

**Statement for Rep. William Timmons (SC-4)**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**  
**Member Day, June 9, 2021**

Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Granger, thank you for hosting today's Member Day hearing and thank you for your leadership.

I am here today to talk about some of the recommendations the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress has made to make Congress a more effective and efficient institution. I serve as Vice Chair of the Select Committee, alongside Chair Derek Kilmer. We work as partners to identify problems and develop solutions to make Congress work better for the American people.

I am proud of what the Select Committee accomplished in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress. We proved that it is possible for Members from both sides of the aisle to sit down together, engage in tough discussions, listen and learn from one another, and ultimately find bipartisan solutions to the challenges we all face. The Committee unanimously passed 97 recommendations to improve the way Congress works and turned many of those recommendations into legislation that passed the House last year.

Today I want to join Chair Kilmer in highlighting some of the Select Committee's recommendations that we think should be funded. A modern Congress is one that is well equipped to serve the American people and we think that's worthy of investment.

In addition to the bipartisan retreat and staffing related recommendations that Chair Kilmer addressed, I would like to highlight a few recommendations designed to make Congress more efficient and Members better able to serve their constituents.

Something I think on which we can all agree is the need to better balance our time between home and D.C., and to better manage our often hectic and unpredictable schedules. During the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Select Committee devoted a lot of time to exploring ways to improve the House schedule and calendar and we will continue to do so in the 117th. We know there is no perfect calendar and no schedule that will please every Member. Everyone's situation is different and our preferred schedules to some degree reflect those differences. That said, there are still ways we can make more efficient use of our time.

One of the biggest challenges we heard about from our colleagues was managing competing committee schedules. For this reason, the Select Committee recommends including funding or support for the Clerk to establish a common committee calendar on docs.house.gov that identifies Member committee conflicts in real-time, at the time a committee meeting is published. By identifying and collecting data on committee conflicts, we can begin to develop solutions toward creating more efficient and productive committee schedules.

The other recommendations I'd like to address today focus on helping Members and staff work smarter and better on behalf of the American people.

Chair Kilmer mentioned the need to provide staff with better pay, benefits, and training. I'd like to offer some more detail on what the Select Committee recommends when it comes to better training for new staff. The Committee suggests funding or support for the CAO to provide institution-wide, standard onboarding training for new employees, including required training to ensure all new staff understand their role, how Congress operates, as well as logistics like benefits. Staff are the backbone of this institution and investing in their training helps Congress work better for the American people.

Along the same lines, the Select Committee recommends funding or support for the CAO to support Member offices with their casework business processes. This includes providing electronic document management, accessibility, and the creation of constituent forms that can be viewed, edited, and electronically signed. By building these kinds of efficiencies into our systems, we can do better work for our constituents. That is what we are here to do.

Finally, the Select Committee recommends funding or support for the CAO to create a pilot Congressional Leadership Academy for Members. If Members believe that additional professional development and institutional training will help them better carry out their representational and legislative responsibilities, they should have access to programs that will help them continue learning.

These recommendations, in addition to those addressed by Chair Kilmer, will make Congress work better for the American people and I believe that's a worthy investment. I appreciate your consideration of these requests and am happy to provide additional information to support your work.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before the committee today.