, one that would hold Members accountable for rules and ethics violations, while also ensuring that disciplinary procedures themselves are used appropriately. And, again, not as a political weapon against someone across the aisle, but truly to ensure accountability when bad conduct has occurred.

Third, I propose that the House engage with our Senate counterparts to prioritize popular bipartisan legislation in both Chambers. We have to be responsive to the needs and views of our constituents. But far too often legislation stalls once it passes in a Chamber of origin. That is not acceptable.

When legislation passes the House or the Senate with broad support, whether unanimous consent or two-thirds majority, it should receive expedited consideration in the next Chamber.

Lastly, I suggest that two Members of Congress can serve as the primary sponsor of a bill should it be in a bipartisan effort. There is already precedent for this practice from the 104th Congress where the House of Representatives allowed the first 20 bills introduced in the first session to have more than one Member listed as a sponsor.

I am proud of my bipartisan record in Congress, and I know that incentivizing two different Members, especially from opposite parties, to serve as an original sponsor of a piece of legislation would continue to incentivize that work.

I urge my colleagues to support these reforms and look forward to discussing more ways that we can make Congress accessible and accountable to the American people.

Thank you for your time today. And I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you very much. Ms. Gluesenkamp Perez.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. MARIE GLUESENKAMP PEREZ, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

Ms. PEREZ. Thank you so much, Chairwoman. And thank you to the members of the Rules Committee for bringing us here today.

So proud of what has been said, and I cannot say enough how much I think the representation of the body is improved when we have a more representative body. I believe there are fewer than ten Members of Congress who have a child in daycare. Is it any shock,

then, that daycare has not become a priority of this body? So I am very glad to be exiting that club.

But I am here to talk about another form of representation: ensuring that rural districts, that normal people are able to be committee witnesses.

It is so easy to get an expert with a Ph.D. or a lobbyist to come before your committee and give testimony. But if you are a mom who has to get a babysitter, if you are running a small business, you can't drop everything, book a hotel room, and come to D.C. to give expert witness testimony.

My BRIDGE to Congress ensures that we allow remote testimony in our committees, and I urge the support of it.

Next, I would like to urge adoption of the resolution supporting the bipartisan Select Committee on Electoral Reform. Regardless of party or ideology, more and more Americans feel that our democracy is not working for them. They are losing faith in government, and they view it as unreflective of their communities and values.

As Members of Congress, we need to take a step back, reexamine how we got here, and work towards what we can do to fix it.

Realistically, there is not one easy trick that is going to fix this, but I believe that a Select Committee on Electoral Reform will bring together an evenly split bipartisan group of lawmakers to study our electoral methods, conduct public hearings, and submit recommendations to reduce polarization and strengthen our representative democracy's effectiveness.

This committee will examine a series of reforms to improve our electoral system, including independent redistricting commissions to push back against gerrymandering, instant runoff voting, also known as ranked choice voting, to ensure an election winner represents a majority of voters, and multi-Member districts to increase proportional representation, not preferencing or biasing any of those, but examining those opportunities to build a more representative body.

My biggest frustration in the fall of the 2025 shutdown was that Members like me had no real way to bring the House back into session after the Speaker sent everyone home in September. The Speaker had designated the House as being in a district work period, and that matters because during a district work period the Speaker can effectively adjourn the House unilaterally. Members don't get the same opportunity to object to an adjournment, or force a vote. Even resolutions of the highest level of privilege are unable to call the House back into session.

We need to fix this. If a majority of the House wants to come back to Washington to do the people's work, there should be a way for them to do it.

My idea is pretty simple. If a sufficient number of House Members believe the House needs to come back from a district work period, we should have a mechanism to let that happen. I encourage this committee to allowing a majority, or even potentially a supermajority of Members to terminate a district work period and require the House to reconvene.

Fourth, I would like to thank Representatives Leger Fernández and Cammack for their and the Democratic Women's Caucus for their leadership on this next issue. As Members of Congress, it is

our responsibility to ensure this institution is predicated on accountability and trust. Right now that responsibility begs our action to address sexual misconduct.

As Members, we are here to work, not to date. The next rules package should include a code of conduct that prohibits Members of Congress from having sexual relationships with House staff no matter where that staffer works, whether in another Member's office, a personal office, a committee, or a caucus.

This is about trust and accountability and not giving powerful people a free pass to continue perpetuating a culture of sexual assault and misconduct. Americans deserve to know that their elected officials are held to high standards, and this body will not regain the confidence of the American people until we do that.

Finally, I want to address a difficult subject. Too often we ignore the elephant in the room.

Americans elect Members of Congress to be their voice in Washington, and that responsibility comes with a clear standard of conduct. Clause 1 of Rule XXIII of the House rules requires Members to, quote, "behave at all times in a manner that shall reflect creditably on the House."

When a Member is no longer able to fulfill the responsibilities of the office because of significant, irreversible, cognitive impairment, and unelected staff are effectively running the office on that Member's behalf, we have to ask whether we are meeting that standard.

This is not about age. Some of our sharpest and most valuable Members of this body are among our oldest. This is about cognitive capacity, clarity, and the ability to fulfill the responsibilities entrusted to Members of Congress.

That is why I introduced legislation directing the Office of Congressional Conduct to establish a standard for addressing these circumstances.

For such a standard to be directly enforceable, it would need to come through this body. It would need to come through the Rules Committee, be debated, be adopted. This changes nothing about the Constitution and the rules for removing Members of Congress from their office.

I don't have all the answers, but we can't continue to ignore this issue. I urge the committee to consider including a provision addressing the abilities of Members to fulfill the responsibilities of their office in the Code of Conduct for the 120th Congress.

Thank you again to Chair Foxx and Ranking Member McGovern for giving me the opportunity to testify today, and I look forward to working with you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Jack, do you have any questions?

Mr. JACK. No questions, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. McGovern.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I want to thank you all for being here. And on the issue of proxy voting, I am in agreement. You know, we initiated proxy voting when I was chair of the Rules Committee and during COVID. I thought it was the right thing to do. There were some that abused it.

And so I think we need clarity in terms of how we would proceed, but I think there are compelling instances where it makes sense.

I mean, we are living in 2026, not 1946. I mean, we have the technology to be able to accommodate people who are not here.

But I appreciate all of the suggestions that have been put forward. And, again, even on the issue of how we handle classified information, I think we just need to do a better job, and this shouldn't be a controversial issue. So we can work on that.

But anyway, I look forward to working with all of you as we put our rules package together, and thank you for being here.

I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you, Mr. McGovern.

Ms. Scanlon.

Ms. SCANLON. I just want to thank everyone for your really concrete testimony about ways we can drag this body into, if not the 21st century, at least the 20th century. But, I mean, your proposals are things that have been implemented in companies, in legislatures around the world. It is far pastime that we catch up. So thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Ms. Leger Fernández.

Ms. LEGER FERNÁNDEZ. Thank you very much. And I also really want to thank, you know, the vice chair. We have had so many meetings.

And with regards to addressing the sexual misconduct and the sense, the sense of pervasiveness that occurs in this Congress and the fact that our staff, our staff tell us about it over and over again. We will conduct the last of our meetings with staff this week. And so there will be a—hopefully, it will be a bipartisan—we are really looking forward to having a bipartisan proposal put forth that will have many proposed rule changes.

I think right now we are at about 14 very specific rule changes that will go to the issue of accountability, right. That there should be a code of conduct that says you will not have sexual relations with any staff; that you will not use your position to abuse, to harass, to take advantage, because there is a power imbalance, and anybody who thinks there is not a power imbalance is lying to themselves, to their constituents, and to others.

And it needs to be meaning—the consequences for violating that code of ethics need to be meaningful, and they need to be clear. So that if you start walking down that path, you know what is at the end, that you may lose your committee assignments, you may have to face an expulsion vote.

We need due process. We need to make sure that happens. We need to make sure that everybody knows where to go. It is very confusing right now. If you have been subject to sexual harassment, where do you go?

So we are calling it one-stop shop where somebody knows where to go and that there is appropriate training, in-person training, so people can't, like, not pay attention while there is a video going on about what does it mean, what does it mean to harass people. And that there are timely, timely investigations and thorough investigations because that is important. It should not be based on a tweet or based on a mere accusation.

The American people and the people who were sent here, their constituents also need to know what happened so that if there are consequences, it is very clear.

So we will be submitting that, and I want to thank everybody who participated and people who raised it. I think it is really important.

And the other stuff, it is like, yes, absolutely, of course, we should be doing these things, right. We should be making it easier for brand-new parents to serve. I represent the Los Alamos National Labs, and I have gone previously—in a previous position, I have gone through the—I have gotten clearance. And when I walked in there, it is like now we can tell you everything, you know, coming to the blue room, coming to the red room because you have been elected. It is like, oh, my God, right.

Like, we need to protect our security, and we should not assume that everybody knows, right. That everybody knows what you shouldn't say or what you can say. And so all of these make sense.

We should not be using our position to make money. The prediction markets need to be reined in in so many ways, but we can do our piece here in a rules package.

