



April 26, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable Steny Hoyer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable Jim McGovern  
Chairman  
House Committee on Rules  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren  
Chairperson  
House Committee on Administration  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.

Sent Electronically

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Hoyer, Chairman McGovern, and Chairperson Lofgren,

Members of the New Democrat Coalition strongly support the House of Representatives and Committees returning to regular order through a remote or virtual means as soon as possible and until public health officials provide guidance that it would be safe for all Members and staff to physically return to the House full time. Toward that end, we were prepared to vote for Chairman McGovern's resolution to implement remote voting by proxy and to authorize virtual committee proceedings as an interim step this week, and were disappointed that we adjourned without taking action on that critical proposal.

We understand your decision to postpone the vote on remote voting and Committee proceedings in order to pursue bipartisan discussions with your Republican counterparts, and we are hopeful those discussions will quickly lead to a bipartisan agreement. We acknowledge that changing the House Rules is not easy, but it is crucial in these circumstances. Organizations across the country have learned to communicate and make decisions remotely, in part because we as policymakers have encouraged them to. As we urge the public to observe social distancing practices, comply with shelter-in-place orders, and telework as much as possible, Congress must itself adapt to the public health threat our nation faces.

For the last several weeks, Members have been working hard to advance the interests and needs of our constituents from our districts across the country. Now we are eager for Congress to reconvene regular legislative proceedings that typically occur in Washington D.C. Now more than ever, Congress must conduct public oversight and legislative discussions. Congress needs to work to ensure the coronavirus recovery packages already signed into law are implemented appropriately and future packages are fully responsive to the needs in our communities. The House needs a temporary mechanism to move legislation and convene committee hearings and mark-ups remotely so that vital legislation cannot be hamstrung by relying on unanimous consent agreements.

While we hope a bipartisan agreement with Republican Leadership that results in temporary remote capabilities on the floor and in committees can be reached in the coming days, if House Republican leadership does not engage on this matter in a constructive way, we must move forward. Therefore, we urge you to commit to bringing a resolution that allows for remote voting and virtual committee proceedings to the floor no later than the week of May 4.

Sincerely,



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Rep. Derek Kilmer  
Chair  
New Democrat Coalition



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Rep. Suzan DelBene  
Vice Chair  
New Democrat Coalition



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Rep. Ann McLane Kuster  
Vice Chair  
New Democrat Coalition



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Rep. Scott Peters  
Vice Chair  
New Democrat Coalition



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Rep. Terri Sewell  
Vice Chair  
New Democrat Coalition



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Rep. Pete Aguilar  
Whip  
New Democrat Coalition



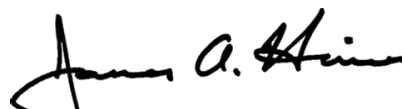
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Rep. Ami Bera  
Leadership Member  
New Democrat Coalition



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Rep. Kathleen Rice  
Leadership Member  
New Democrat Coalition



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Rep. Jim Himes  
Chair Emeritus  
New Democrat Coalition



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Rep. Chrissy Houlahan  
Freshman Leadership Representative  
New Democrat Coalition



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Rep. Mikie Sherrill  
Freshman Whip  
New Democrat Coalition

CC: Minority Leader McCarthy, Ranking Member Cole, and Ranking Member Davis