WHAT: Member Day for the Modernization Select Committee
WHEN: Tuesday, March 12 @10:35 AM
RE: Time for big questions and big ideas for Congress to work in the 21st Century

---

Good morning. It is good to be here with everyone. We all believe in a government by the people, for the people. That is why we choose to serve.

I also believe in a government that efficient, effective, and accountable. That's why last Congress -- through our Innovation Initiative -- we introduced and enacted several bills into law to make government work better.

- TALENT Act -- reauthorized the fellowship program to bring top tech talent to the federal government.
- Bug-Bounty for DHS (SECURE Technology Act) -- instituted a bug bounty and VDP program at DHS.
- VET TEC Act -- established a pilot program at to allow veterans use their GI Bill for technology education courses like Udacity
- And we launched a pilot program to give constituents a digital signature option on their privacy waiver forms

But we have more work to do. Confidence in government is at an all-time low and for good reason—government is stuck in the past. While Americans have come to expect, enjoy, and be fascinated by innovation from the private-sector, government remains bogged down with a system built for the 20th century that makes adapting to change all but impossible.

Throughout the entire federal government we know that 80% of the federal IT budget--over $60 billion--goes to managing outdated legacy systems instead of investing in new technologies. I would bet the United States Congress has a similar ratio.

Rather than making government simply fail more efficiently, we need to completely refashion it. That's the task before you all.

This panel is an opportunity for us to ask big questions. To consider big ideas. And to lay the path for a Congress that is not just a bystander in the modern era -- but leading the charge in technology, communication, and innovation.

Here are some things I believe this panel should consider over the next two years:

- **PERSONNEL AND CITIZEN-DRIVEN LEADERSHIP**: As we have seen with the TALENT Act, bringing service minded entrepreneurs and technologists into the government is extremely effective. They help root out inefficiencies and find new ways to deliver better service. I believe a similar approach should be considered in Congress.
  - Whether it is the **Congressional Digital Service** that Leader Hoyer has worked on
  - Or **project sites with permanent ad-hoc teams** that can securely collaborate around shared objectives

- **TRANSPARENCY AND DECENTRALIZATION** -- Part of rebuilding the confidence of the American people is more transparency in the legislative process. Even as a member of Congress we sometimes find out what's in a bill just hours before it comes to the floor.
  - Can Congress institute **blockchain technologies to add transparency** to the lawmaking process? Just as the blockchain documents every financial transaction, can it document every legislative alteration?
  - Or perhaps we can utilize the **power of AI in bill drafting**, introduction, markup, scheduling, and voting. Imagine Microsoft Word's "track changes" feature but for the US Code. Accept/reject changes, and drill down into how proposed changes impact statute.

- **CYBERSECURITY** -- The amount of sensitive and constituent information that our offices handle can be staggering. It can also be a major security and personal data vulnerability. This is true with other agencies as well. The inspiration for the **bug bounty program at DHS** stemmed from the success the DOD has had with a similar program.
  - **Congress** should **institute its own bug bounty and vulnerability disclosure program** to give our citizens the opportunity to use their skills to identify risks, alert information security -- and be compensated for successfully doing so.
  - We also should **ask vendors** that do business with Congress **to commit to paying for necessary security and software updates** as needed, to save taxpayers money.
  - And we should make sure **American data isn't stored in foreign data centers**. Sometimes what seems like great technology on the front end is using overseas data centers on the backend, placing congressional business beyond US legal protection.

- **DIGITAL STRATEGY** -- Finally, we should use this opportunity to create a clear Congressional digital strategy.
  - People have come to expect speed, customization, and flexibility in their daily life. What's our plan to make sure that government service delivery is also user-friendly?
  - How can policymakers implement data to turn a critical eye on the workings of government itself, finding inefficiencies and inadequacies?
  - Where should the government take a light touch approach or step back entirely? Remember, it was President Reagan's decision to make NOAA satellite information publicly available that spawned AccuWeather and the weather app on your phone. Isn't that preferable to a Weather.gov website?

This committee has a tremendous opportunity to redefine how our Congress serves our fellow citizens and charts a path for a stronger future. I look forward to working through these big questions and big ideas over the coming years.

I yield back.