So I thank everybody for their proposals and thank you for taking the time and sharing them directly with the committee.

And with that, Madam Chair, I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you, Ms. Leger Fernández.

I want to echo much of what my colleagues have said. I appreciate very much your all coming, all the people who have made the suggestions to us for incorporating items into the rules.

I agree with you too, the American people expect us to be role models. I, frankly, am often shocked, shocked by the behavior of people in this body. And not just on things that you have brought up, but on other little things that happen.

And I am assuming most of us grew up knowing the difference between right and wrong. And when people don't exhibit right behavior, it surprises even me. So I don't know how we can make sure that we get people who come here to serve who want to do things for the right reasons, but I appreciate your suggestions.

I also want to emphasize what Ms. Scanlon had said about the Modernization Committee. In the last 4 years, the House has implemented most of the 202 recommendations provided by the Modernization Committee, and I certainly have appreciated the things they have done. And House Administration Committee is actively seeking new modernization ideas.

So I think it is not just the Rules Committee that is looking at how to make things better as we operate the House of Representatives and the Congress, but there are other committees actively working on these things, and I am sure there will be Member days for those committees if they haven't had—especially House Administration.

So I hope people will be paying attention to that and making suggestions there. Doesn't all have to be done in the Rules Committee. There are other ways that it can be done.

So thank you all very much for coming. And I think there are no further questions. So you are excused.

Mr. Cleaver, Mr. Kiley, I think you guys know the drill. We welcome your written statements.

Mr. Cleaver, you are recognized.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. EMANUEL CLEAVER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MISSOURI

Mr. CLEAVER. Thank you, Madam Chair. The resolution would allow for any—in the House will involve two lead sponsors—

Mr. MCGOVERN. You need to put your mike on.

Mr. CLEAVER. Sorry. This suggestion actually was made; I didn't realize it. They were in the same position. But they made this same recommendation that we should move to allow Members of different political parties to participate in the top of the bills.

And I was proud to introduce the BUDS Resolution alongside Representative Young Kim, who, in an ideal world, would be listed as a lead sponsor as well, as well as Representative Scott Peters, William Timmons, Kevin Mullin, and Mike Carey.

There are two key advantages to this resolution that I hope to emphasize.

First, it can help us promote bipartisanship, which I believe is desperately needed in our polarized politics. Second, it can help give better recognition to Members who are working hard and seeking common ground here in D.C.

Let me take just a few seconds to point something out. Recognition for the hard and important work that lawmakers do is something that can often feel uncomfortable for the humblest of lawmakers, because the last thing any of us want to admit to our districts is that Members deserve plaudits or praise.

But we all know that there are some Members, particularly when their party is in the minority, who are working hard every single day to craft meaningful bipartisan bills with the majority party to meet the needs of their constituents and make their communities a better place in which to live.

We also know that there are some Members who don't. Even if the BUDS Resolution did not change behavior in a way, it would immediately become much easier for our constituents and the media alike to see when the Member of Congress is actively writing and introducing legislation; whereas, currently, they wouldn't get listed on the top line.

However, I would contend that the BUDS Resolution would change behavior, and that is the other benefit here, promoting bipartisanship. I believe, as do many others, that we won't just see better recognition for those Members who are working to introduce bipartisan bills. We will see a clear incentive change where Members know that it is now furthering their advantage to work in a bipartisan manner more frequently.

Mike Flood of Omaha, 130 miles away from me in Kansas City, and I started working right after the election almost 2 years ago, and eventually we went out to dinner and sat down, had some ideas that were similar, and we introduced what is now the law. And that is this bipartisan housing bill, the first of its kind in almost three decades. But we started it having dinner and started working together.

Now, I never for one moment believe that I should go and demand that my name be on the top line, but I do believe that it does help. The idea has gotten a lot of traction with the cohort organizations aimed at fixing Congress, and we have heard an outstanding amount of support from groups like the Bipartisan Policy Center,

Demand Progress, the Foundation of American Innovation, Issue One, and more.

And I absolutely believe that democracy demands debate and dialogue, and that can happen more frequently when we are able to work together in having a bipartisan bill actually introduced. I am absolutely convinced that that bill would never have come to fruition, it would have never become law had I had some kind of anger based on the fact that my name was not on the bill.

But I am seeking your support on something like this because I think it does matter.

Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Mister, Miss, others who are not here.

[The statement of Mr. Cleaver follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. EMANUEL CLEAVER

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

I'm Representative Emanuel Cleaver, and I have the honor of representing the 5th District of the great state of Missouri.

