

**Testimony – Select Committee on Modernization of Congress
Tuesday, March 12, 2019; 9:30AM; H-131**

INTRODUCTION

Thank you, **Chairman Derek Kilmer**, for the opportunity to join you to testify before this important, bipartisan Select Committee. Thank you also to **Ranking Member Tom Graves**.

In the election, the American people called for a Congress that would be ethical, transparent, unifying and responsive to their needs and aspirations.

Under this Committee's leadership, we are honoring that promise: modernizing our institution and making the House more transparent and responsive to the voices of Members and the American people.

We must advance a House of Representatives that is diverse, dynamic and oriented toward the future, and that fulfills its Constitutional role as Article I, the first branch of government, co-equal to the other two.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY AGENDA

Under my previous Speakership, Democrats advanced reforms that updated our institution in bold, forward-looking ways.

Our Democratic Majority took great pride in ensuring that the Congress would be more welcoming to women, children and families, including by advancing the first lactation room in the House, a smoking ban in the Speaker's lobby and a Greening of the Capitol.

At the same time, our "Women's Economic Agenda" was a cornerstone of Democrats' leadership, and we were also proud to launch a Diversity Initiative to guide our hiring, which we have made permanent in the 116th Congress.

PROGRESS IN THE NEW CONGRESS

In the new Congress, Democrats have worked quickly and boldly to build on this progress, and modernize our institution so that we can best meet the needs of the American people.

On Day One, we passed a **Rules Package** to accelerate the pace of change in Congress: ensuring that the Freshman Class has a seat at the table, restoring transparency and accountability to Congress and keeping our agenda laser-focused on delivering For The People.

CALENDAR

To ensure that we deliver on our agenda, we have instituted a more **predictable, family-friendly calendar** that will allow members to regularly travel home to serve our constituents, while also providing sufficient time for debating and voting on legislation here in Washington.

REFORM AGENDA

In the coming weeks, we are focused on continuing this progress with the following critical reforms:

We must make the Congress more diverse and dynamic – so we are working with the House Administration Committee to establish a **Diversity and Inclusion office**, and are working to expand paid internships and improve leadership development initiatives.

We must make the Congress more welcoming to parents – so we are working with Members and appropriate House offices to establish **summer camps and other family initiatives**, and are directing the Office of Employee Assistance to update and incorporate resources for parents into its services.

FURTHER REFORMS

We are also reviewing the services for the House Family Room and conferring with women Members to assess services provided in the women's lounge.

We must make the Congress more responsive to our constituents – so we are working with the Committee on House Administration to task House officers to develop a district office support system.

CLOSE

The work of this Committee will be vital in coordinating, supporting and leading these important initiatives.

Together, we can – and we must – reinvigorate the Congress and return the People's House to the American people.

Thank you for your leadership, and the opportunity to testify today.

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