

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 14, 2021

Chair Derek Kilmer
Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress
164 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Vice Chair William Timmons
Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress
164 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Kilmer and Vice Chair Timmons,

Attached is a written copy of my testimony for Member Day before the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress.

Best regards,



Darren Soto
Member of Congress

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Derek Kilmer, Vice-chair William Timmons, and Members of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress: thank you for the opportunity to testify. I sincerely appreciate your leadership in ensuring an effective, efficient, and transparent Congress for all Americans.

I represent much of Central Florida, a district made of both rural and urban communities. During my time in Congress, I can say that nothing has been more critical to our work than staying engaged with our constituents. Civic engagement has and will forever be at the core of our constitutional duties.

In the “old days,” we would meet with constituents at our local grocery stores, host in-person town halls or shake hands at community events. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has unexpectedly forced us to find new, innovative ways to communicate.

While we have undoubtedly made strides in the way we virtually communicate with our communities, there is still work to be done. Increasing access to zoom, hosting affordable telephone town halls, improving virtual accessibility for people with disabilities, allowing for faster correspondence with constituents, updating social media rules, streamlining our websites and newsletters, and more, are just some of the ways we can increase the quality of constituent communication.

In recent months, we’ve seen an increase in civic engagement. More people showed up to the polls than ever before, more people called to demand racial justice and more people reached out for resources on COVID-19 testing and vaccinations. Many of our constituents are already engaged and interested. This is about moving forward with the 21st century and reimagine the way we consistently communicate with families in each of our districts. Now is the time to pave the way for an easier, innovative democratic dialogue.

Thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.