I want to thank both Chairwoman Virginia Foxx & Ranking Member Jim McGovern for all your hard work over the past two years. I know your jobs haven't always been easy, but you've demonstrated a commitment to civility, respect, and integrity that should be celebrated by your respective communities and the entire nation.

Today, I also want to thank you particularly for allowing America's Representatives this opportunity to voice our own experiences and ideas on how we can make this beautiful, if also increasingly chaotic, institution that we all love work just a little bit better.

During the 116th and 117th Congresses, I had the honor of serving on the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress, otherwise known as the Modernization Committee.

As you know, this Select Committee was slightly different from the others in our illustrious chamber; it had an equal number of Democrats and Republicans, working together to find bipartisan reforms that make Congress a little more effective, efficient, and reflective of the will of the people.

Over those four years, I'm happy to say that we were able to conjure up more than 200 recommendations that will help all of us better serve our constituents.

While I was proud of all the recommendations that we formally passed under the leadership of Chairman Derek Kilmer, there is one that I found particularly powerful, one that ultimately became my BUDS Resolution, or "Building Unity through Dual Sponsors" Resolution.

This important legislation would pull one small but powerful lever that I believe would facilitate greater collaboration in the halls of the House—which is something I think the vast majority of Americans are yearning for.

This resolution would allow for any bill in the House to have two lead sponsors, provided they are from Members of different political parties.

I was proud to introduce the BUDS Resolution alongside Representative Young Kim, who in an ideal world would be listed as

a lead sponsor as well, as well as Representatives Scott Peters, William Timmons, Kevin Mullin, and Mike Carey.

There are two key advantages to this resolution that I hope to emphasize. First, it can help us promote bipartisanship, which I believe is desperately needed in our polarized politics. Second, it can help give better recognition to the Members who are Working hard and seeking common ground here in DC.

Allow me to take the second point first.

Recognition for the hard and important work that lawmakers do is something that can often feel uncomfortable for the humblest of lawmakers, because the last thing any of us wants to admit to our Districts is that Members deserve plaudits.

But we all know that there are some Members, particularly when their party is in the Minority, who are working hard every day to craft meaningful bipartisan bills with the Majority party to meet the needs of their constituents and make their communities a better place in key, tangible ways.

We also all know that there are some Members who . . . don't.

Even if the BUDS Resolution did not change behavior in any way, it would immediately become much easier for our constituents & the media alike to see when their Member of Congress is actively writing and introducing legislation, whereas currently they wouldn't get listed "topline."

However, I would contend that the BUDS resolution would change behavior and that's the other benefit here—Promoting Bipartisanship.

I believe, as do many others, that we won't just see better recognition for those Members who are working to introduce bipartisan bills—we'll see a clear incentive change where Members know that it's now further in their advantage to work in a bipartisan manner more frequently.

I strongly believe this is a key ideal we should be striving for in how we craft a Rules package.

This idea has gotten a lot of traction with the cohort of organizations aimed at "fixing Congress", and we've heard an outstanding amount of support from groups like the Bipartisan Policy Center, Demand Progress, the Foundation for American Innovation, Issue One, and more.

But I believe that anybody who believes in smart organizational incentives & good system design can get behind this change, which I think would be of great aid to this organization.

With that, I thank you for your time and appreciate your audience.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you, Mr. Cleaver.

Mr. Kiley, you are recognized.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. KEVIN KILEY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. KILEY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Today I am proposing a change to the House rules to protect the right of Members to serve on standing committees irrespective of their membership or affiliation in a party, caucus, or conference. In other words, to protect the right of Independent Members to serve on committees.

This will restore the fair, commonsense practice that prevailed for most of American history, up until the 1970s, when committee seats suddenly became the property of the parties. And the parties have, of course, used this newfound power to, in many ways, contribute to the partisanship, polarization, and dysfunction that prevails in this building.

The power to assign committees is, of course, used to enforce party discipline, to punish Members. Just yesterday we had a couple Democrat Members who voted a way that the minority leader did not want them to, and so he has announced that he is going to crack down on them, which, of course, one of the obvious ways to do that is through committee assignments.

Committee seats are also used to compel Members to participate in the political activities of the party outside of the building with the expected level of participation, indeed, being determined in a formulaic way based on the prestige of the Member's committee assignments.

When Americans learn about how this all works, the sheer griminess of it, they are, without exception, shocked. It is a system that very much needs reform.

But today I am not going to propose fixing this system broadly, but, instead, targeting a particularly perverse consequence of it, which is that Independents do not get committee seats.

