



Recommendations to Improve the Rules of the House of Representatives To Better Serve All Members in the 120th Congress

The opening of the 120th Congress offers an opportunity to strengthen the House of Representatives as a member-driven, deliberative, and capable institution. The House works best when power and responsibility are shared among its members.

The following proposals would expand meaningful participation, revitalize committees, empower legislating, and equip the House with the resources and procedures needed to more effectively govern itself and the nation.

Key Recommendations:

- Establish a House Committee on Modernization and Procedure
- Strengthen congressional member organizations
- Make committees more representative and member driven
- Rebuild Member and committee capacity
- Establish an Office of the Secretary General
- Promote regular order
- Adopt day one reforms

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Establish a House Committee on Modernization and Procedure.

Establish a 15-member *Committee on Modernization and Procedure* to advance institutional modernization and create member-driven pathways for legislation to advance to the floor. The House would elect 14 committee members at large by single transferable vote¹ from candidates meeting specified nomination requirements; the Speaker would appoint the fifteenth. The committee would be empowered to report qualifying measures directly to the House for consideration.

Institutional Modernization: The Committee would study and report legislative proposals concerning House rules, procedures, administration, technology, and internal governance. Legislation on these topics, upon a majority vote by the committee, would become eligible for consideration on the House floor upon the offering of a privileged motion. The Committee would be authorized to establish subcommittees, task forces, and commissions to study issues. It would conduct a comprehensive review of House rules each Congress and recommend appropriate revisions for adoption by the House.

Pathway to the Floor: The following matters would become eligible for consideration on the House floor pursuant to a privileged motion:

- An amended discharge petition with 218 signatures. The lead sponsor could propose specific germane amendments to their petition, which the Committee could adopt and order reported by a majority vote.
- A discharge petition with 150 Member signatures - 10 per Congress.
- A bill or resolution the House passed without opposition in the preceding Congress and for which the primary committee of jurisdiction declined to assert jurisdiction within 30 legislative days of notice provided by the Committee.

Strengthen Congressional Member Organizations.

At the start of each Congress, the House would establish a \$20 million account to fund eligible Congressional Member Organizations (eCMOs) over the two-year Congress. Each Member could direct their proportionate share, approximately \$23,000 annually, to one or more eligible eCMOs.

Each eCMO could hire staff directly; obtain House office and meeting space; use House technology, administrative support, and official communication resources; maintain public websites and social media accounts; and administer House-controlled financial accounts. The Committee on House Administration would establish eligibility, governance, and disclosure requirements, oversee regular elections of eCMO leaders, conduct audits, and periodically publish each organization's membership and expenditures.

¹ Single transferable vote is a ranked-choice election method designed to provide proportional representation, allowing groups of Members with sufficient support to elect candidates without requiring a winner-take-all majority.

Make Committees More Representative and Member Driven.

Selection of Committee Members.

- *Apportionment.* At the start of each Congress, seats on each committee would be apportioned among recognized parties using the Webster method,² based on each party's membership in the House. In a two-party House, the majority party must hold at least one more seat than the minority party on each committee (except as described below).
- *Member elections.* Each recognized party would fill its committee seats from a list of candidates through secret-ballot elections. Parties and factions could endorse slates of candidates. Elections would use the single transferable vote method.
- *Continuity.* Members serving on a committee in the current Congress would be placed automatically on the list of candidates to serve on that committee in the next Congress. Any other member may qualify to be added to the list of candidates by self-nominating and securing exclusive support from three other party members.
- *Chair election.* The committee chair would be elected by a majority of committee members and could be removed by a majority.
- *Certification and removal.* The Clerk would administer or certify those elections under publicly available party rules. Removal of a committee member between elections requires a three-fifths vote by the chamber.

Member-designated staff. Each Member would be entitled to hire one staff employee, paid for by a committee on which they serve, who works exclusively for that Member on matters within the committee's jurisdiction.

Committee staff. Each subcommittee chair would appoint the subcommittee's staff with the concurrence of the full committee chair and the approval of a majority of the subcommittee. Appointments of non-designated committee staff would be recommended by the leaders of each party on the committee.

Applicability: Except for the Committee on Modernization and the Committee on Rules, these requirements apply to all committees, including the Committees on House Administration, Ethics, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. However, in a two-party House, the Ethics Committee would have its members divided evenly between the parties.

Selection of Rules Committee Members. The party ratio on the 13-member Committee on Rules shall generally reflect the relative representation of the parties in the House of

² The Webster method was developed by Daniel Webster and used to apportion seats in the House of Representatives following the decennial census. Applied to committees, it allocates seats proportionally based on each party's share of the total membership. It divides each party's membership by a common divisor, rounds the resulting quotients to the nearest whole number, and adjusts the divisor until the allocated seats equal the total number available. The method minimizes rounding distortions and generally treats larger and smaller parties equitably.

Representatives. The largest party shall receive two seats with the remaining seats allocated proportionally among the parties. The selection and removal process for those members shall be determined by party rules, with appointments subject to confirmation by the House.

