

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 5, 2019

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable James Clyburn
Majority Whip
H-329, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader
H-148, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jim McGovern
Chairman, Committee on Rules
H-312, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Hoyer, Majority Whip Clyburn, and Chairman McGovern:

As new members of Congress from diverse backgrounds and with distinct points of view, we write to ask that you take further steps to make the proceedings of the House of Representatives more accessible and transparent to the American people. We want to preserve mechanisms for bona fide efforts to improve legislation under consideration. However, both Democrats and Republicans have used parliamentary procedures, like the Motion to Recommit (MTR), for too long to derail legislation. This is inconsistent with our commitment to a more transparent government that works for the American people, and we ask to be part of an effort to fix this broken process.

We have already taken steps in the right direction. The Rules Package, H.Res. 6, established a 72-hour rule for the public to inspect legislation that is scheduled for a vote; it ordered the development of a consensus calendar for the advancement of bills that have broad support on both sides of the aisle; and it prohibited the use of nondisclosure agreements that might obscure the reporting of possible wrongdoing. Additionally, the Rules Committee has approved the consideration of Minority-sponsored and bipartisan amendments on several bills, ranging from U.S. foreign policy to veterans' child care assistance legislation.

We are aware that, year after year, both parties have deployed the MTR in bad faith and with little transparency. During our first two months, we have personally seen it used to create fodder for partisan political attacks. Whatever our predecessors' original vision for the MTR may have been, in this era it is a weapon to vandalize the legislative process rather than enhance it.

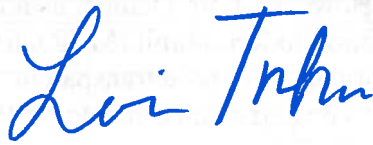
Further, the MTR is inconsistent with our belief in transparent government. MTR text has been made available only minutes before a vote, concealing their contents from public view. This process denies our constituents the opportunity to make their views heard. Simply put, the MTR process fails to meet the standards of transparency that we have established for the 116th Congress.

Nor even does the MTR serve the purpose of broadening a bill's support through legislative compromise, and it can have significant consequences. We have seen several examples of MTRs where Minority party members were unanimous in their support of the MTRs passage, only to vote against the bill's final passage. Indeed, neither of the MTRs that have passed this year led to even a slim majority of the Minority party supporting passage of the underlying bill. Further, the MTR that passed the House for H.J.Res. 37 was ruled non-germane by the Senate Parliamentarian, and the bill is now stuck in the Senate as a result.

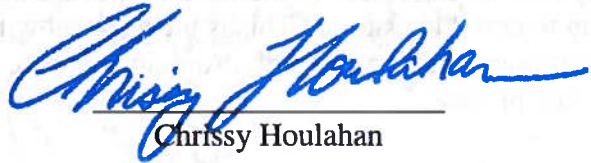
In 2018, the American people made clear that their patience with partisan politics and business-as-usual in the nation's capital was exhausted. They want Congress to get to work again on the people's priorities with both sides debating their views openly and sincerely. This week Congress will take up a once-a-generation bill, H.R. 1, to make government more accountable by expanding Americans' access to the ballot box, reducing the influence of money in politics, and strengthening ethics rules. **It is essential that Congress fix the current process. We must act without delay.**

We urge you to create a more transparent process that allows for robust debate and serious, bipartisan efforts to improve legislation, and we stand ready to work with you and with our colleagues to improve this process and end abuse of the MTR.

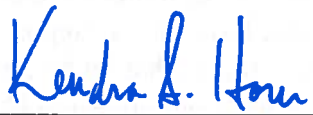
Sincerely,



Lori Trahan



Chrissy Houlahan



Kendra Horn



Ayanna Pressley



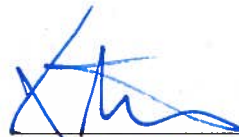
Ed Case



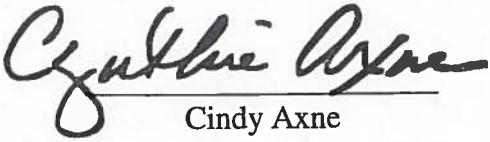
Anthony Brindisi

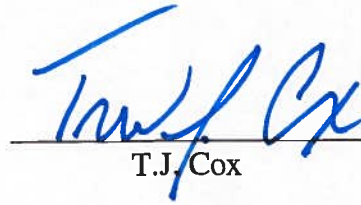


Mikie Sherrill



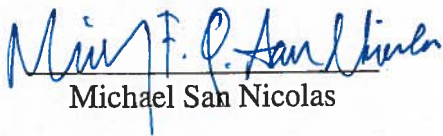
Xochitl Torres Small

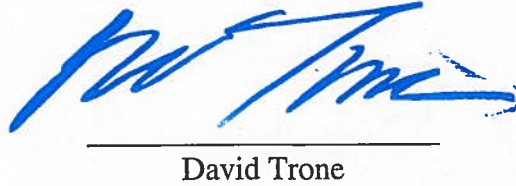

Cindy Axne


T.J. Cox

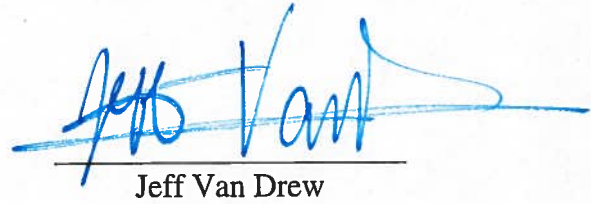

Abigail Spanberger

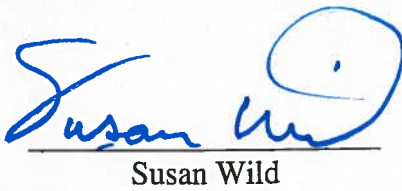

Lucy McBath


Michael San Nicolas


David Trone


Kim Schrier


Jeff Van Drew


Susan Wild

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