Now, think about just how deeply counterintuitive this is. If you are an Independent elected by your district, duly elected—maybe you are elected precisely because you are Independent and voters are dissatisfied with both parties—if you don't affiliate with one of the two party caucuses, you cannot sit on standing committees and really participate in the heart of policymaking. Your voters, constituents are in many ways disenfranchised.

Perhaps most jarring, rule X functions in such a way that if a Member sitting on committees becomes Independent, then they are automatically removed from those committees, just like that, just because they are not affiliating with a party anymore. What does the one have to do with the other? Why do you suddenly lose your committee seats just because you are not affiliating with one party or the other?

So an Independent Member like myself, in order to fulfill my commitment that I had at the beginning of this term to serve on the committees that I am on, to chair the subcommittee that I chair on the Education Committee, I have to, as a formality, affiliate with one party or another just to fulfill those commitments. That is not the way that it should work, and it is not the historical practice. Indeed, this provision of rule X was only adopted in 1983.

As things stand, Independents are the most underrepresented group in the entire country. Upwards of 50 percent of Americans are Independent, and yet there is exactly one Member out of 435 in the House who is Independent. And this is largely because of structural impediments, such as the denial of committee seats.

So what I am proposing today is a simple change that simply assures that an Independent Member has the right to serve on standing committees, whether or not they affiliate with a party, caucus, or conference. And the way I have proposed it—and this is not necessarily the only way to do it, but I think it is one that

makes sense—is that the Member could suggest up to six—or a total of six preferred committees and would be guaranteed to be assigned to at least one of those six, so they couldn't just be given whatever is the worst or the least desirable of all the committees. And they would also have a right to a second committee but wouldn't be able to suggest particular preferences with respect to that one.

I think that this is a commonsense change that the vast, vast majority of Americans would support. Everyone I have talked to is very surprised, whether they are Democrat, Republican, or Independent, that this is the way that the House works. And, frankly, we are serving at a time when Congress has a 10 percent approval rating when we had this redistricting war that has broken out across the country, when we had the longest government shutdown in American history.

I think that a modest change to allow for Members to have a greater ability to operate here and to make Independent representation more viable would be a good start in reversing these trends.

Thank you very much.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you, Mr. Kiley.

Mr. Jack, do you have any questions?

Mr. JACK. No questions.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Mr. McGovern.

Mr. MCGOVERN. First I want to ask unanimous consent to insert into the record testimony from Representative Gonzalez in support of proxy voting and virtual witness participation.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Without objection.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. VINCENTE GONZALEZ

Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member McGovern, and Members of the Committee, thank you for convening this Member Day hearing and for giving Members the opportunity to offer recommendations for improving the Rules of the House for the 120th Congress.

I appreciate the Committee's willingness to hear directly from Members and consider their proposals. This process strengthens the institution and ensures we take a more thoughtful approach to the rules that govern our work.

As we prepare for the new Congress and technology continues to evolve, I believe the House should continue modernizing its procedures to ensure full participation, transparency, and efficiency.

Today, I want to highlight two specific reforms: proxy voting and virtual witness participation.

First proxy voting:

Given the realities of modern congressional service, including overlapping committee hearings, district responsibilities, and unexpected scheduling conflicts, I believe the House should consider establishing a permanent, structured proxy voting system for certain limited, well-defined circumstances.

When properly safeguarded, proxy voting can ensure that constituents are not left without representation simply because a Member is unable to be in two places at once or is dealing with a district emergency as many of us are familiar with.

A transparent and accountable proxy voting system would give Members greater flexibility to meet their obligations while keeping limitations to preserve the integrity of the legislative process.

It would also empower the House to continue operations during emergencies or disruptions—something recent Congresses have experienced firsthand.

Second, virtual witness participation:

I also urge the Committee to continue evaluating and formalizing the use of virtual witness testimony in committee proceedings.

Remote participation proved effective and reliable during prior Congresses, allowing committees to hear from experts, community leaders, and stakeholders who might otherwise be unable to testify due to the cost, time, or logistics involved in traveling to Washington.

This is particularly important for many disadvantaged communities I represent in South Texas.

I represent many small and rural cities who have limited resources to cover their aging infrastructure let alone fly to Washington on short notice to testify.

Asking those communities to spend thousands of dollars to send someone to Washington just to testify before Congress can be an unrealistic burden.

At a time when everyday goods and services are skyrocketing putting pressure on families, local governments, and small communities, we should be asking ourselves whether there is a better way.

And frankly, we are doing ourselves a disservice when we make it unnecessarily difficult for people to participate.