Rebuild Member and Committee Capacity.

Personal Office. The personal office employment cap would increase to 30 employees, including up to 26 permanent employees and four temporary/additional/shared employees. At the start of the 120th Congress, the House would establish a policy calling for a 40 percent increase in each Members' Representational Account. Thereafter, the MRA would be adjusted annually for inflation and changes in the average population represented by each voting Member. Members may pool portions of their MRAs to support shared personnel, technology, services, or for other purposes.

Committee Staff. Committee staffing levels and funding shall each increase by 40 percent (not counting staff designees) and thereafter by no less than the rate of inflation. Committee funding shall be divided 55%–45% between the parties in a two-party House. Where more than two parties are represented, the largest party shall receive five percentage points more than its proportional share, with the remaining funds distributed proportionally to party membership.

Establish an Office of the Secretary General.

A new position of Secretary General shall be established as the senior nonpartisan administrative official in the House of Representatives, reporting directly to the Committee on House Administration. The SG would be recommended by the Committee on Modernization, confirmed by a three-fifths vote of the House, and serve a renewable six-year term or until the Modernization Committee directs their removal by a majority vote.

The Secretary General would oversee House operations and non-political appointees, lead long-term operational planning, and promote modernization of House operations. Day-to-day management would remain with subordinate offices. The SG would recommend the appointment and removal of the Clerk, the Chief Administrative Officer, the Chaplain, and other officers that require the assent of the House. Offices not currently within the reporting structure would report to the SG, except the Inspector General, who reports to the House.

The Secretary General would be empowered to approve hiring, promotions, and changes in pay rates for non-political appointees. The SG would set pay ceilings for non-political and political staff alike, and would be responsible for tracking and publishing data about staff pay, demographics, and retention in political and non-political offices in the House.

Promote Regular Order.

Notice.

- Amendments in the nature of a substitute (“manager’s amendments”) offered in a committee must be publicly available at least 48 hours prior to the markup at which it will be considered. The committee must also provide the capability to show the underlying legislation and the changes proposed by the substitute text.
- Any substitute text for a bill made in order as original text for floor consideration by the Rules Committee must be publicly available 48 hours prior to consideration; the Rules Committee must also provide the capability to show the underlying legislation and the changes proposed by the substitute text.
- Any amendments to a bill made in order by the Rules Committee must be publicly available for 48 hours prior to floor consideration.

Preserve Member Privileges.

- The Rules Committee is prohibited from including in any special order providing for the consideration of a bill any provision that purports to waive or otherwise render inapplicable expedited procedures listed below.
- Any special order from the Rules Committee that waives or otherwise renders inapplicable expedited procedures listed below may not be adopted except by a three-fifths vote. Multi-subject resolutions are severable by a privileged motion on the floor.
- These restrictions would be applicable to any expedited procedures, including (but not limited to): trade agreements or sanctions; impoundments; impeachments; arms sales or agreements; discharge petitions; war powers resolutions; resolutions of inquiry; or congressional review of agency rulemakings.

Modernization and Procedure Committee.

- The Committee on Rules may not report a measure, matter, or amendment that would establish, abolish, or alter the jurisdiction, membership, selection process, authorities, or procedures of the Committee on Modernization unless 30 legislative days have elapsed since the Rules Committee notified the Modernization Committee and the Modernization Committee has not adopted a resolution opposing the proposal.

Adopt Day One Reforms.

Ethics.

- Pass the stock trading ban legislation *The Restore Trust in Congress Act* or successor legislation, and adopt parallel House rules in the form of amendments to the Code of Official Conduct applying substantially equivalent restrictions pending statutory enactment.
- Amend the Code of Official Conduct to prohibit Members, officers, and covered employees from financially participating in prediction markets.
- Adopt the ethics reforms jointly proposed by the Democratic Women's Caucus and Republican Women's Caucus, and direct the Modernization Committee to establish a commission to report its ethics reform recommendations to the Committee on Modernization by September 1, 2027.

Chamber Operations.

- Adopt a chamber schedule consisting generally of two weeks in legislative session followed by two weeks for district work. The Clerk has the authority to publish an interim schedule pending adoption of a final schedule by the Modernization Committee.
- Authorize the Holdover Clerk to continue payroll, benefits, and essential administrative support for personal- and committee-office employees before the election of a Speaker.
- Authorize remote participation, debate, and voting on the floor and in committee when a declared emergency prevents the House from assembling safely. Provide a process by which a majority of members can declare the emergency over. Additionally, establish a procedure for reconvening the House of Representatives upon receipt by the Clerk of a letter from a majority of Members requesting such reconvening. Finally, direct the Modernization Committee to establish a Continuity of Congress Commission to further refine the rules for remote proceedings in emergency circumstances.

Foster Institutional Innovation.

- Establish an Office of the Chief Scientist to provide scientific and technical advice to the House and to develop recommendations for establishing a House Office of Technology Assessment by June 1, 2027.
- Establish a commission to study the use of multi-member districts in elections to the House of Representatives and report its recommendations to the Committee on Modernization by April 1, 2028.