

**Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress  
Member Day Hearing, April 15, 2021  
Statement of Representative Bill Posey (FL-08)**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on proposals to modernize Congress. I believe modernization ought to mean the reforms we can adopt not only make our work more efficient but also make the work we do more transparent, accessible, and accountable to the people who send us here. Sometimes a proposal will satisfy both purposes and make us more efficient and more accountable and transparent. My proposals are simple. I will discuss them in a conceptual manner and urge the committee to explore these ideas and adopt the changes I am recommending.

First, we must move to the same system of law revision that most state legislatures use. That is the system of continuous law revision. In Florida where I served in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, we have such a system. Our statutes are kept continuously up to date and the statutes are positive law. Bills in the legislature are introduced and tracked as electronic documents that are the full new or amended versions of our statutes. There is no need for what we call here in Congress a Ramseyer or Comparative Print showing the impact of a bill on the current law. Each bill is exactly what the statute will look like if the bill is adopted and signed into law. A bill takes full advantage of the electronic means for tracking changes that we are used to seeing in modern word processors. In a past Congress, I won approval of a rule that would have required a comparative print showing the current law changes before a bill could be acted on in the House. Regrettably, the rule was never honored and fell out of the last set of rules entirely. What we have in the House today in terms of bill drafting might be called an arcane set of instructions to the keeper of statute books on how to mark up the existing law. Such a system means that Members and the public alike have to spend hours marking up the existing law just to begin to understand what a bill is doing. We can do better than that by following the example of our state legislatures. I understand this will require investment, but we need to get on with it. We have the technology.

Another disappointment was that the recently adopted rules have sought to compress the 72-hour rule by saying that the time limit starts running when the first posting of a proposal is made. I don't believe that we should be voting on bills that have not been announced and properly noticed to Members' offices for at least 72 hours. There are few reasons — except perhaps our own self-interested convenience — for not requiring at least that amount of time. Members should read the bills. The public should have adequate time to read a bill and weigh in with their Members. Emergencies may arise but such occasions of real exigency will be rare. Voting on a bill before Thursday evening is not an emergency. We should reinstitute the 72-hour rule and require that the time period begins when Members receive due notice of the availability of the bill and its projected consideration. To provide for emergencies, our House rules should provide that the 72-hour rule may be waived on a vote of two-thirds of the House as in the case of bills passed under suspension.

Finally, I propose that we erect in the House Chamber a voting board that shows the votes of all Members on a pending piece of legislation. This procedure is almost universal among our state legislative chambers. Such a board will provide immediate transparency to votes taken on the

House floor. If the House does not believe that such a board can be erected in good taste, then I believe we could create a virtual board by making votes immediately available on the internet and making them available in daily volumes. All vote tallies would be archived in an easily accessible and single searchable, on-line data base. The public would find all votes easily and with one stop.

Once again, I thank you for permitting me to make proposals for modernizing Congress and make our work both more efficient and more accessible to our people. I urge your favorable consideration of these recommendations.