We are missing out on vital testimony from experts all around the country who have valuable firsthand knowledge to share with Congress.

We should be making it easier—not harder—for them to be heard.

Integrating virtual witness participating into committee rules would allow us to not only strengthen oversight but broaden the perspectives presented at hearings. It would also reduce logistical burdens without compromising the quality or accountability of testimony.

Both proxy voting and virtual witness participation are pragmatic, commonsense reforms that recognize the realities Members and committees face today.

Each would enhance the efficiency, fairness, and accessibility of the legislative process while preserving the transparency and institutional integrity that the House rightly demands.

I look forward to continuing to engage with the Committee as we consider reforms for the 120th Congress.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. MCGOVERN. And I would ask unanimous consent to insert into the record testimony from Rep. Budzinski in support of multiple ideas to reform House rules, including banning House-affiliated individuals from participating in prediction markets and allowing bipartisan joint sponsorship of Members.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Without objection.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. NIKKI BUDZINSKI

DEAR CHAIR FOXX AND RANKING MEMBER MCGOVERN, Thank you for holding a Member Day hearing on proposed rules changes for the 120th Congress. In an effort to make the House of Representatives a more modern, efficient, bipartisan, and ethical institution, I write today to urge the House Committee on Rules to consider the following changes as you work on a House Rules package for the coming Congress:

1. Ban Insider Trading on Prediction Markets

This bipartisan proposal, cosponsored by Rep. Adrian Smith of Nebraska, would include in the House Rules a ban on House Members, officers, employees, and their immediate families and/or fiduciaries from purchasing event contracts on political or government events on prediction market platforms. This rule would prevent Members of Congress, officers, staff, and family members from using sensitive, nonpublic information that is entrusted to them by the public for personal profit.

2. Bipartisan Joint Sponsorship of Measures

This proposal would allow two lead sponsors from different parties on one piece of legislation, so cross-party authorship is formal and recognized. This would give Members on both sides of the aisle equal ownership of measures they worked on together, rather than allowing only one side to be listed as the lead in committee proceedings or on Congress.gov.

3. Predictable House Calendar and Remote Voting Allowance

This proposal encourages setting a House voting calendar that includes fewer travel days, longer working weeks, and protected committee time set in the rules, so the schedule does not turn on one leader's preference. To allow personal flexibility, there could also be a mechanism by which Members could participate and vote remotely for up to 10 days per year. This change would give Members on both sides of the aisle predictability in the House calendar and provide more time for Members to collaborate on legislation, including in committee.

4. Sponsor Modification of Legislation Prior to Committee Markup

This proposal would provide a Member the opportunity to amend their own legislation before markup, rather than needing to have it amended by the Chair or during the committee markup. This would give Members on both sides of the aisle the opportunity to be flexible on good ideas and amend legislation to garner needed support between the time a bill is introduced and when it is marked up in committee.

5. Bipartisan Priority Calendar

Under this proposal, committee-reported bills with robust bipartisan support would be given a fast-tracked path to a Floor vote, not dependent on leadership's discretion. This would expedite consideration of bipartisan bills with broad support that does not rely on the preferences of either party's leadership.

6. Members-Only Speaker's Lobby

This proposal would convert the Speaker's Lobby to a Members-only space off the floor where Members of both parties can

speak with no cameras or outside groups. This would help foster a culture of bipartisanship and negotiation among Members of the House.

7. Finish Reforming the Motion to Vacate

Finishing the reformation of the motion to vacate the Chair would make it so that no single faction of the House can throw our body into crisis over the gavel, regardless of who holds it. This would help ensure stability and certainty in the leadership of the House.

8. Bipartisan Commission on Legislative and Institutional Reform

This proposal would establish a bipartisan commission of former Members of Congress and experts to study and recommend fixes for structural and procedural issues in the House, with a defined path to a vote. This commission would bring together individuals with deep institutional knowledge to make recommendations to the House on how House operations and procedures could be improved to enhance efficiency and bipartisanship.

I look forward to continuing our work together on these proposals and others that would make doing the business of the American people more efficient, transparent, and ethical. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony today.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I want to thank both of our colleagues for being here.

Mr. Kiley, you are on committees, though, aren't you?

Mr. KILEY. I am.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Yeah. Okay. So I remember when Bernie Sanders was here, he was on committees as well and very—he wasn't blocked from being on committees. And I hear what you are saying.

On the other hand, I mean, I watch how people vote, and you vote pretty consistently with the Republicans. And so I—I don't know, you know, whether or not we need to create a whole other category, you know. But in any event, I hear what you are saying and—

Mr. KILEY. Well, I vote with the Republicans when I agree with what the Republicans are doing. I vote with the Democrats when I agree with what the Democrats are doing.

