

March 16, 2021

The Honorable Carolyn Maloney
Chairwoman
House Oversight and Reform Cmte.
United States House of Representatives
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James Comer
Ranking Member
House Oversight and Reform Cmte.
United States House of Representatives
2105 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Support for Reintroduction and Passage of the Federal Advisory Committee Act Amendments Act

Dear Chairwoman Maloney, Ranking Member Comer, and Members of the Committee:

We are writing to express our support for the reintroduction and passage of the Federal Advisory Committee Act Amendments Act in the 117th Congress. The legislation, which previously passed the House of Representatives in the 116th Congress, would make advisory committees more transparent, strengthen the independence of advisory committees, improve oversight of the advisory committee process, and close implementation loopholes.

The FACA Amendments Act would make advisory committees more transparent by requiring disclosure of information about the committees. Agencies would be required to disclose committee members' names, how those members were chosen, any stakeholder interests those members represent, and justifications for any conflict of interest waivers granted to members.

In addition, the FACA Amendments Act would strengthen advisory committee independence. The legislation prohibits political loyalty as a basis for making appointments. It would insulate committee recommendations from agency interference. And it would ensure that committee members comply with federal ethics and conflict of interest laws.

The FACA Amendments Act would improve oversight of the advisory committee process. It would authorize the GSA Administrator to issue rules implementing the act. Furthermore, it would require the GAO to review agency compliance and report its findings to Congress.

Finally, the FACA Amendments Act would close loopholes in the implementation of FACA. It would clarify that FACA applies to subcommittees as well as committees, closing the loophole whereby a committee avoids public meetings by conducting its business through subcommittees.

Also, committees formed at the request of an agency or president would be subject to FACA even if established by a contractor.

The FACA Amendments Act has passed the House on multiple occasions. We hope that this Congress, under your leadership, this legislation can be duly considered and move forward to become law.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our views. If you have any questions, please contact Daniel Schuman, policy director, Demand Progress, at 240-237-3930 or Daniel@DemandProgress.org.

Sincerely,

Clean Elections Texas
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)
Demand Progress
Fix Democracy First
Government Accountability Project
Government Information Watch
Greenpeace US
Harrington Investment Inc.
Issue One
New Progressive Alliance
Open The Government
Project on Government Oversight (POGO)
Rural Coalition
Society of Professional Journalists
Union of Concerned Scientists

Brian Baird, Former Member of Congress*

Kel McClananahan, National Security Counselors*

Lorelei Kelly, Beeck Center for Social Impact + Innovation at Georgetown University*

** Affiliations listed for identification purposes only.*