COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

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ROBERT A. BRADY, Pennsylvania, Ranking Member
ZOE LOFGREN, California
JAMIE RASKIN, Maryland
The Committee met, pursuant to call, at 11:24 a.m., in Room 1310, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Gregg Harper [Chairman of the Committee] presiding.


Staff Present: Sean Moran, Staff Director; Kim Betz, Deputy Staff Director/Policy and Oversight; Steven Wall, Deputy General Counsel; Dan Jarrell, Legislative Clerk; Max Engling, Staff Director of the Commission on Congressional Mailing Standards; Courtney Parella, Communications Director; Jamie Fleet, Minority Staff Director; Khalil Abboud, Minority Deputy Staff Director; and Eddie Flaherty, Minority Chief Clerk.

The CHAIRMAN. I call to order the Committee on House Administration for today's Committee markup. A quorum is present, so we may proceed.

The meeting record will remain open for 5 legislative days so Members may submit any materials they wish to be included therein.

[The information follows:]

The CHAIRMAN. We are here today to formally approve Committee Resolution 115–20 to update the townhall meeting regulations found in the Members' Congressional Handbook.

The current handbook regulations allows Members of the House to co-host in-person townhall meetings with Members representing adjacent congressional districts. This handbook update will allow Members of the House to co-host telephone and internet or virtual townhall meetings with another Member even if the congressional districts are not adjacent.

This update will offer additional flexibility to Members when communicating with their constituents via virtual townhall meetings.

I would now like to recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Brady, for the purpose of providing an opening statement if he desires.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I support the Committee resolution before us today. This change to our Members' handbook will allow Members to communicate with their constituents about regional issues, allowing constituents more meaningful access to their government. I
appreciate the bipartisan work in developing this proposal, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Brady.

I would ask if any other Member of the Committee wishes to be recognized for the purpose of providing an opening statement.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I recognize the gentlewoman from California.

Ms. LOFGREN. I don’t have an opening statement, but I just wanted to clarify—I think it is permitted, but I wanted to get it on the record—that you could have more than one adjacent Member.

For example, I had a townhall meeting once where there were three Members who were adjacent to each other on a topic, held at the county, you know, board chambers.

So this is not restricted to two if there are—in an urban area, for example, there are oftentimes more than two who are adjacent.

And, with that clarification, I would yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair would agree with that interpretation.

As long as they are adjacent, it can be more than two.

Ms. LOFGREN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Anyone else?

I now call up and lay before the Committee Resolution 115–20 to prove the update to the Members’ Congressional Handbook.

Without objection, the first reading of the resolution is dispensed with, and the resolution is considered read and open for amendment at any point.

[The resolution follows:]
Resolved, the Committee on House Administration adopts the following regulations amending and superseding prior regulations known collectively as the Members' Congressional Handbook:

In the “Communications” section, beginning with the first paragraph, strike paragraphs “Town Hall Meetings” through “Virtual Town Hall Meetings” and insert:

“Physical Town Hall Meetings

A town hall meeting is an official meeting a Member holds within the Member’s district with their constituents to facilitate the exchange of information regarding the Member’s official and representational duties.

Ordinary and necessary expenses related to town hall meetings are reimbursable.

Ordinary and necessary expenses include, but are not limited to, the following:

Advertisements
Rental of rooms, chairs, audio systems
Audio/Video Expenses
Interpreting Services
ADA Accommodations
Reporting and transcription services
Electronic Transmission (not television)
Custodial Services
Signs/banners/leaflets/flyers that comply with the Franking Regulations

Security, including personal security contractors (Members are strongly urged to coordinate any security needs with the House Sergeant at Arms.) For additional information, please see the Security and Contractors sections.

Plants or other relevant decorative items of nominal value
may be directly vouchered through the Office of Finance with supporting documentation (invitation, agenda, etc.).

2. 39 U.S.C. § 3210 prohibits Members from sending any mass mailings outside of the district from which elected. Therefore, Franked mail expenses that relate to advertising joint virtual town hall meetings must be separately accounted for and charged to the MRA of the Member into whose district the Franked mail was delivered.

Unsolicited mass mailings and communications related to joint virtual town hall meetings may only be sent by Members to their own constituents and may only contain the sending Member’s contact information.

Joint virtual town hall meetings may only target the hosts’ Congressional Districts (telephone and internet) or the hosts’ social media followers (internet).”
The CHAIRMAN. Is there any debate?
Are there any Members who wish to offer an amendment to the resolution?
If not, I move the Committee adopt the resolution.
The question is on the motion.
All those in favor, signify by saying aye.
Opposed, say nay.
In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it, and the motion is agreed to.
Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid upon the table.
Without objection, the markup is adjourned.
[Whereupon, at 11:27 a.m., the Committee was adjourned.]