So on three reconciliation bills, I voted with the Republicans once, I voted with the Democrats twice. I think that you should be able to do that here without, you know, having to, you know, let there be consequences for it.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I keep score, like on the rules and the—

Mr. KILEY. Say it again?

Mr. MCGOVERN. I keep score when it comes to the rules. And, basically, you know, my critique has been that people have been locked out of offering amendments pretty consistently. This is the most closed Congress in history, and you vote all the time pretty much, maybe with one exception, I guess—one or two exceptions—with the Republicans to shut down the process.

So I would think that one of the things that we need to do to try to make this place work better is to understand that not everybody thinks alike and that we ought to have legitimate debate on the floor. That doesn't mean that it is a free-for-all. But we are get-

ting into the habit of just shutting everything down because it is convenient. And I think that that undermines kind of the influence of individual Members, whether they are Democrats or Republicans or Independents, and I think it is not good for legislating. I think we could do a lot better.

But anyway, I appreciate you both being here and——

Mr. KILEY. I appreciate that.

Madam Chair, if I could just—there was some jargon thrown out by the ranking member there about rules and whatnot. Just so folks understand what he is referring to, a rule, as we consider it on the floor, is just a means of bringing a bill to the floor for a vote. I generally support those because I think it is good when Members can vote their conscience on the underlying bill. Of course, two Members of your party who voted for one are now going to be punished for that for giving folks the opportunity to vote on the underlying bill.

Mr. MCGOVERN. No, no.

Mr. KILEY. But you are right that it is not—it is not just one party or the other.

The CHAIRWOMAN. It is——

Mr. MCGOVERN. It is my time.

Mr. KILEY. Oh, I am sorry.

Mr. MCGOVERN. It is my time. All right. And the bottom line is we have had 168 closed rules. So it is more than just about bringing a bill——

Mr. KILEY. Sure, and I agree with you. I think there should be more open——

Mr. MCGOVERN [continuing]. And to have people vote their conscience. Bottom line is these are closed rules. So I can't even bring an idea to the floor. You can't bring an idea to the floor. Nobody can bring an idea to the floor. So it is more than just, oh, it is just, oh, we are bringing a bill to the floor, people vote their conscience. I mean, bottom line is, I have never seen a perfect piece of legislation.

Mr. KILEY. Yeah.

Mr. MCGOVERN. And the bottom line is that, you know, Members—by the way, not just Democrats. I mean, we are disproportionately cut out of offering amendments. But, you know, a majority of Republican amendments have been banned, have been denied.

And, again, you know, I am looking at the record here, and you have voted basically to all your fellow Republicans that they can't offer amendments either. I think there is just something—I think we are getting too comfortable in that habit, and we need to open things up.

Mr. KILEY. If I may personally just express agreement. I agree with you on that. I think that we should have more open rules. I think there should be more opportunities for amendment. We are in agreement with that 100 percent.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Yeah. But your votes don't agree with that. But anyway, that is another story.

Mr. KILEY. I disagree. I mean, I think——

Mr. MCGOVERN. When you vote for closed rule after closed rule after closed rule and then you come up here and say we ought to have more participation by Democrats and Republicans——

Mr. KILEY. Well, Mr. Ranking Member, the alternative is you don't get to vote on anything at all. So if I had a choice between an open rule and a closed rule, I would, of course, vote for the open rule.

Mr. MCGOVERN. The alternative is you vote down a rule, and then you come back and you create a better rule where there can be more debate. That is all.

Mr. KILEY. Sure. All right. If people can come together, I would love to because I would love to see more open rules. So let's talk more about that.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I yield back.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Thank you, Mr. McGovern.

Ms. Scanlon.

Ms. SCANLON. Just thank you for coming to testify. Mr. Cleaver, your points about providing more opportunities for people to work through legislation in a bipartisan manner in advance and to get more effective legislation forward are very well taken. Thank you.

The CHAIRWOMAN. And I thank you both for coming. And hearing no further questions, you are excused.

Mr. CLEANER. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. KILEY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Without objection, I would like to submit written statements from Mr. Womack for the record.

[The statements follow:]

PREPARED STATEMENTS OF HON. STEPHEN A. WOMACK

CHAIRWOMAN FOXX, RANKING MEMBER MCGOVERN, AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE: Thank you for your consideration of my proposals and for allowing an opportunity for Members to present our ideas on improving the operation of this body. As former Chairman of the House Budget Committee and the Joint Select Committee on Budget and Appropriations Process Reform, as well as a current member of the Bipartisan Fiscal Forum, I continue to explore bipartisan solutions to address our fiscal state and welcome your input. We must come together as a Congress to find solutions for the pressing matters before us.

