

**Testimony to House Administration Committee: Member Day  
Subcommittee on Elections  
December 17, 2021**

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- Chairs Lofgren, Butterfield, Davis, and Steil – thank you for the invitation to testify at today’s Member Day hearing.
- And before I get into my testimony, Mr. Butterfield, I want to thank you for the great working relationship we share on Energy and Commerce.
- I am honored to be able to call you a friend.
- This is an important hearing today.
- As you may know, I am a trained and licensed pharmacist – and I served patients in Georgia for over 30 years before coming to Congress.
- I say this so you know that I have a background in health care.
- As a health care professional, I find the current House rules related to mask wearing, constituent meetings, and Capitol tours far too restrictive and frankly disrespectful to the millions of Americans we all serve.
- Members of Congress are directly elected by the people.
- And many refer to the House of Representatives as the “People’s House.”
- But the people, our constituents, are not able to visit our Capitol to witness their democracy work.
- They are limited to watching hearings and legislative business on a screen – the most impersonal form of participation with their government.
- The House, under the Democrat party’s lead, has shut out the public.
- Members are prohibited from giving tours, constituents can’t personally visit their Representatives office without going through a ridiculously

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cumbersome sign-in process, and just forget about letting constituents visit the House Chamber.

- Meanwhile, on the other side of the dome, Senate offices can take meetings and give constituents tours of the same Capitol building we can't.
- It is understandable that certain precautions were necessary when the pandemic started as we knew very little about the virus.
- But our knowledge has evolved.
- We know how to mitigate spread and we have vaccines.
- So at what point is limiting constituent involvement in the democratic process no longer about the virus – well, we hit that point a LONG time ago.
- The virus is here to stay.
- We have effective, free vaccines for every American.
- It's time we open our capitol back up and let the Americans that elected us visit their Capitol and their Representatives without restrictions.
- Furthermore, the mask mandate is long past necessary.
- The District of Columbia recently removed its mask mandate.
- Why is it that I can walk into any grocery store, go to church, or go out to eat in DC without a mask – but when our staff and ourselves enter the Capitol and House office buildings, we are all required to wear masks.
- These are not safety precautions; these are Orwellian requirements.

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- It's time we let our constituents, the American people, participate in their democracy like the founding fathers intended.
- And it's time to make scientific, medically based decisions about COVID mitigation methods.
- The rules in place right now are based on feelings, not facts.
- It's time to return to the pre-pandemic normal in our Capitol.
- I yield back.