



Revitalizing the House:

Bipartisan Recommendations on Rules and Process

By Former Members, Former Staff, and Other Experts

Executive Summary

Change the Rules to Give Substantial Bipartisan Majorities Greater Access to the Floor

- *Improve the discharge petition*, giving petition filers the option to collect signatures privately and setting the threshold to a majority of sitting members
- *Improve the consensus calendar*, closing loopholes in the rule and thus ensuring that bills that reach 290 cosponsors receive floor votes
- *Create a new procedure, Guaranteed Regular Order*, empowering committees to advance important bipartisan legislation – particularly on reauthorizations – to the floor if they conduct a thorough deliberative process including hearings and markups
- *Require consideration of bipartisan amendments* with 10 cosponsors from each party

Make Committees Stronger, More Substantive, and More Effective

- *Reduce member conflicts* through block scheduling and a mandatory deconflicting tool, and then publish member attendance
- *Promote alternative hearing setups* to further inquiry rather than adversarial position-taking

- *Enhance staff professionalization* by reducing turnover, with partisan balance of 60-40 instead of 2-1
- *Give subcommittee chairs control over hiring at least one staffer*
- *Give committee members the chance to weigh in on chairs and ranking members*, by holding a secret advisory vote before selection is made by party steering committee

Give Members More Time for Legislative Work

- *Fix the House calendar*, giving members more time for sustained attention to issues by increasing the number of five-day work-weeks per session

Promote Bipartisan Collaborations

- *Promote relationships across party lines*, providing more resources for bipartisan retreats, lunches, educational sessions, codels, and staffdels, and providing physical space near the House floor reserved for members of both parties
- *Promote conference committees*

Raise Member Pay

- *Raise Congressional salaries*, which have stagnated and lagged executive branch pay

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Mission

At a time of heightened concern about the strength of our democracy, we cannot ignore the poor health of Congress. Our Constitution has endowed power to the American people by empowering Congress, especially the representatives closest to the people—the members of the House of Representatives. But members are increasingly disengaged from the legislative process. This is not

a Republican or Democratic problem, but a problem with how the institution currently operates. To revitalize the House and reinvigorate our democracy, our bipartisan task force recommends these reforms to House rules and procedures, both to re-empower individual members and committees in lawmaking and to facilitate participation in a democratic, deliberative process.



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