As you are all aware, our nation recently surpassed \$40 trillion in national debt. This is uncharted territory for us as lawmakers, and if we do not act expeditiously as a Congress, we will propel our nation into a fiscal crisis with catastrophic outcomes for our constituents.

The House of Representatives does not have the luxury of routinely enacting legislation that increases mandatory spending at a time when such spending currently accounts for a majority of annual outlays. In response, I propose guardrails to enforce already-existing mandatory spending controls.

Congress reinstituted a "Cut-As-You-Go" rule within the rules package adopted for the 118th Congress and retained it for the 119th Congress, intending to restore fiscal responsibility and prevent future Congresses from having to address the catastrophic implications stemming from fiscal irresponsibility. Unfortunately, not

long after adoption, the rule was waived and has continued to be waived with regularity.

I propose a new clause to be inserted into the rules of the House for the 120th Congress that requires no less than 9/13 of the Rules Committees' members, including one member of the minority party in the House of Representatives, voting in the affirmative to report out a resolution, rule, or order of business that supersedes, suspends, or otherwise bypasses House Rule XXI, clause 10, the Cut-As-You-Go point of order. For reference, Rule XXI, Clause 10 states:

"Except as provided in paragraphs (b) and (c) it shall not be in order to consider a bill or joint resolution, or amendment thereto or a conference report thereon if the provisions of such measure have the net effect of increasing mandatory spending for the period of either—(a) the current year, the budget year, and the four fiscal years that following budget year; or (b) the current year, the budget year, and the nine fiscal years following that budget year."

The rules should clearly state that it shall not be in order to consider in the House a resolution, rule, or order of business reported by the Committee on Rules in violation of this paragraph unless the aforementioned threshold is met.

By instituting this rule, the House will exercise restraint and consider the implications of new mandatory spending within our current fiscal climate. The purpose is not to prohibit new mandatory spending, but to require the House to carefully weigh the economic, social, and moral implications of doing so.

Considering the national debt is over \$40 trillion, Congress must explore solutions to rein in our mandatory spending before it is too late. Thank you for your time and consideration of my proposals.

CHAIRWOMAN FOXX, RANKING MEMBER MCGOVERN, AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE: Thank you for your consideration of my proposals and for allowing an opportunity for Members to present our ideas on improving the operation of this body. As former Chairman of the House Budget Committee and the Joint Select Committee on Budget and Appropriations Process Reform, as well as a current member of the Bipartisan Fiscal Forum, I continue to explore bipartisan solutions to address our fiscal state and welcome your input. We must come together as a Congress to find solutions for the pressing matters before us.

Regardless of which party controls the House of Representatives, we are far too often asked to vote on legislation without being given the time to understand the fiscal ramifications. Long-past are the days when this body could haphazardly vote on legislation without worrying about the long-term fiscal impact of doing so. Going forward, the House must take into consideration the fiscal state of our nation when evaluating each and every piece of legislation that comes before us.

It is a disservice to our constituents and counterintuitive to the intent of this body when we are expected to vote on something without understanding its broader fiscal impacts, or the more personal impacts felt across our districts. In response, I propose the creation of a "No Score, No Vote" point of order in the rules of the House of Representatives for the 120th Congress.

To do this, we must create a point of order that may be raised to prohibit the House of Representatives from beginning debate, or calling for a vote on legislation unless said legislation has received a comprehensive estimate from either the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) or the Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT). The comprehensive estimate must clearly include the legislation's fiscal impact and clearly document the estimated effects on the outlays, revenues, and annual deficit of the federal government over a 5-year or 10-year budget window.

One frustration shared by all Members of the House is the lack of time we are given to evaluate pieces of legislation before it is considered on the floor. To address this, it shall not be in order to consider a covered measure until a comprehensive estimate performed by CBO or JCT that satisfies these conditions has been available to Members, Delegates, and the Resident Commissioner for at least 24 hours.

To ensure that we do not hamstring ourselves or prevent swift action in response to national emergencies, a provision should be included to ensure that this shall not apply to a bill or joint resolution continuing appropriations for a fiscal year, legislation reported by the Committee on Appropriations providing new budget authority for a fiscal year, or containing an emergency designation under section 251(b)(2) or section 252(e) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my proposals.

The CHAIRWOMAN. Anyone else seeking to testify on today's agenda?

Seeing none, the committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:22 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]

