

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 4, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bryan Steil
Chairman
Committee on House Administration
1309 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joseph Morelle
Ranking Member
Committee on House Administration
1216 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson and Leader Jeffries, Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle:

We respectfully request that you consider strongly encouraging and expanding opportunities for all Members of Congress to receive training on the proper handling of classified information, beginning in the 119th Congress.

In today's world of complex challenges and evolving threats, it is crucial for our elected representatives to have access to classified information because such information is essential for effectively carrying out our oversight and legislative responsibilities. Simply having access to this information is not enough, Members must also be proficient in *managing* that classified intelligence as well.

While Members of Congress possess expertise in various domains, most have never had the reason to handle classified information prior to joining Congress. Regular and frequent training on how to work with classified information is therefore imperative for every Member.

Past inadvertent or irresponsible releases of vital intelligence have occurred during open hearings, press scrums, conferences, or via other extemporaneous utterances. These incidents underscore the importance of training Members on the proper handling of classified information, the unauthorized release of which can compromise the work of our national security professionals and threaten the safety of our citizens at home and abroad.

To prepare for the incoming 119th Congress, we strongly encourage Members to receive training under the Office of House Security (OHS), overseen by the House Sergeant at Arms, before accessing classified information. This training should be integrated into orientation sessions for newly elected members and be readily available and encouraged for returning members,

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alongside already established training refresher courses offered on various topics throughout the year.

Additionally, advanced training options should be available and encouraged for committee Members and leaders who are regularly in contact with classified information on committees of jurisdiction such as the House Committee on Armed Services, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, House Committee on Homeland Security, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and relevant subcommittees of the House Committee on Appropriations (Defense, State and Foreign Operations, and Energy and Water).

The training curriculum should encompass but not be limited to critical topics such as classification levels and markings, proper storage protocols, legal obligations, and best practices for safeguarding sensitive data. In addition, Members should be taught the different resources available to them through House security and various committees on which they sit.

Furthermore, we recommend clearer and regular guidance from briefers regarding the classification status of information presented to Congress members. Articulating guidelines and markings will aid informed decision-making and mitigate inadvertent disclosures, reinforcing the solemn Oath of Secrecy taken by all Members to protect national security.¹

Thank you for considering our recommendations. We urge you to prioritize the modernization of House Member training, reinforcing our commitment to national security for Members of Congress in the 119th Congress. This initiative leverages existing House Security resources and aligns with principles of transparency, accountability, and national security that are fundamental to our democracy.

We look forward to hearing from you and working with you on this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



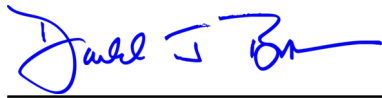
Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



Laurel M. Lee
Member of Congress

¹ House Rule XXIII, cl. 13, 112th Congress. Copies of the oath or affirmation are retained by the Clerk as part of the records of the House.

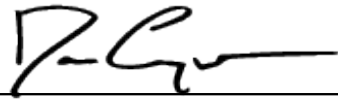
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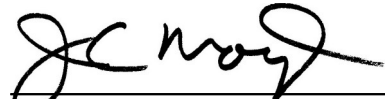
Don Bacon
Member of Congress



Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



Dan Crenshaw
Member of Congress



James C. Moylan
Member of Congress



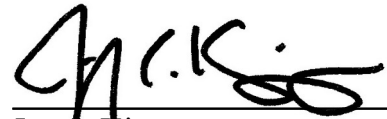
Ed Case
Member of Congress



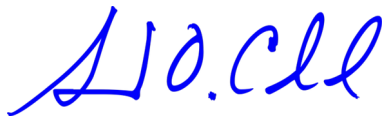
Nick LaLota
Member of Congress



Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



Jen A. Kiggans
Member of Congress



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress