

MEMBER DAY

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

MARCH 8, 2023

Printed for the use of the Committee on House Administration



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U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

WASHINGTON : 2023

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MEMBER DAY

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2023

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:38 a.m., in room 1310, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Bryan Steil [Chairman of the Committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Steil, Loudermilk, Griffith, Murphy, Carey, Lee, D'Esposito, Morelle, Sewell, Kilmer, and Torres.

Staff present: Tim Monahan, Staff Director; Caleb Hays, Deputy Staff Director and General Counsel, Acting Parliamentarian; Nick Crocker, Deputy Staff Director; Hillary Lassiter, Chief Clerk; Jordan Wilson, Director of Member Services; Cade Alcock, Assistant Clerk; Ryan Arient, Staff Assistant; Jamie Fleet, Minority Staff Director; Khalil Abboud, Minority Deputy Staff Director; Matthew Schlesinger, Minority Oversight Counsel; Eddie Flaherty, Minority Chief Clerk; Owen Reilly, Minority Professional Staff Member; and Andrew Garcia, Minority Staff Assistant.

Chairman STEIL. The Committee on House Administration will come to order—in part to have Mr. Murphy no longer be speaking ill of me for attending late.

[Laughter.]

I am very concerned about what any motion might be for my tardiness. Sincerest apologies.

I note that a quorum is present. Without objection, the Chair may declare a recess at any time.

Thank you all for participating in the Committee on House Administration's Member Day. Our Committee has jurisdiction over a broad range of issues.

One of our primary responsibilities includes oversight over the day-to-day operations that keep the House of Representatives running. This includes oversight over House officers, the key leadership across the legislative branch, like the Architect of the Capitol, as well as the countless administrative and technical functions of the chamber.

Further, as part of our official duties demonstrated this week, we authorize the budget of committees and individual member allowances, known as the MRA.

House Administration also has a role to play in considering potential updates to the STOCK Act.

We want to hear from members as we examine ways to make improvements and increase transparency and accountability. We have also increased our education and outreach efforts, alongside the

Ethics Committee, to ensure members fully understand current rules on trading stocks and the reporting requirements.

This committee also oversees the management of important historical and national institutions, such as the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution. We must ensure all taxpayer-funded entities are being good stewards of taxpayer dollars.

That being said, we are tasked with ensuring the legislative branch as a whole is operating effectively and transparently for all members, staff, and most importantly, the American people.

House Administration also has oversight over the security in the House of Representatives and on Capitol Hill, with Capitol Police, the House Sergeant at Arms, and the Capitol Police Board all under our jurisdiction. We must ensure both safety and access for the millions of Americans who visit the People's House.

Especially with our campus now fully accessible to the public, thanks to the House Republican majority, our responsibility is even more imperative to guarantee we provide a safe, secure, and open campus.

Also within our committee's broad jurisdiction is the oversight of federal elections on behalf of the House of Representatives. However, our role is limited and we must keep the federal government in check from overstepping onto state sovereignty, which is protected by the United States Constitution.

Our goal is promoting faith in our elections process and outcomes by promoting policies that make it easier for eligible Americans to vote and harder to cheat. When Americans have more confidence that their ballots will count, they are more likely to vote.

To do so, we will hear from state and local elections officials on what is working and what isn't working in elections across our country. From there, we will help facilitate discussions on best practices that states can consider and ensure that federal policies don't get in their way.

Today we will hear testimony from our colleagues on these various topics.

Thank you to everyone who has taken time to testify before our committee today. We appreciate you making the time. I look forward to hearing your testimonies and having productive conversations which will better aid our work to strengthen this institution and serve the American people.

I will now recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Morelle, for 5 minutes for the purpose of making an opening statement.

Mr. MORELLE. Thanks so much, Mr. Chairman, for calling the meeting.

I thank the members appearing before us for their testimony today. I have the utmost respect and admiration for our colleagues who are testifying.

I would ask, Mr. Chairman, that you allow me to treat the witnesses as hostile, particularly Messrs. Armstrong and Krishnamoorthi.

[Laughter.]

I am grateful for them all being here. This is of particular importance because at our core this committee is a customer service organization. You are our customers. The feedback we gather today will go a long way toward allowing us to make the institution of

the House stronger, which, in turn, leads to all of us being able to have better representation for our constituents.

The committee has a—as you indicated, Mr. Chair, and it bears repeating—a diverse jurisdiction, ranging from Capitol security to oversight over the museums and national cultural institutions, to election administration, the regulation of campaign finance.

I know in previous years, although I was not a member of the committee, I understood that members have testified about each of these issues to help inform the committee about its work. I look forward to that tradition continuing today.

Just last week we heard testimony from committee chairs and Ranking Members on the funding for the various committees of the 118th Congress, which, in turn, helped to inform us on the resolution that I know we will be considering later today. I think it is a testament to how much this committee values the input from our colleagues and the members, their perspective, particularly on a bipartisan basis.

I join with you and Members of the Committee in welcoming people, and I am grateful that they are here this morning. Look forward to their testimony.

I will yield back.

Chairman STEIL. Thank you very much.

Without objection, all Members' opening statements will be made part of the hearing record if they are submitted to the Committee Clerk by 5 p.m. today.

Today we will hear from three panels of members wishing to speak on policies within our jurisdiction. Each Member will be recognized for 5 minutes. Once all Members of the panel have delivered remarks, any Member wishing to be recognized for the purpose of questioning the panel should signal to the Chair.

We will begin from my left to right for opening statements and begin with you, Mr. Kelly Armstrong.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. KELLY ARMSTRONG, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

Mr. ARMSTRONG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

For 1,026 days, the House of Representatives was closed to the public. Over the course of this period, appointed leadership within the administrative bodies of this institution pushed the limits on the curtailment of civil liberties and historic norms of the U.S. Congress.

The House Sergeant at Arms and the U.S. Capitol Police instituted operational changes that hindered access to legislators and increased surveillance on Members, staff, and the public.

On March 12, 2020, the Sergeant at Arms barred open access to the House Office Buildings in response to COVID-19. In this unprecedented move, the public was prevented from freely entering the House Office Buildings to engage their legislators and redress their grievances, a constitutionally protected activity under the First Amendment.

More than 1 year later, the Sergeant at Arms modified this protocol and instituted an official business visitor program to allow an extremely limited number of individuals to enter into the House Office Buildings.

This OBV process granted access to individuals who were pre-registered with the Sergeant at Arms, presented a form of identification to be checked by relevant staff, and issued a badge corresponding with the location of the pre-arranged meetings. The OBVs were subsequently prevented from moving through the buildings without a staff escort.

This process, which was ostensibly predicated on guidelines from the Office of the Attending Physician to address the COVID-19 pandemic, remained woefully inadequate, poorly implemented, and chilled the ability of constituents to petition their Members of Congress.

These policies culminated in an act as a significant obstacle, if not an outright deterrent, to a considerable number of Americans wishing to exercise their constitutional rights.

Following leadership and law enforcement failures that left the U.S. Capitol vulnerable on January 6, 2021, congressional law enforcement bodies initiated or proposed a variety of programming changes that furthered the alarming trend of data collection and surveillance.

At the direction of then Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, retired Lieutenant General Russel Honoré led the Task Force 1-6 Capitol Security Review, which made several recommendations to address security issues facing the Capitol.

Among the most contentious were advising that screening procedures and background checks be implemented. The review stated that, as part of an effort to decrease insider threats, the Capitol should apply background checks to each holder of an identification card, a process that would deviate from the longstanding practice of deferring to employing House Members' hiring decisions.

The Task Force 1-6 report suggestion for enhanced background checks and intelligence-gathering policies coincided with a Sergeant at Arms initiative designed to identify threats from individuals working within the Capitol complex.

Then Sergeant at Arms Walker testified before the House Appropriations Committee that his office had developed an insider threat awareness program, in coordination with the intelligence community, Department of Homeland Security, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to identify employees who lose their compass and individuals whose allegiances have changed.

This policy, whether it was implemented or not, combined with Sergeant at Arms Walker's subsequent rationale, should cause concern for Members from both parties because of numerous unanswered questions and a lack of robust statutory guardrails.

Regardless of whether the discussed insider threat awareness program-proposed background checks or pandemic-era visitor policies are warranted, these initiatives should not be developed in the isolation of institutions governed by appointees of the majority, regardless of which party holds power.

Rather than utilizing a surveillance program designed with no apparent concern for civil liberties or concern for constitutionally safeguarded functions, this body must engage in a transparent legislative process that is unambiguous, protective of speech, and defends the rights of all who come to the United States Capitol.

While I know it is not this committee's jurisdiction, I did this in Rules last night on the First Amendment. I did it last week in Energy and Commerce on data collection by the government. I am going to go back to a subcommittee hearing with DHS in front of us about a domestic surveillance program.

What is in this committee's jurisdiction should be—this place is the center of democracy in the free world and it has freedom of movement for any one of our constituents who wants to come here. We can't lose that. We can't have people utilizing whatever excuse they can to do domestic intelligence gathering on our staff, the press, or any of our constituents who come here to redress their grievances with government.

We have to get better at this. This is the existential threat that our citizens face from our own government in the 21st century.

I appreciate the opportunity to talk to you all, and I yield back.
[The prepared statement of Mr. Armstrong follows:]

*Testimony of Representative Kelly Armstrong
Committee on House Administration Member Day
March 8, 2023*

For 1,026 days, the House of Representatives was closed to the public. Over the course of this period, appointed leadership within the administrative bodies of this institution pushed the limit on the curtailment of civil liberties and historic norms of the United States Congress.

Leadership within the chief law-enforcement and protocol offices within the Capitol, the House Sergeant-at-Arms (SAA) and U.S. Capitol Police (USCP), instituted operational changes that hindered access to legislators and increased surveillance on members, staff, and the public.

Building Access

On March 12, 2020, the SAA barred open access to the House Office Buildings in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this unprecedented move, the public was prevented from freely entering House office buildings to engage their legislators and redress their grievances, a constitutionally protected activity under the First Amendment. While there were certainly other means for the public to be in communication with Members of Congress, personal interactions and face to face meetings are among the most direct and time-honored forms of petitioning the government.

More than one year later, the SAA modified this protocol and instituted an “Official Business Visitor” (OBV) program to allow an extremely limited number of individuals entry into the House Office Buildings. According to an April 21, 2021, email titled *House Campus Access Update to Official Business Visitor Procedures*, circulated by then-Acting Sergeant-at-Arms Timothy Blodgett, OBV access would be granted to individuals who were pre-registered with the SAA, presented a form of identification to be checked by SAA staff, and issued a badge corresponding with the location of the pre-arranged meeting. OBVs were subsequently prevented from moving through the building without a staff escort.

For more than a year after the OBV process began, the admission of OBVs into House Office Buildings remained slow and cumbersome. The result was a massive disruption to constituents and members due to lines that routinely stretched well beyond building entry points. Complicating matters was a severe USCP staffing shortage, like that on the week of February 21, 2022, that prevented the operation of two out of the three approved OBV checkpoints for the core House Office Buildings.

This process, which was ostensibly predicated on guidance from the Office of the Attending Physician (OAP) to address the COVID-19 pandemic, remained woefully inadequate, poorly implemented, and chilled the ability of constituents to petition their Member of Congress.

These policies culminated to act as a significant obstacle, if not an outright deterrent, to a considerable number of Americans wishing to exercise their constitutional rights.

Surveillance

Following leadership and law enforcement failures that left the U.S. Capitol vulnerable on January 6, 2021, Congressional law enforcement bodies initiated or proposed a variety of programmatic changes that furthered the alarming trend of data collection and surveillance.

At the direction of then-Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, retired Lieutenant General Russel Honoré led the Task Force 1-6 Capitol Security Review, which made several recommendations to address security issues facing the Capitol. Among the most contentious were advising that screening procedures and background checks be implemented. The review stated that as part of an effort to decrease insider threats, the Capitol should apply background checks to each holder of an identification card, a process that would deviate from the long-standing practice of deferring to employing Member offices for hiring decisions.

The Task Force 1-6 report suggestion for enhanced background checks and intelligence-gathering policies coincided with a SAA initiative designed to identify threats from individuals working within the Capitol Complex. Then SAA Walker testified before the House Appropriations Committee that the House Sergeant-at-Arms Office had developed an “insider threat awareness program” in coordination with the Intelligence Community, Department of Homeland Security, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to identify “employees who lose their compass” and individuals whose “allegiance has changed.” This policy, whether it was implemented or not, combined Sergeant-at-Arms Walker’s subsequent rationale should cause concern members from both parties because of numerous unanswered questions and lack of robust statutory guardrails.

Regardless of whether the discussed “insider threat awareness program”, proposed background checks, or pandemic-related business visitor policies are warranted, these initiatives should not be developed in the isolation of institutions governed by appointees of a majority, regardless of which party holds power. Rather than utilizing surveillance programs designed with no apparent concern for civil liberties or concern for constitutionally safeguarded functions, this body must engage in a transparent legislative process that is unambiguous, protective of speech, and defends the rights of all who come to the United States Capitol.

Chairman STEIL. Thank you very much, Mr. Armstrong, for your comments on that really important topic.

Mr. Cohen, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. STEVE COHEN, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TENNESSEE**

Mr. COHEN. Thank you, sir. It won't take that long. It is a very simple request. That is that this committee look into changing the identifying articles that we have to identify the states in the tunnel between Rayburn and the Capitol where we have our subway.

For time immemorial, we had the flags of the states that were beautiful and represented the states fairly clearly. We took them down when Mississippi's flag, with the Confederate flag part of it, became a controversy. Mississippi now has another flag called the Magnolia Flag. I presume we have still got the other 49 flags. The expense would be one flag for Mississippi.

I would suggest we put the flags back up. There is no reason to have them down when there is not a Confederate flag among them.

I think the coins, to be honest, are rather blah, kind of like a 1930's black-and-white movie with the sound not very good. They are just awful. You don't see it. It doesn't come out at you and you go, "Oh, that is Georgia or Virginia," or wherever. It just doesn't show.

You could put up the flags and the coins or you could just get rid of the coins. The Senate still has the flags. I would think we are the 50 states, the United States, that you look at it, and I think it would be nice, more attractive, and local. It has kind of cured itself of the problems, the Confederate flag.

With that, I thank the Chairman for having the meeting. I yield back the balance of my time.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cohen follows:]

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COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND
COOPERATION IN EUROPE (U.S.
HELSINKI COMMISSION)

March 7, 2023

The Honorable Bryan Steil
Chairman
House Committee on Administration
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Morelle
Ranking Member
House Committee on Administration
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle:

Thank you for the opportunity to highlight one initiative relevant to this committee that is important to me.

I would like to urge the committee to reinstate the U.S. state flags which were formerly displayed in the Rayburn subway tunnel. It was the correct decision at the time to remove state flags from the Rayburn tunnel in 2016 after debate over Mississippi's state flag, which included an image of the Confederate battle emblem. However, since Mississippi voters chose a different state flag, "The New Magnolia" in 2020, it seems appropriate to reinstate the flag display. The quarters that line the hallway now are blah, like something out of a B-grade black and white movie. The flags, on the other hand, add great panache and vibrancy.

These flags provide Members, staff and visitors a look into each state of America. Many have commented to me that they miss seeing the flags in the tunnel. I hope to see them hanging once again, just as they still do in the Senate subway tunnel.

Thank you for considering this request and for your leadership on the committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Cohen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a blue ink color.

Steve Cohen

Member of Congress

Chairman STEIL. Thank you very much.

That was an issue I was unaware of. I appreciate you coming in and sharing that with us.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Thank you, Chairman Steil. Thank you, Ranking Member Morelle and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today about the need to ban Members of Congress from trading individual stocks, bonds, and other similar financial instruments.

Maintaining the public's faith in government is pivotal to preserving Congress' institutional legitimacy. Frequent reports of suspicious stock trades, failures to comply with the STOCK Act, and revelations that Members of Congress can actively buy and sell the stock of companies they regulate or to which they appropriate money have shaken the public's faith in Congress' ability to make decisions purely in the public's interest.

This leaves our constituents on occasion with the impression that we are serving our own financial interests, rather than their interests.

That is why it is crucial that we prohibit Members of Congress from trading individual stocks, bonds, or other similar financial instruments. Members should not benefit from insider financial information obtained as a result of their positions, nor should they have financial interests cloud their policymaking.

A congressional stock trading ban is extremely popular with the American people. Overall, three-quarters of voters support prohibiting Members of Congress from trading stocks while serving in office. The support holds true across partisan lines, with 70 percent of Democrats, 78 percent of Republicans, and nearly 80 percent of Independents in favor of a stock trading ban.

Nonpartisan experts also strongly support these commonsense reforms. This level of cross-partisan public and expert support is a mandate for comprehensive action in this Congress.

Last Congress, I worked collaboratively with Democrats and Republicans who share the fundamental goal of fighting corruption and rebuilding confidence in our institutions. There is no better evidence of that common purpose than the many strong bipartisan proposals which exist, such as my own bicameral, bipartisan Ban Conflicted Trading Act.

While the specifics of different pieces of legislation differ, their spirit is the same. That is why I am optimistic that in this 118th Congress we can work together to develop and pass comprehensive, bipartisan, bicameral legislation to ban congressional stock trading.

That said, it is important that any final legislation include a set of policies that would address the multiple related problems that arise from Members owning and trading individual stocks. Specifically, as seven other Members and I stated in a letter to Speaker McCarthy last month, any final legislation on a stock trading ban should include the following three components.

First, it should cover all Members of Congress, their spouses, and dependents under the age of 18.

Second, it should require them to either divest prohibited investments within 120 days of an effective date, place such investments in a truly qualified blind trust, or it should require them to diversify such investments by placing them in widely held, diversified mutual or exchange-traded funds or U.S. Treasury bills, notes, or bonds.

Third, it must contain clear enforcement mechanisms and penalties that are sufficient to ensure Member compliance, while omitting any gimmicks, carve-outs, or exemptions that undercut the purpose of the legislation.

The American people widely support these policies across partisan and ideological lines and have given us a mandate to pass clear and comprehensive legislation. There is just not any excuse not to act any further on this particular issue. It should be a top priority of this Congress to finally pass this legislation.

In July 2022, then Leader McCarthy promised to take action on a stock trading ban should he become Speaker. I respectfully encourage Speaker McCarthy to follow through on this commitment by bringing strong, comprehensive legislation which meets the above principles to the floor as expeditiously as possible.

I also respectfully request this Committee, the House Admin Committee, to hold a bipartisan hearing, at least hold a hearing on this particular issue, putting in place a congressional stock trade ban, and work in a bipartisan fashion to advance comprehensive stock trade ban legislation.

To summarize, I respectfully request that you folks please hold a hearing on this issue as soon as you can.

Again, I thank you for your time. I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Krishnamoorthi follows:]

Testimony
Representative Krishnamoorthi
Committee on House Administration Member Day Hearing
March 8, 2023

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today about the need to ban Members of Congress from trading individual stocks, bonds, and other similar financial instruments.

Maintaining the public's faith in government is pivotal to preserving Congress' institutional legitimacy. Frequent reports of suspicious stock trades, failures to comply with the STOCK Act, and revelations that Members of Congress can actively buy and sell the stock of companies they regulate, or to which they appropriate money, have shaken the public's faith in Congress' ability to make decisions purely in the public interest. This leaves our constituents with the impression that their representatives are serving their own financial interests, rather than the interests of their constituents.

That is why it is crucial that we prohibit Members of Congress from trading individual stocks, bonds, or other similar financial investments. Members of Congress should not benefit from insider financial information obtained as a result of their positions, nor should their own financial interests cloud their policymaking.

A Congressional stock trading ban is extremely popular with the American people. Overall, three-quarters of voters support prohibiting members of Congress from trading stocks while serving in office. And the support holds true across partisan lines, with 70 percent of Democrats, 78 percent of Republicans, and nearly 80 percent of independents in favor of a stock trading ban. This cross-partisan support also extends to prohibiting members of Congress from owning individual stocks, which Republicans support by a 28-point margin, Democrats by a 27-point margin, and Independents by a 29-point margin. Nonpartisan experts also strongly support these common-sense reforms. This level of cross-partisan public and expert support is a mandate for comprehensive action.

Last Congress, I worked collaboratively with both Democrats and Republicans who share the fundamental goal of fighting corruption and rebuilding confidence in our institutions. There's no better evidence of that common purpose than the many strong, bipartisan proposals which exist, such as my bicameral legislation- the Ban Conflicted Trading Act.

While the specifics of the pieces of legislation differ, their spirit is the same. That is why I am optimistic that in the 118th Congress we can work together to develop and pass comprehensive, bipartisan legislation to ban Congressional stock trading.

That said, it is important that any final legislation include a set of policies that would address the multiple, related problems that arise from members owning and trading individual stocks. Specifically, as seven other members and I stated in a letter to Speaker McCarthy last month, any final legislation on a Congressional stock trading ban should:

- cover all Members of Congress, their spouses, and dependents under 18;

- require them to either divest prohibited investments within 120 days of the effective date, place such investments in a truly Qualified Blind Trust, or diversify such investments by placing them in widely held, diversified mutual or exchange-traded funds, or U.S. Treasury bills, notes, or bonds; and,
- contain clear enforcement mechanisms and penalties that are sufficient to ensure Member compliance, while omitting any gimmicks, carveouts, or exemptions that undercut the purpose of the legislation.

The American people widely support these policies across partisan and ideological lines and have given us a mandate to pass clear and comprehensive legislation. There is no excuse not to act.

It should be a top priority of the 118th Congress to finally pass this legislation. In July 2022, then-Leader McCarthy promised to take action on a stock trading ban should he become Speaker. I encourage the Speaker to follow through on this commitment by bringing strong, comprehensive legislation which meets the above principles to the floor as expeditiously as possible. I also respectfully request the House Administration Committee hold a bipartisan hearing on the merits of a Congressional stock trade ban and work in a bipartisan fashion to advance comprehensive stock trade ban legislation.

Thank you for your time.

Chairman STEIL. Thank you very much, Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Mr. Bucshon, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. LARRY BUCSHON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF INDIANA

Mr. BUCSHON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I will start by expressing my appreciation to the Chairman, the Ranking Member, and the Members of the House Admin Committee for hosting Member Day and for soliciting input from fellow Representatives on actions the House of Representatives should take to improve operations within this body.

I want to bring the Committee's attention to what I consider an urgent need to increase the accountability in the Office of the Attending Physician.

I think most of you know that I was a doctor before I was in Congress. Many of you are no doubt familiar with the office, as it provides medical assistance and advice to Members of Congress, Justices of the Supreme Court, congressional staff, and visitors to the United States Capitol. I have spoken to Dr. Monahan concerning my thoughts on this subject.

As you know, the Attending Physician is a medical officer assigned by the Department of the Navy. Individuals assigned to the position generally serve for an extended period. In the 95 years the office has existed, only seven individuals have served—except, of course, the first one served for 40 years. The current Attending Physician has held the role since 2009, and I am not passing judgment on him.

Though much of the OAP's, Office of the Attending Physician's, work occurs behind the scenes, it has repeatedly come to the attention of Congress and the public over the last 3 years in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. Concerns were raised that the office can be used for political purposes, that the Attending Physician is or was forced to act without using science to justify their actions, and there is a lack of accountability for OAP decisions. Actually, it can put the OAP in a very difficult spot.

During the 117th Congress, I worked with then Ranking Member Rodney Davis and staff of the House Administration Committee to draft H.R. 4862, the Office of Attending Physician Independence Act. I intend to reintroduce this legislation in the coming weeks. Though I believe past work on the language has brought it to a good place, I certainly invite additional feedback from Members or committee staff on how we can make this better.

The Office of the Attending Physician Independence Act would change the process for selecting an Attending Physician and create additional accountability for the role. It would resemble the process that we currently have for selecting and maintaining the Architect of the Capitol.

Specifically, the bill would establish a commission to recommend individuals for appointment to the position of Attending Physician. The commission would recommend at least three individuals who are medical officers of the Navy for the role. The President would select one of these three individuals to serve as the Attending Physician and then be Senate confirmed with the advice and consent of the Senate.

The individual selected as the Attending Physician would serve for a specific period of time yet to be determined, with the option of being reappointed, potentially multiple times.

Finally, the Office of the Attending Physician would be subject to oversight by the Committee on House Administration and the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration.

My goal is to ensure that the Office of Attending Physician is one that all Members can respect without concern that its actions or advice are based on anything other than science and reason.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to weigh in. I look forward to working with all of you on this important issue.

Thank you. I yield.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bucshon follows:]

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March 6, 2023

Dear Chairman Steil,

First, I would like to express my appreciation to the Chairman, Ranking Member, and other Members of the House Administration Committee for hosting Member Day and for soliciting input from fellow Representatives on actions the House of Representatives should take to improve operations within this body. At this time, I do intend to appear in-person before the Committee on Wednesday, March 8 to present oral testimony regarding the Office of the Attending Physician.

I want to bring the Committee's attention to an urgent need to increase accountability in the Office of Attending Physician (OAP). Established in 1928, the OAP provides medical assistance and advice to Members of Congress, Justices of the Supreme Court, congressional staff, and visitors to the United States Capitol.¹

As you know, the Attending Physician is a medical officer assigned by the Department of the Navy. Individuals assigned to the position generally serve for an extended period; in the 95 years the office has existed, only 7 individuals have served. The current Attending Physician has held the role since 2009.²

Though much of the OAP's work occurs behind the scenes, it has repeatedly come to the attention of Congress and the public over the last three years in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. Concerns were raised that the office can be used for political purposes, that the Attending Physician is able to act without using science to justify their actions, and that there is a lack of accountability for OAP decisions.

During the 117th Congress, I worked with then-Ranking Member Rodney Davis and staff of the House Administration Committee to draft H.R. 4862, the Office of Attending Physician Independence Act. I intend to re-introduce this legislation in the coming weeks. Though I believe past work on the language has brought it to a good place, I invite additional feedback from Members or committee staff.

¹ Ida A. Brudnick, CRS Insight: Office of the Attending Physician, U.S. Congress: Background Information and Response to Public Health Emergencies, May 14, 2020. Available at <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IN/IN11390>.

² *Id.*

The Office of Attending Physician Independence Act would change the process for selecting an Attending Physician, and create additional accountability for the role. It would resemble the process for selecting and maintaining an Architect of the Capitol.

Specifically, the bill would establish a commission to recommend individuals for appointment to the position of Attending Physician. The commission would recommend at least three individuals who are medical officers of the Navy for the role. The President would select one of these three individuals to serve as Attending Physician, with advice and consent from the Senate. The individual selected as Attending Physician would serve for a specific period of time, with the option to be reappointed. Finally, the Office of Attending Physician would be subject to oversight by the Committee on House Administration and the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration.

My goal is to ensure that the Office of Attending Physician is one all Members can respect without concern that its actions or advice are based on anything other than science and reason.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to weigh in and I look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry Bucshon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Larry Bucshon, M.D.
Member of Congress

Chairman STEIL. Thank you very much, Mr. Bucshon.
Ms. Tlaib, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. RASHIDA TLAIB, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

Ms. TLAIB. Thank you so much, Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle, and, of course, our House Members on this Committee. Thank you so much for allowing us to come before you. Much of the work that you do here directly impacts how effective we are in serving the residents that elected us.

Two years ago, Mr. Chair, I discovered that the young parents on my staff based in the district were not offered the same access to childcare. If you are based in Washington, DC, you had access to childcare facilities offered by the House. However, our whole team based in the district was not afforded any help or assistance with childcare.

We all know disparity in childcare benefits between D.C.-based staff members and staff based in the home district. Right now, many of you, it could be shocking to you all to realize that.

Based on feedback and challenges faced by staff in our districts, I urge the committee to ensure childcare benefits are equitable among all congressional employees.

I, along with many of my colleagues, welcomed the expansion of authorities for the development of childcare subsidies program for staff under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023.

This will allow, Mr. Chair, funding to be used for childcare in the House of Representatives and gives the Committee on House Admin the authority and responsibility in implementing this program.

Childcare is one of the biggest challenges for congressional staff, in maintaining congressional staff, and hurts our retention of very well-experienced and talented members of our staff. You all know retention really, truly does impact consistency of services for our residents.

It is also not lost on any Member of the House that the cost of childcare varies greatly from state to state. The challenges with cost and access are inherent to any discussion on childcare and cannot be discounted as you begin to implement this program.

As we know, according to various reports, the annual cost of, like, infant care in Michigan, for instance, is \$11,000. In New York, it is \$15,000. Again, it varies state to state.

We should make sure, and we already know we can, and should make sure that this considerable expense is easier on our staff and that we are fair when we do implement it.

I strongly believe that a program mirrored off of the student loan repayment program could prove successful for offering childcare subsidies to both our district office employees, as well as our Washington, DC.-based office staff.

Again, it is not a perfect program, though, by the way, but it can, again, offer some sort of guidance as you think about how to implement this program. I welcome the opportunity, Mr. Chair, to assist and partner with the Committee on House Admin to develop benefit programs for the offices to provide more benefits, again, for all employees.

I further urge the Committee to please conduct a needs assessment. Talk with the Members and parents. I know, as somebody that was a young parent working for the House Majority Floor Leader in the Michigan Legislature, how challenging it was to travel between various communities and, of course, making sure that we cover such a large geographic area, many of us multiple counties, multiple cities, and so forth.

Again, I greatly appreciate your time and attention to this critical matter to help our offices ensure that their staff and their families can thrive while they work for our various offices and on behalf of our families.

Thank you, and I yield.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Tlaib follows:]

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL
SERVICES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOUSING
& INSURANCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
& INVESTIGATIONS

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March 8, 2023

The Honorable Bryan Steil
Chairman
Committee on House Administration
1309 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Morelle
Ranking Member
Committee on House Administration
1216 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle

I write to offer my testimony for the Committee's Member Day hearing.

Two years ago, I discovered that the young parents on my staff based in the district were not offered the same access to childcare. If you are based in D.C., you had access to the childcare facilities offered by the House. Our whole team based in the district was not afforded any help or assistance with childcare. In the past four years, I have had three births on staff and over four that needed childcare.

The disparity in childcare benefits offered between D.C.-based staff members and staff based in the home district was shocking. Based on feedback and challenges faced by staff in the district, I urge the Committee to ensure childcare benefits are equitable among all congressional employees.

I, along with many of my colleagues, welcomed the expansion of authorities for the development of a childcare subsidy program for staff in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023. This will allow funding to be used for childcare subsidies in the House of Representatives and gives the Committee on House Administration the authority and responsibility of implementing this program.

It is not lost on any member of the House of Representatives that the cost of childcare varies greatly from state to state. The challenges with cost and access are inherent to any discussion on childcare and cannot be discounted as you all begin to implement this program.

Childcare is one of the biggest challenges for congressional staff and hurts our ability to retain talent among our offices.

According to a report from the Economic Policy Institute, the average annual cost of infant care in Michigan¹ is almost \$11,000 per year, and nearly \$9,000 per year for a four-year-old. In Wisconsin², infant care costs \$12,500 per year on average, and most than \$10,000 per year for a four-year-old. In New York³, the average annual cost for an infant and a four-year-old are over \$15,000 and \$12,000, respectively. This is unsustainable, and while solving this problem completely is outside the parameters of what we're discussing today, we can and should make this considerable expense easier on our staff.

I strongly believe that a program mirrored off the Student Loan Repayment Program could prove successful for offering childcare subsidies to district office employees. It's not perfect but could still serve as an example of an existing program that is offered to both D.C. and district-based employees.

I welcome the opportunity to assist and partner with the Committee on House Administration to develop a benefits program or pilot program for offices to provide more benefits to district office staff and their families. I further urge the Committee to conduct a needs assessment with members of staff who are parents to get their perspective. I greatly appreciate your time and attention to this critical matter to help all offices ensure that their staff and their families can thrive.

Sincerely,



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

¹ <https://www.epi.org/child-care-costs-in-the-united-states/#/MI>

² <https://www.epi.org/child-care-costs-in-the-united-states/#/WI>

³ <https://www.epi.org/child-care-costs-in-the-united-states/#/NY>

Chairman STEIL. Thank you very much, Ms. Tlaib.
Thank you all for your testimony.

We now have time for Members here of the Committee to ask questions. We will do this somewhat informally. Just signal to the chair if you have a question of our panelists.

I will recognize Mr. Morelle.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you.

First, I wanted to just ask Mr. Armstrong, I know that when I was in my previous iteration as a Member of the Rules Committee, you came off and talked about individual rights, civil rights, civil liberties. I appreciate your commitment to it.

I think, though, in understanding what you are saying, I think even you would agree there needs to be some balance. I mean, as much as this is open and Americans have the right, obviously, to come to their seat of government, there needs to be protections to make sure that we adequately secure the place.

Could you just further elaborate on how you would seek to achieve that balance?

Mr. ARMSTRONG. Sure.

Mr. MORELLE. Or do you not?

Mr. ARMSTRONG. No, no. Absolutely.

Mr. MORELLE. Maybe the premise to my question is wrong.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. This is the fantastic push and pull that exists here, and this is why this Committee is so important. We have former law enforcement on this end.

If you give law enforcement a job to secure what they will call priority targets in a hard structure, they are going to put up fences. They would put up a moat. They would put alligators in the moat if they could. They would do background checks on everybody. They would do all of those things. Their job is to protect the Capitol and the people who work in the Capitol.

It is this Committee's job to balance those most restrictive means with what we want to accomplish for our constituents. Outside of anything else, that was my biggest problem with this program. It never came in front of this Committee. It never came in front of an open and robust debate.

There are a lot of—I mean, there are always going to be balances to people who are in public life. The reality of what occurred, I mean, there are a ton of different questions.

If they are doing background checks on my employees, what if something is flagged? What happens next?

Mr. MORELLE. So you are—

Mr. ARMSTRONG. Because my employees don't work for Speaker Pelosi. They don't work for Speaker McCarthy. They work for the citizens of North Dakota. Can they ban them from the building?

I am an ex-defense attorney. I very much would hire a convicted felon who has gone through that process. He is going to flag on a background check.

Are they doing it to the press? They get badges.

I mean, the question isn't about concerning and protecting this building. The question is about this Committee being involved in making those final decisions.

Mr. MORELLE. I see. Okay. You are not arguing one way or the other about which techniques—

Mr. ARMSTRONG. Oh, I have very—

Mr. MORELLE. I know you—yes.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. I have very strict—I have very significant personal opinions—

Mr. MORELLE. I am sure you do.

Mr. ARMSTRONG [continuing]. which may be in the minority on some issues.

Mr. MORELLE. Your argument here is that the Committee ought to have a more robust process as you are determining what that balance is appropriately.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. I think domestic intelligence gathering in general is a very dangerous path to go down. When your stated message from law enforcement—and I don't care if they work for Ms. Tlaib or Mr. Armstrong or whoever—when your stated position is we are going to check their social medic accounts to see if employees have lost their way, that should be very scary. I mean, there is a reason we very strictly define things for criminal activity. That is very ambiguous depending on the lens through which you are reading it.

Mr. MORELLE. Got you. No, I appreciate that very much.

Ms. Tlaib, first of all, you point out something I think all Americans face, not just our district office employees, and I know you and I would see eye to eye on this, that the challenge—particularly for women, because, let's face it, even in our very progressive, advanced society women are still primary caregivers for children across the country—that having women back in the workforce, protecting them, allowing them the opportunity to advance in their careers is still a problem when it comes to the cost of childcare.

I don't know if you want to comment further, but I think this is—

Ms. TLAIB. No, I think, for me, my goal is to make sure that you all apply it equitably. Again, I had no idea that our district staff had no access to childcare. Even the childcare program that is here, which is much more affordable and everything, there is a 2-year waiting list. It is broken. I know that.

The fact that my district-based staff didn't have any sort of access to some sort of assistance, especially because we know that we did the student loan program primarily because retention and it was very hard. We are not a corporation. I know we don't have that kind of resource and stuff and we have to be careful with the public tax dollar.

I think for our families, they do want consistency in services, they do want to build out. I want our staff to be able to stay longer with us as they grow their family. I really think it has become a challenge when our district staff, again, is not offered the same kind of benefits. I just think it is unfair.

Mr. MORELLE. Got you. It is more about the equitable treatment of Washington versus our district office personnel. I appreciate that.

With that, I will yield back, Mr. Chair.

Chairman STEIL. Thank you very much. The gentleman yields back.

Mr. D'Esposito, did you have a question you wanted to ask?

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. Not so much a question, but more of a comment regarding Mr. Armstrong's testimony.

I think what is important is that since this Committee has been put together and we have had our opportunity to meet as a caucus, one of the things that is a priority is to make sure that any sort of politicization of the Capitol Police is removed from what is going on, on this Hill. I think that there is a good step in the right direction.

As someone who has worn the uniform, as someone who has responded to those calls, something that is very important is when you respond to a 911 call or you are called to help someone, no one ever asks whether you are—what political party you are from. That should not only be in the street, but it should be here on Capitol Hill.

I know that I am going to do my best to work to make sure that this Committee is a part of every decision that is made and to remove any politics from the Capitol Police.

Chairman STEIL. Yield back. Thank you very much.

Mr. Griffith, you are now recognized.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Thank you very much.

Dr. Bucshon, would you have any objection if we tinkered with your bill a little bit and took the President out of it?

One of the things that I am anxious to do is to start recognizing Congress has certain prerogatives. It doesn't matter who the President is, somebody on our side, I am not sure what that formula ought to be, but somebody on the legislative branch side ought to be picking all of these people who work for the legislature in the end.

Mr. BUCSHON. Yes, obviously, I want to bring more accountability to the office. I did work with Rodney last Congress and this what is we came up with. This is a starting point, not an end. Absolutely I want us to work together.

It actually benefits the Office of the Attending Physician—I talked to Dr. Monahan—that it puts them in a better place, because they don't have the feeling that there is any political influence on their decision making as a physician and the advice that they give.

I am absolutely open to whatever this Committee thinks will work and that we can get across the finish line to accomplish those goals.

Mr. GRIFFITH. I appreciate that.

Congresswoman Tlaib, if you can help me out, because I am probably doing something wrong. We have childcare in my office for the folks but we don't pay for it. They pay for it themselves. The House has the childcare available but we pay for it—but we don't pay for it in our office. Is that something I am—

Ms. TLAIB. Yes, it is just an affordable option. We do—I believe we do offer.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Okay.

Ms. TLAIB. It is much, much more affordable, according to my D.C.-based staff.

It is available. They do pay for it themselves, but it is at a lower rate, sir.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Okay. I just want to look into that, because I agree we should have options for our staffs back home.

Ms. TLAIB. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFITH. In some areas there might not even be adequate childcare available, and that is always an issue, particularly in rural areas like I represent. Alright.

Mr. Armstrong—if I might continue, Mr. Chairman, I am going on a roll.

First, let me say I like your concept. We will have to take a look at it. I am actually one who has had on the payroll a convicted felon in the past. If they have paid their time and they are doing right in society today, that doesn't cause me a great concern.

It does cause me some concern that somebody might be flagging them and what is my role. If they find something and I haven't been told about it, that is one issue. How deep are they diving? As you said, isn't that my job as the person who is actually hiring them?

Would you like to respond to that?

Mr. ARMSTRONG. That was my question with the original thing anyway, is I didn't know what the remedy was, what the due process was. I mean, I generally don't like domestic spying in general. I think we should all be in that case. Take it away from that side of it.

I am not—a policy change from intelligence leadership or Capitol Police leadership—

Chairman STEIL. Will the gentleman check if his microphone is on?

Mr. ARMSTRONG. Oh, sorry. Okay.

Chairman STEIL. We can hear you clearly, but I don't know there are others who may not be able to.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. When you are making a drastic change about anybody who has an employee card that gets into this building about what you are going to require and do all of those things, you should probably lay out how that works after you find something. Like, again, they can't fire my employee but could they bar them from the building?

Every member of the press, conservative press, liberal press, print press, TV press, has a badge.

There is just, without real significant guidelines in place for how that happens, just the opportunity for abuse exists. I am not sure what the remedy would have been to begin with. I mean, I get an MRA. I get to spend it how I want. I get to hire who I want. My LD can't do the job if he is barred from coming into the building because of a background check. Nothing of that was ever laid out, and that is a real problem.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Anything else you want to add at this time? Alright.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman STEIL. Thank you very much.

I appreciate all of our panelists here.

I just have a quick question and maybe a comment.

In regards to Ms. Tlaib, to what is really an important issue: How do we make sure people have availability for childcare?

The D.C. campus is a shared expense where it is subsidized by the House, and Members who utilize that service or staff who utilize that service for their children are also paying in, in a structure that I think you correctly identify as an issue as we think about staff who are at each of our respective homes, me, Wisconsin, you, Michigan.

Mr. Bucshon, we are going to definitely be looking into the issue that you brought up about how some of these appointments are made. That was really crystallized I think on this Committee's work on our oversight of the Architect of the Capitol, which is a very complicated process for that appointment. It is something I think we need to work with our colleagues in the Senate to reestablish the authority of Article I, which I know is dear to Mr. Griffith's heart as well.

Then, finally, if I could just ask a very brief question of you, Mr. Armstrong. Could you just comment on how we should be thinking in this Committee, when we are doing our oversight over the Capitol Police Board, the Capitol Police structure, depoliticizing, as Mr. D'Esposito said, how do we—how should we be thinking about protecting due process rights for individuals, either staff or individuals who want to visit the Capitol campus?

Mr. ARMSTRONG. The first answer to that is recognize that they have a tough job. This is a tough place to secure. This is a tough place to secure on a random Wednesday. They are going to bring you proposals—you are lucky you have law enforcement on your Committee—that from their perspective work.

The single best way to do it, whether it is in an open forum or a robust forum, is that you have to be involved in the final decision. It is every elected Member on this Committee's job to weigh the balance of absolute security for access to redress your grievances with your government.

If they are making decision—and then my personal request to each and every one of you, if you are making a force change posture, if you are making any of those things, background check, security, any of those things, make sure you clearly delineate out what the process is if that is picked, because that is one thing law enforcement—I mean, they are not the prosecutor. They are not the defense attorney. They are not the judge. Their job is to protect us, our staff, and the people who come here. It is your job to figure out how do you deal with that next.

Chairman STEIL. Thank you very much. I couldn't agree more that we should be more involved in our oversight role as it relates to a whole host of agencies, including Capitol Police. Appreciate your testimony today.

We will pause while the next panel comes in and assembles.

[Recess.]

Chairman STEIL. We thank the Members for joining us here today for an opportunity to hear from our colleagues on the work that we do here on this Committee.

We are going give each Member of our witness panel here 5 minutes for opening statements, and then we will open it up to Members of the Committee to question our witnesses. We are going to go from my left to the right, starting with Ms. Pramila Jayapal.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. PRAMILA JAYAPAL, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

Ms. JAYAPAL. Thank you so much, Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I would like to address the ethics problems created when Members of Congress own or trade individual stocks.

Eleven years ago, President Obama signed the Stop Trading on Congressional Knowledge, or the STOCK Act, into law. The STOCK Act clarified that Members of Congress were liable under existing insider trading law and required disclosures for any securities transactions.

While this law created more transparency and scrutiny over Members of Congress who practice dubious trading techniques, lawmakers and their spouses can still purchase and sell stock in corporations that they are responsible for regulating.

Last year, an investigation revealed countless violations of the STOCK Act. Despite these violations, government officials suffered few fines or penalties for their misconduct.

Even more concerning, the fines and penalties that were enforced served as little deterrent to the future violations of the law. For example, the penalty for violation of the disclosure provisions in the STOCK Act is at minimum \$200. Compared to the significant profits that Members may make from a conflicted asset, this penalty is a drop in the bucket.

Last Congress, Congressman Matt Rosendale and I introduced the Bipartisan Ban on Congressional Stock Ownership Act, with Senator Elizabeth Warren and Senator Steve Daines leading in the Senate. I look forward to reintroducing this bill with my colleague Matt Rosendale and also Congressman Ken Buck.

This bipartisan, bicameral bill bans Members of Congress and their spouses from owning and trading individual stocks, bonds, commodities, futures, and other securities.

Our bill also has exceptions. It does not ban common, widely held investments that do not present a conflict of interest and are suitably diversified. The bill gives Members 180 days to come into compliance after its enactment, with a 5-year deadline for complex assets such as hedge funds or venture capital funds.

The Bipartisan Ban on Congressional Stock Ownership Act is distinct from several existing proposals because it does not allow for the creation of qualified blind trusts.

While blind trusts are well-intentioned, they are often not truly blind. In fact, blind trusts may be known or easily discovered by their grantor. For example, if a Member holds millions of dollars in stock of one corporation and this stock is placed into a qualified blind trust, they can be reasonably confident that they don't own alternative stock for an extended period.

To ensure that Members do not pose such conflicts of interest during their public service, full divestment is necessary. As full divestment is a big sacrifice—we recognize that—our bill permits the deferral of taxation on capital gains on investments that Members and spouses divest under its authority.

There are several proposals in the House and Senate to address stock ownership in Congress, and what is good about that is many

of these are bipartisan proposals and it is an issue that Members, both Democrats and Republicans, are passionate about.

That is why I am proud to have this bipartisan bill and also to be working with other Members who also have strong bipartisan bills to put together what could be the strongest proposal that we can do.

As long as Members of Congress are allowed to hold and trade stocks, the door to corruption remains open, and we lose credibility with our constituents who are relying on us to make sure that we are doing what is in their best interest, not in ours.

The American people widely support a stock ownership legislation across partisan lines, and they are calling on Congress to act. I hope that in this session we will be able to finally pass a bipartisan proposal to address congressional stock ownership.

I remain available for any questions.

Thank you. I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Jayapal follows:]

810 words

**Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal (WA-07)
U.S. House Committee on Administration
"Member Day Hearing"
March 8, 2023**

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I'd like to address the ethics problems created when members of Congress own or trade individual stocks.

Eleven years ago, President Obama signed the Stop Trading on Congressional Knowledge (STOCK) Act into law.¹ The STOCK Act clarified that members of Congress were liable under existing insider trading law and required disclosures for any securities transaction. While this law created more transparency and scrutiny over members of Congress who practice dubious trading techniques, lawmakers (and their spouses) can still purchase and sell stock in corporations that they are responsible for regulating.

Last year, an investigation revealed countless violations² of the STOCK Act. Despite these violations, government officials suffered few fines or penalties for their misconduct.³ Even more concerning, the fines and penalties that were enforced served as little deterrent to future violations of the law. For example, the penalty for violation of the disclosure provisions in the STOCK Act is \$200.⁴ Compared to the significant profits that members may make from a conflicted asset, this penalty is a drop in the bucket.⁵

The American public relies on their faith in the integrity of elected officials to maintain our democracy. As long as these officials own stock in companies they oversee or to which they appropriate taxpayer dollars – this faith remains corrupted. Members of Congress must serve the people and place their service to our country over personal financial interests.

Last Congress, Congressman Matthew Rosendale and I introduced the *Bipartisan Ban on Congressional Stock Ownership Act*, with Senators Elizabeth Warren and Senator Steve Daines leading in the Senate.⁶ Our bipartisan, bicameral bill bans members of Congress and their spouses from owning and trading individual stocks, bonds, commodities, futures, and other securities. Our bill also has exceptions – it does not ban common, widely held investments that do not present a conflict of interest and are suitably diversified. The bill gives members 180 days to come into compliance after its enactment, with a five-year deadline for complex assets such as hedge funds and venture capital funds.

The Bipartisan Ban on Congressional Stock Ownership Act is distinct from several existing proposals because it does not allow for the creation of qualified blind trusts. While blind trusts are well-intentioned, they are often not truly blind. In fact, blind trusts may be known or easily discovered by their grantor. For example, if a member holds millions of dollars in stock of one corporation, and this stock is placed in a qualified blind trust, they can be reasonably confident that they don't own alternative stock for an extended period. To ensure that members do not pose such conflicts of interest during their public service, full divestment is necessary. Because full divestment is a sacrifice, our bill permits the deferral of taxation of capital gains on investments that Members and spouses divest under its authority.

There are several proposals in the House and Senate to address stock ownership in Congress. What we have learned from these proposals is that members, both Democrats and Republicans, are passionate about this issue. That is why I'm proud to have this bipartisan bill and to be working with other members who also have bipartisan bills to put together the strongest possible proposal.

As long as Members of Congress are allowed to hold and trade stocks, the door to corruption remains open. The American people widely support a stock ownership legislation across partisan lines⁷ and are calling on Congress to act. Congress must pass a bipartisan proposal to address Congressional stock ownership.⁸

Thank you for your time.

¹ Blog Post, EXEC. OFF. OF THE PRESIDENT, PRESIDENT OBAMA SIGNS THE STOCK ACT, (Apr. 4, 2012), <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2012/04/04/president-obama-signs-stock-act>.

² Madison Hall & Dave Levinthal, *78 members of Congress have violated a law designed to prevent insider trading and stop conflicts-of-interest*, BUS. INSIDER, (Jan. 3, 2023), <https://www.businessinsider.com/congress-stock-act-violations-senate-house-trading-2021-9>.

³ Camila DeChalus, Kimberly Leonard, & Dave Levinthal, *Congress and top Capitol Hill staff have violated the STOCK Act hundreds of times. But the consequences are minimal, inconsistent, and not recorded publicly*, BUS. INSIDER, (Dec. 15 2021), <https://www.businessinsider.com/congress-stock-act-violations-penalties-consequences-2021-12>.

⁴ See *supra* note 2.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ H.R. 6678, 117th Cong. (2022).

⁷ See Jon Green & Mark White, "The Public Thinks Members of Congress Shouldn't Be Able to Own Individual Stocks," Data for Progress, Mar. 19, 2020, available at <https://www.dataforprogress.org/blog/2020/3/19/the-public-thinks-members-of-congress-shouldnt-be-able-to-own-individual-stocks> ("Republicans support prohibiting members of Congress from holding individual stocks by a 28 point margin, 55% to 27%, while Democrats support the policy by a 27 point margin, 50% to 23%, and Independents support a prohibition by a 29 point margin, 51% to 22%.")

⁸ See Claire Williams, "Most Voters of All Parties Support Congressional Stock Trading Restrictions," Morning Consult, Jan. 19, 2022, available at <https://morningconsult.com/2022/01/19/ban-stock-trading-congress-poll> ("63% of all voters support a ban on members of Congress trading stocks, and 57% favor extending that prohibition to cover member spouses.")

Chairman STEIL. Thank you very much, Ms. Jayapal.
Ms. Tenney, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. CLAUDIA TENNEY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Ms. TENNEY. Good morning, and thank you, Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle and the House Administration Committee, for giving me the opportunity to speak with you today.

I serve as co-Chair of the House Election Integrity Caucus. Our caucus was founded after the 2020 election and currently has almost 70 members. The Election Integrity Caucus is driving commonsense policy solutions that restore faith in the democratic process and improve the administration of elections.

Today, I want to discuss two of these proposed solutions.

First, we recently introduced a resolution calling for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to prohibit individuals who are not citizens of the United States from voting in federal, state, and local elections.

Multiple jurisdictions around the nation, including New York City, San Francisco, Vermont, and the District of Columbia, have attempted to water down our sacred right of citizenship by extending the right to vote to noncitizens. It is time to restore confidence in our elections and rebuild faith in our self-governing constitutional republic by making it explicit that only American citizens are permitted to vote in U.S. elections. This includes local, state, and federal elections.

Second, the Members of the House Election Integrity Caucus are renewing our push to federally ban what are known as “Zuckerbucks.”

As you know, Mark Zuckerberg was able to spend nearly \$300 million influencing election officials around the country in 2020. In a surprise to no one, 92 percent of Zuckerberg’s money went to Democratic districts where it was used to boost turnout, register voters, and enhance ballot harvesting operations.

In the 117th Congress, the Election Integrity Caucus led the charge to ban Zuckerbucks and successfully pressured the Facebook CEO to end his blatant electioneering in the 2022 midterms.

We are not stopping our fight, because shady groups are not stopping theirs. Last month, DeKalb County, Georgia, accepted a \$2 million election grant despite a statewide ban on such donations.

Without a federal ban, left-wing groups and others will continue trying to buy off our election officials and unfairly influence the process. Our End Zuckerbucks Act amends Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code to stop shady nonprofit organizations from providing direct funding to official election organizations. This includes any state, local government entity or any government election organization.

Big tech giants should not be able to bypass state legislatures and directly shape the policies of the boards of election or election administrators. Our bill closes this loophole that left-wing and some other nonprofits are using to exercise inappropriate and corrupt influence over our elections.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to discuss these important issues with you.

I am grateful to your leadership, Chairman Steil and I look forward to continuing the partnership between the Election Integrity Caucus and the House Administration Committee.

Thank you so much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Tenney follows:]

Tenney House Admin Remarks

Good afternoon, thank you Chairman Steil and everyone on the House Administration Committee for giving me the opportunity to speak with you today. For those of you that are not familiar, I serve as co-chair of the House Election Integrity Caucus. Our caucus was founded after the 2020 election and currently has over 60 members focused on driving commonsense policy solutions to restore faith in the democratic process and improve the administration of elections.

I wanted to take a moment to share with you a few of our legislative priorities in the 118th Congress. First, we recently introduced a resolution calling for an amendment to the Constitution to prohibit individuals who are not citizens of the United States from voting in federal, state, and local elections. Multiple jurisdictions around the nation, including New York City, San Francisco, Vermont, and the District of Columbia, have attempted to water down our sacred right of citizenship by extending the right to vote to non-citizens. It is time to restore confidence in our elections and rebuild faith in our self-governing Constitutional Republic by making it explicit that only American citizens are permitted to vote in local, state, and federal elections.

Second, the members of the House Election Integrity Caucus are renewing our push to federally ban Zuckerbucks. As you know, Mark Zuckerberg was able to spend over \$300 million dollars influencing election officials around the country. The worst part is: 92% of Zuckerberg's money went to Democrat districts to boost turnout, register voters and enhance ballot harvesting operations. In the 117th Congress, the Election Integrity Caucus led the charge to ban Zuckerbucks and successfully pressured the Facebook CEO to commit to end his blatant electioneering in the 2022 midterms.

Now, they're at it again. Last month, DeKalb County Georgia accepted a \$2 million dollar election grant despite a statewide ban on such donations. Without a federal ban, leftwing groups will continue trying to buy off our election officials and unfairly influence the process.

Our End Zuckerbucks Bills would amend 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code so these organizations can no longer provide direct funding to official election organizations. This includes any State, local government entity, or any government election organization.

Thank you again for the opportunity to discuss these important issues with you here. I am grateful for the leadership of Chairman Steil and look forward to continuing the partnership between the Election Integrity Caucus and House Administration Committee.

Chairman STEIL. Thank you very much, Ms. Tenney and thank you for your work on this important issue.

Ms. Spanberger, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. ABIGAIL DAVIS SPANBERGER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF VIRGINIA

Ms. SPANBERGER. Thank you, Chair Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the House Administration Committee, for providing us with the opportunity to testify today and for providing me with the opportunity to testify on a matter that is foundational to our responsibility of representing the American people—and that issue is trust.

Last April, many of you in this room heard directly from experts on the need for reforms that can rebuild this trust. At that hearing, Mr. Chairman, I believe you highlighted in your statement that it is important to, quote, “provide confidence to the American people and that we avoid the appearance of an impropriety”—and I couldn’t agree more.

Members of Congress, both those who sit on this Committee as well as those who are elsewhere in the Halls of Congress, have access to privileged information not generally available to the public. That is the nature of our jobs, and that is the trust that is afforded to us.

Every day we attend closed-door briefings, sometimes classified briefings, we hold special hearings, and we participate in private meetings, often with CEOs of publicly traded companies.

We, the people’s elected officials, have access to information that can move markets. We, those who have been sent to Washington, DC, to represent our constituents, are expected to use this information to make smart decisions, not to benefit our personal financial portfolios.

However, trust has broken down, and major contributors to this breakdown include the perception of conflicts of interest, the never-ending parade of suspiciously timed trades, and Congress’ refusal to put guardrails on our own ability to buy and sell stocks while in office.

Ten years ago, Congress passed the STOCK Act. This law was meant to prevent lawmakers from using private information for their personal benefit. It was intended to build back trust.

While the STOCK Act has increased transparency and put in place an ethical standard by which Members should hold themselves accountable, its ultimate goal has not yet been met. The STOCK Act has not erased unethical or questionable activity, nor has it erased the public’s perception of such activity.

Instead, we find ourselves in familiar territory. Congress has an abysmal approval rating. Trust is at an all-time low. I consistently hear from frustrated citizens across Virginia and the country who are far from surprised when yet another headline pops up in the news about a politician using their position in a committee or their access to information for personal gain.

Unfortunately, these reports of suspicious trades by our colleagues are nothing new. After the Great Recession, we saw trades

that caused enough consternation among the American public that it finally forced Congress to pass the STOCK Act.

Yet the STOCK Act has not gone far enough, and we need to accept that the STOCK Act has not yet achieved its mission. The law expects that Members of Congress will police themselves, but that has not yet worked.

During the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we heard a familiar refrain. Reporting showed Members buying and selling stocks of companies that made cleaning supplies, medical equipment, and pharmaceuticals, long before most of the public was aware of the coronavirus' severity.

These violations of trust were not constrained to either party. Lawmakers on both sides of the law were repeat offenders.

To think that at the start of a once-in-a-generation global pandemic, lawmakers found time in their schedules to buy and sell stocks? This is the issue at hand.

They made these transactions at the expense of doing their jobs—at least that is how the public perceives it.

They bought and sold these stocks instead of preparing for the pandemic—at least that is how the public sees it.

They used their time with their often-precious and jam-packed schedules to make a dollar, to call in a trade, rather than update their constituents, check on their local healthcare providers, or seek more resources for nursing homes—that is how so many constituents perceive it.

Since 2020, report after report has highlighted Members buying and selling stocks in companies with whom they met. Reports have made very clear that lawmakers routinely vote on legislation that will impact their individual stock portfolios in a profitable way.

That is why we must hold ourselves accountable and show the American people that we are working for them. That is why our bipartisan TRUST in Congress Act can and will make a difference.

The TRUST in Congress Act would require that Members of Congress, as well as their spouses and dependent children, either divest their assets completely, place their assets in a widely held diversified fund, like mutual funds or ETFs, or place them into a qualified blind trust. These assets would stay in a blind trust for the entirety of their tenure on Capitol Hill,

My colleague Congressman Chip Roy of Texas and I introduced this bill in 2020 after hearing about these reports that I mentioned. The TRUST in Congress Act is the most bipartisan bill tackling this issue. It has more than 50 cosponsors thus far this Congress, both Democrats and Republicans. There is strong enthusiasm across the political spectrum and at home.

This January was the third time we introduced this bill, and I do hope it is the last. Representative Roy and I are hopeful to have honest, fruitful, and effective conversations about how we can move this legislation forward and restore the trust that people should have in Congress.

I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Spanberger follows:]

Rep. Abigail Spanberger Written Testimony
U.S. House Committee on House Administration
Wednesday, March 8, 2023

Thank you — Chair Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the House Administration Committee — for providing me with the opportunity to testify on a matter that is foundational to our responsibility of representing the American people — trust.

Last April, many of you in this room heard directly from experts on the need for reforms that can rebuild this trust. At that hearing, Mister Chairman, I believe you highlighted in your statement that it's important to "provide confidence to the American people...that we avoid the appearance of an impropriety." I couldn't agree more.

Members of Congress — both those who sit on this Committee as well as those who are elsewhere in the Halls of Congress — have access to privileged information not generally available to the public. That's the nature of our jobs. That's the trust that's afforded to us.

Every day, we attend closed-door briefings — sometimes classified briefings. We hold special hearings. And we participate in private meetings — often with CEOs of publicly-traded companies.

We — the people's elected officials — have access to information that can move markets. We — who have been sent to Washington, D.C. to represent our constituents — are expected to use this information to make smart decisions, not benefit our personal financial portfolios. However, trust has broken down — and major contributors to this breakdown include the perception of conflicts of interests, the never-ending parade of suspiciously timed trades, and Congress's refusal to put guardrails on our own ability to buy and sell stocks while in office.

10 years ago, Congress passed the STOCK Act. This law was meant to prevent lawmakers from using private information for their personal benefit. It was intended to build back trust. And while the STOCK Act has increased transparency and put in place an ethical standard by which Members should hold themselves accountable, its ultimate goal has not been met.

The STOCK Act has not erased unethical activity — nor erased the public perception of unethical activity.

Instead, we find ourselves in familiar territory. Congress has an abysmal approval rating. Trust is at an all-time low. And I consistently hear from frustrated citizens in Virginia — and across the country — who are far from surprised when another headline pops in the news about a politician using their position as a committee chair or their access to classified information for personal gain.

Unfortunately, these reports of suspicious trades by our colleagues are nothing new. After the Great Recession, we saw trades that caused enough consternation among the American public to finally force Congress to pass the STOCK Act.

The STOCK Act as not gone far enough. We need to accept that the STOCK Act has failed to achieve its mission, because of a sad truth — the law expects that Members of Congress will police themselves. But that has not worked.

During the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we heard a familiar refrain. Reporting showed Members buying and selling stocks of companies that made cleaning supplies, medical equipment, and pharmaceuticals — long before most of the public was aware of the coronavirus's severity. These violations of trust were not constrained to either party — lawmakers in both parties were repeat offenders.

To think — at the start of a once-in-a-generation global pandemic, these lawmakers found time in their schedules to buy and sell stocks. They made these transactions at the expense of doing their jobs. They bought and sold these stocks instead of preparing for the pandemic. And they used their time — with their often precious and jam-packed schedules — to make a buck in the stock market, rather than update their constituents, check on their local healthcare providers, or seek more resources for nursing homes.

Since 2020, report after report has highlighted Members buying and selling stocks in the companies with whom they met. Reports have also made very clear that lawmakers routinely vote on legislation that will impact their individual stock portfolios — often in a profitable way.

Even if the majority of these trades have been purely coincidental, we cannot deny that they erode public trust.

The only way we can truly hold ourselves accountable and show the American people that we are working for them is by removing — completely eliminating — the opportunity to buy or sell individual stocks in the first place. As one of my constituents in Spotsylvania County told me last year, “Leaders should be willing to accept the occasional limits required to demonstrate the integrity that their roles require.”

That’s where my bipartisan *TRUST in Congress Act* can and will make a difference.

The *TRUST in Congress Act* would require Members of Congress — as well as their spouses and dependent children — to either divest their assets, place their assets in widely-held, diversified funds like mutual funds or ETFs, or place their assets into a qualified blind trust. These assets would stay in the blind trust for the lawmaker’s entire tenure on Capitol Hill.

My colleague Congressman Chip Roy of Texas and I introduced this bill in 2020 after hearing reports of stock trades by some of our colleagues at the start of the pandemic. The *TRUST in Congress Act* is the most bipartisan bill tackling this issue and already has more than 50 cosponsors, both Democrats and Republicans.

There is strong enthusiasm — across the political spectrum and across the country — for this idea. The American people want to see Members of Congress spending more time serving their constituents and less time calling their stockbrokers.

This January was the third time we introduced this bill – and I hope it’s the last.

I urge the Committee to seriously consider legislation banning Members of Congress from trading individual stocks, and I encourage you to use our bill as a starting point. Representative Roy and I are open to honest, fruitful conversations about how to reach an agreement among a critical mass of Members to get this across the finish line. My only request is that it is done in good faith.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I yield back.

Chairman STEIL. Thank you very much, Ms. Spanberger.
Mr. Chip Roy, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. CHIP ROY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS**

Mr. ROY. Thank the Chairman, thank the Ranking Member, thank the Committee for your time. Glad to be here with my friend, the gentlelady from Virginia, Abigail. I appreciate it. We have now done this for three Congresses, and I think it is important.

I don't come here saying that I think I have got all the answers or that I know exactly what we should do or shouldn't do. It is hard.

Here is the simple thing: We don't want to be projecting to the American people that we are somehow making decisions, when we are doing our job here, that is connected to our own profit, our own personal financial stake.

I think the transparency that was embraced a decade ago was a step in the right direction so that people can understand.

We also, as going through all this, know the burdens that go with that and so forth. We know that when you have Members coming into Congress, if they have to divest themselves entirely of their life's work, dump their equities between November election and January 3, that may not attract a whole lot of people to want to come serve in Congress.

We have got to find a way to do this that recognizes the reality that if you are trading equities in the middle of while you are doing your job, that raises certain questions, it just does, if I am sitting on the Judiciary Committee and we have got an antitrust bill before us to break up Google, or to debate the size and scope and power of Big Tech, or if we are having conversations and somebody has a big position in Tesla and they are advancing EV mandates and that we should be investing in batteries, or if you are a Texan and have significant ownership in oil and gas and that might raise certain flags.

I do and have had. My wife's family, grandfather, worked for Phillips Petroleum in Phillips, Texas, just up there north of Amarillo.

The reality is we have got to send a signal to the country that we are not profiteering—or, the other side of this that people don't talk about very often, we are not actually making decisions on policy because of our position and choosing to take a walk on some policy choice or engage in some policy choice because of some position that we might have financially.

I think this is something that we should take up, but I think it should be one of those where we are sitting at a roundtable and we figure out how to do this the right way. Because I have talked to people. We embraced the idea of broadly traded mutual funds is a good place to land, blind trust.

I have had several Members come up to me and go, "Well, I tried to look into a blind trust because I wanted to send a signal that I was not doing something I shouldn't be doing, and it is really complex and hard."

Well, maybe we could simplify that. Maybe we can come up with a structure that makes it work so that you can take your life's work, move it over here, and have true blindness, to the gentlelady's point earlier.

What I think we have got to do, though, is address it. This can't be one of those things that we just kind of walk along and avoid it. Let's sit down, figure out how we are going to do it, and do it in a way that the American people actually believe that we are doing it for their best interest and not just to score political points. This isn't just to say, "Oh, look at us, we have got a big win that we have cleaned up Congress finally."

We need to do something here that just sends a signal that we get it, we shouldn't be day trading while we are voting on the crap that our day trading is affected by.

With that, I will yield back the balance of my time.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Roy follows:]



Rep. Chip Roy's statement for House Administration Member Day Hearing, as prepared.

March 8, 2023

"Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before the committee with my colleague Representative Spanberger to testify on the need for legislation to reform stock trading practices by Members of Congress. For the third straight Congress, Representative Spanberger and I have introduced the TRUST in Congress Act. This bipartisan bill is about making it easier for Members of Congress to do their job — representing their constituents and the American people as a whole — without the question of whether or not they are actually serving a financial motive, or other personal gain. I respectfully encourage the House Administration Committee to consider this and related proposals to help restore trust in this body by reforming congressional stock trading."

Chairman STEIL. Thank you very much, Mr. Roy.

We are now going to take names. We are going to go throw people into a queue, do it a little bit informally, and jump around.

I am really excited about this topic and appreciate the work that you are both doing in this space. I think one of the big concerns is sometimes the appearance of impropriety that exists amongst the American public.

One of my goals and commitments here is to restore trust, accountability, transparency to the American people about how Congress is operating, and that includes that appearance of impropriety that I think can exist.

In your research on this bill and in this space, do you think that we need a solution that is broader than just Members of Congress in the House and the Senate, that we should also be looking at the executive branch as well? Or do you think that the focus should remain mostly here between Members and Senators?

Mr. ROY. Do you want to?

Ms. SPANBERGER. I will go first on this.

I want to have broad ethics reforms for everyone. That would be an ultimate goal.

Chip and I have chosen to focus our legislation on Congress, the House of Representatives and the Senate, because, quite literally, we need to get our own house in order.

Notably, the executive branch has really strong and in some case very similar requirements related to divestiture for many executive branch employees, which I think can serve as an important model.

Broadly speaking, I support the notion and the principle of expanding this across branches of government, but I think that we have a responsibility to get it right with us. We wanted to be focused in creation of our legislation and so focused it on Congress, on the legislative branch, but I have no opposition to expanding it more broadly.

The intent here is to really get it right. The judicial branch versus the executive branch versus the legislative branch, understandably, we have different priorities. We are the one taking votes and moving markets. It does seem that we should be addressing that issue. We are the ones who get people to elect us and deserve that trust.

Mr. ROY. I would answer it in general agreement. Probably a little bit more aggressively in the view of we should apply this to the coequal branches because every opinion the Court hears is touching on these issues. Every one of the, frankly, to my political philosophical chagrin, the executive branch has a whole heck of a lot to do with the regulatory state and impacting business maybe in ways that none of us have the power directly. I mean, there are individuals who work for agencies who have significantly more power than any one of us do.

I think we should absolutely be looking at that across the board. I cosponsored legislation with Senator Cornyn—or I did the companion—applying to the judiciary the same kind of transparency that we had in Congress. I think we ought to be figuring out how to treat the branches equally.

Chairman STEIL. I tend to agree with you that I think this is broader. I think one of the areas I think we are also going to have

to explore is what I would call senior staff as it relates to that. As we know, some of those folks are as equally involved in the decisionmaking process as some rank-and-file Members here.

I think we have some great examples of where things have been done correctly. We see that in some of the executive branch agencies where there are some IRS tax treatments that allow Members to be able to escape from some of their previous investments when they come into Congress so that they will remove that appearance of impropriety, one of the things we are going to work on this Congress.

I appreciate your time.

I am going to yield to the Ranking Member, Mr. Morelle. Again, if Members want to get in the queue, just signal to me.

Mr. Morelle.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank the witnesses for being here.

I went through this personally. Near the end of my first term, I decided—I didn't have a lot of stock. I was a public official for far too long, I am sure, to gain much. Sold everything, put it into exchange-traded funds and mutual funds.

I assume neither of you object to those kinds of broader vehicles to invest in?

Mr. ROY. No. In fact, the legislation contemplates exactly that.

Mr. MORELLE. Yes.

I would say this, and I think, as the Chairman said, I tend to agree that something shouldn't be done unilaterally within one branch of the government. I really do think that the genius of the Founders in creating three separate branches means that each has significant power and authority to regulate the activity of American enterprise, commerce, all things that we do. If we are going to apply this, it seems to me it ought to apply equally to all the people who help make decisions and govern the country.

A couple things that I would just note, and perhaps you meant this when you referenced tax treatment. If Members come in and are required to sell equities and have to pay significant capital gains, there ought to be, I think, ways to adjust. I know I did when I sold everything. The tax bill was significant. It didn't give me pause, I did it anyway, but, I mean, that is like an additional, almost like a penalty required.

I don't know if either of you want to comment on that.

Mr. ROY. If I could address that, Ranking Member.

I agree. That is one of those things that I think we have got to work through, that you don't want to make it a disincentive for someone to serve. It is like, "Okay, well, I have worked up a life and I am going to have to liquidate all these, take a tax hit." They may not be able to do that. I think there are ways we can address that and we should. That is what we need to thoughtfully do.

I would make one other point. You talked about your course of action. My course of action, probably rather stupidly, has been I have just sat on what I had, which was fairly modest in the grand scheme of the world, since I have come in. It is just sitting there. Whatever handful of equities I owned I haven't sold. That is not a great financial strategy. They are literally just sitting there.

Mr. MORELLE. I am not a financial adviser, but I agree with you, that doesn't sound like the best financial—

Mr. ROY. Right. My point is, in part because I didn't want to, especially once we were going down this path, look like I was trying to game the system at all.

I will give you one other example. There was a pipeline company that was running a pipeline through my district in the Texas Hill Country. I was chastising them for running the pipeline under two rivers that are west of Austin.

I sought counsel from Ethics and I said, "Alright, I am about to rip into these guys and I hold equity in this pipeline company that I had before I ran for Congress. If I sell that now, what does that look like?" They advised, "You may not want to sell that now, because you are publicly beating the snot out of them for running this pipeline under the river."

That just shows you the world we operate in, and we ought to figure out a way to avoid that if we can.

Mr. MORELLE. Well, I agree. It is interesting you said that. In my prior life, I was in the New York state Legislature and owned some health insurance stocks and then was named the Chairman of the Insurance Committee. I said to my adviser or broker, whatever, financial adviser, please do not buy any more, do not sell any more. It felt awkward still to own it.

I do like, I mean, the notion of divesting, but to think about the tax implications so we are not unduly [inaudible].

The last comment I would make too is, particularly when it is service of your senior staff members, if we are going to ask people to sacrifice to come into government to play a role that benefits society, I think we have to compensate people well enough to justify at least giving back some of the sacrifice they are going to have to make.

That is why I think even around, I think for us, around compensation of Members, et cetera. I know people don't like to touch the subject and no one is clamoring in the public for Members of Congress to be making more money.

I do think you will have a hard time attracting quality candidates if they know, first of all, compensation hasn't changed in, I don't know, a decade or more, and you will be divesting your financial investments for the opportunity to serve here.

It is a privilege, but I think we all collectively need to think about how to balance those interests so we can continue to attract quality people who wish to serve not only in Congress but on staff and in senior positions throughout the government.

I won't ask you to comment. That is just my opinion.

I will yield back.

Mr. ROY. I will comment to say—and understand, none of us ever want to touch that subject. It is curious to me that we go through this, and we have got the constitutional amendment—which has an extremely interesting history tied, by the way, to a Ph.D. student at the University of Texas in Austin, about how that amendment got adopted in the 1990's. I actually think it is a good amendment. I actually think it is a good thing that you can't affect your existing salary in the current Congress.

We vote all the time on salary increases for judges, for executive branch officials, and yet, we are in this kind of infinite do loop here as a political matter.

It seems to me that, looking across the entirety of the three branches, in my belief, if you are truly looking at the branches equally, then we need to think about that, and we need to think about how all of those rules and how compensation and stuff plays into that.

I yield back.

Chairman STEIL. Thank you very much.

The Chair now recognizes Mr. Griffith.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Thank you very much.

I do like the idea of spreading it across other areas. We have all heard of executives in the—people in the executive branch who got paid pretty good salaries, had important positions, were in a place to influence contracts being let, and sometimes sole source, and making millions in the private sector as well.

That creates a concern. I have heard it from my constituents, who don't normally pay attention to those things. They don't like that.

On the other side of that coin, not being a person who grew up with means and not having lots of equities, as I often joke with my constituents, I sold all of mine and got my \$6,000 and reinvested it elsewhere. My tax bill wasn't too high, because it wasn't much to start with.

I do have a small community swimming pool that we purchased to save it from being condoed 30 years ago. While I am not on the board, I am obviously very interested in what goes on there. I grew up there and about 25 of us bought it.

Do you all have some kind of a de minimus or a small, closely held exception? Because, obviously, I am going to want to be involved. I go there almost every day in the summer when I am not traveling or up here. Obviously, I am involved in that.

Like I said, there were about 25 of us that got together, purchased it out of distress, saved it from being condoed, and it is still there serving the community. Some years we make money, but most years we don't.

Mr. ROY. I mean, I would defer. I don't think there is a specific de minimus exception, but there certainly should be or we certainly should have that conversation. There is always in this conversation the what ownership do you have in a business that you created and then who owns that and all that. I just think we got to look at the whole corpus of that.

Surely, what you are just describing, those are the kinds of things that the goal is to exempt, because you are not trading on that.

Ms. SPANBERGER. Yes. Our bill touches publicly traded individual stocks. If you cannot take a vote that would move the value of your community swimming pool—and to my dear colleague from the Commonwealth, I would argue that you likely can't—that may be something that would go on your financial disclosures, because under the STOCK Act—

Mr. GRIFFITH. It is on there, right.

Ms. SPANBERGER [continuing]. people should know that you have interest in that, but that is not something that you could say, “Oh, the community swimming pool industry is going to go under, let me get out of that really quickly, because I am ahead of that loss.”

Because it is not a publicly traded stock, it would not be part of our legislation, but it would still fall under the STOCK Act and transparency.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Some of the stock trades from time to time, but it is not publicly traded. It is usually a discussion amongst the people who currently own it and the people who are currently members of the pool.

Mr. ROY. A big, big profit center, is it?

Mr. GRIFFITH. Not large, but—a moment of personal privilege, Mr. Chairman.

I did that when I didn’t have kids, and then years later I had kids. They have grown up there. They work there. Best investment I ever made. I didn’t make any money, but I got a lot of memories for myself, but particularly for my children, who all grew up there, and a big part of their childhood is that pool.

Mr. ROY. That is fantastic.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back?

Mr. GRIFFITH. I yield back.

Chairman STEIL. Mr. Murphy, did you want to be heard?

Mr. MURPHY. Yes, sir. Thank you. I will make this brief.

I will tell you, there were at least two individuals in the last Congress that blatantly sold stocks right before the CHIPS Act and made millions. Why this wasn’t taken up in the last Congress is beyond me. We know who those individuals are, and that nonsense doesn’t need to happen again.

I will tell you, temptation is real. I read about COVID, and I still read lots of medical literature about the second week in February in the journal Nature. It raised just a big red flag. I made a bunch of phone calls and I thought to myself, “Boy, this is going to be something.” I literally thought to myself, “Well, gosh, the market is going to tank, I need to sell this stuff.”

Then literally, thank God, I took my pulse. I literally did just the opposite. I called Vanguard—and I had already been managing mutual funds—and I handed it over to them.

I think that is really, honestly, what we need to do and I will just give an example for that. Obviously, any fund that you need.

It is an absolute blight on Congress that we have individuals who are taking advantage of our positions of leadership and knowledge for personal gain.

I applaud you guys. I just ask my chief to get on the bill. I am going to encourage our leadership as much as possible to get this bill passed. It should have been passed last session.

Chairman STEIL. The gentleman yields back?

Mr. MURPHY. Yes, sir.

Chairman STEIL. Appreciate all of our panelists, in particular, I think, on this really important topic. It is something this Committee is going to review, because I think we have an opportunity to do the work to get it right, to make it a nonpartisan event, and to work to continue to restore the trust and integrity of this institution for the American people.

I appreciate your testimony today. Thank you very much.

Mr. ROY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. SPANBERGER. Thank you.

Chairman STEIL. This Committee, we are going to gavel out, take a 5-minute break, and gavel back in.

Without objection, each Member, including our witnesses, have 5 legislative days to insert additional material into the record or to revise and extend their remarks.

**Statement by Congressman Andy Kim (NJ03)
before the Committee on House Administration
March 8, 2023**

Dear Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle:

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify before the Committee for today's Member Day hearing. We are now two months into a new Congress and we have not yet met the moment on an important task the American people sent us here to do—prohibiting officials across all three branches of government from owning individual stocks. This is neither a Democratic issue nor a Republican issue, but an issue that goes directly to the health and safety of our democracy. In fact, it is an issue that Speaker McCarthy himself has said needs to be addressed by Congress.

Americans have lost trust in their government and their representatives. We have a dangerous level of helplessness and apathy growing in our nation from people who feel that no matter what they do or who they vote for, their lives will not improve.

It's incumbent on us as elected leaders to work to restore Americans' trust in us, in our institutions, and in our constitution. The Constitution is a sacred document. If you're empowered by the people to hold a job whose job description is written in our Constitution, I believe you should have to hold yourself to the highest professional and ethical standards and leave no doubt that you are serving the American people and not working for political or personal benefit.

This week I introduced a bill that would be a first step in restoring people's faith in their democracy, restoring their trust in the elected leaders, and restoring the idea that the people's government works for the people.

My Restoring Trust in Public Servants Act would set one single standard across all three branches of the federal government – including Congress, the President, Vice President, and the Supreme Court– to prohibit ownership of individual stocks. We all swear an oath to the same constitution and we should have a single standard by which we show our commitment to that sacred document.

All public servants, at the highest levels, owe the American people their undivided attention and loyalty. Americans deserve to have complete faith in the people who choose to serve in our government without potential conflicts of interest.

I am encouraged by the growing consensus across the country and here in Congress that lawmakers should not be in a position to profit off of their service to the American people. I look forward to working with Americans and lawmakers from all sides of the political spectrum to tackle this challenge together and to restore Americans' trust in their government.

In addition to this legislative effort to restore trust by banning Members of Congress from owning individual stock, this Committee also holds within its power the ability to help restore trust between Representatives and their constituents by working with the House Ethics Committee to revise and update rules relating to community service, volunteerism, and informing constituents about resources available to them from non-profits, public health, and private entities.

Currently, Members of Congress are not allowed to volunteer our time with a charity or non-profit through our official office. In the aftermath of tragedies and disasters in our own community, we are not allowed to tell people where to donate food or resources to get urgent help to those in need. I respect and understand the need to restrict the use of official resources for solicitations, but also believe that I and other Members of Congress should be able to visit a soup kitchen and actually serve the homeless instead of merely giving remarks. Indeed, the March 16, 2020 Joint House Administration-Ethics Committee Guidance related to official communications about Coronavirus made clear that the relevant committees can create guardrails without totally prohibiting communications and the sharing of resources in times of emergency. I believe we can and should revise and update our rules to create such guardrails during non-emergencies as well.

Throughout American history, ordinary people have stepped up to accomplish extraordinary things in service to our country. From planting victory gardens and sewing homemade masks, to volunteer first responders spending their nights in the back of an ambulance, to the millions who joined the Civilian Conservation Corps in rebuilding our country after the Great Depression, Americans have always served one another, and I believe we must recommit ourselves to doing it again.

During the 117th Congress, dozens of bills were introduced by members on both sides of the aisle to promote and encourage service in our communities and to our country, including my own package of five bills to supercharge national service. I will continue to fiercely advocate for these legislative efforts, but I also encourage this Committee to revisit our own rules, handbook and guidelines so that Members may share resources without soliciting support, may work with non-profit partners in support of the public good, and may truly serve their constituents and their communities in both words *and* deeds. I believe doing so would be a huge step forward in restoring trust in government and elected officials.

House Administration Committee
“Member Day: Committee on House Administration”
March 6, 2023
Representative Angie Craig (MN-02)

It’s simple: Members of Congress should be focused on serving their constituents, not playing the stock market.

Folks in Washington have too often used their power for personal gain while hardworking Minnesota families struggle just to get by. And with the way things are going, it’s no wonder that many folks in our district feel like they’ve been left behind by a government that’s dominated by big money and special interests.

Over the past few years, as I’ve talked with folks in my community, it has always stuck with me how many Minnesotans are resigned to the belief that, no matter what anyone does, nothing will ever change.

We need to restore confidence in our elected officials and our government by returning the power to hardworking families in Minnesota. And since the very first day I arrived in Congress, I’ve been focused on reforming the way Washington works so that Minnesotans can feel confident that they are – and will always be their elected official’s number-one priority.

Our constituents sent us to Congress to lower health care costs, fix our roads and bridges and help create good-paying jobs, not play the stock market and line our own pockets. Unfortunately, some of my colleagues have gotten sidetracked by special interests and conflicts of interest. I am proud to have reintroduced my *NO STOCK Resolution* in the 118th Congress – and I’m committed to making progress on this issue and making Congress work better for the people we represent.

If passed, this stand-alone legislation would require every Member of the House to immediately sell their individual stocks and refrain from future stock ownership.

This is a long-overdue step – but I won't stop fighting until we get this one done. That's what Minnesotans deserve.

**Testimony of Representative Warren Davidson Before the Committee on House
Administration Concerning House Staffer TS/SCI Clearances**

March 8, 2023

Good morning, Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle. Thank you for allowing me to testify before the Committee on House Administration concerning the House's ability to permit one Top Secret / Sensitive Compartmented Information (TS/SCI) clearance per House personal office to support access to information.

Security clearances govern access to classified information. While Members of Congress are entitled to access classified information by virtue of our constitutional offices, our staff do not have this privilege. Often, our staffers do not hold sufficient clearances to access information required for Members of Congress to legislate or conduct effective oversight.

Members cannot be expected to conduct oversight singlehandedly, which is why our staff is so essential. And those staff should be empowered to help Members as necessary, including being granted high clearances as needed. Specifically, I ask that the House Administration Committee consider instructing The House Security Division to set up a process to allow one staffer from each personal office to have a TS/SCI clearance. This change would mirror the Senate's recent policy change and expand Congress' oversight capabilities.

Access to classified information is controlled by several parallel systems, two of which are relevant here. The first is the division of clearances into confidential, secret, and top secret. The second imposes additional controls on eligibility and access to information, known as the Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI) program. Access to SCI information requires completion of a Single Scope Background Investigation and eligibility adjudication by the Department of Defense Consolidated Adjudications Facility or by the Intelligence Community. Classified information that requires both a top-secret clearance and SCI eligibility is often abbreviated as "TS/SCI" to denote the clearance level and additional access requirements.¹

Currently, Members of the House of Representatives are afforded up to two staffers with a TS clearance, but they are not eligible to obtain a TS/SCI. There have been several notable pushes in the House to address this imbalance — even Members of the House Intelligence Committee are not currently afforded personal office staff with TS/SCI clearances, and they have unsuccessfully advocated for their aides to be eligible to obtain them.²

The Legislative branch oversees the entire government, but only a few staffers have these high-level clearances. Meanwhile, there are currently hundreds of thousands of Executive branch staff with TS/SCI clearances. The number of committee offices altogether is probably on the order of 1,000. It is past time for Congress to address this disparity.

¹ For additional background information regarding the security clearance process, see "Security Clearance Process: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions" Congressional Research Service, October 7, 2016 <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/secretcy/R43216.pdf>

² See Ratnam, Gopal "Staff security clearances may vex House Intelligence members" Roll Call, October 2, 2019 <https://rollcall.com/2019/10/02/staff-security-clearances-may-vex-house-intelligence-members/>

The possession of a TS/SCI clearance significantly empowers staff to conduct oversight of the Executive branch. In November 2021, the Senate understood this need and changed its chamber rules to designate one staffer as eligible to apply for TS/SCI, giving personal office staffers the ability to review matters deemed classified by the Executive branch.³

House appropriators have taken action on this issue, but more needs to be done. The FY 2020 Legislative Branch Appropriations bill requested a study and report on processing times for security clearances for House employees and whether such clearances are being finalized and adjudicated consistently with executive branch timelines.⁴ The FY 2021 Legislative Branch Appropriations bill asked for further clarification of this information, directing the Sergeant at Arms to include the number of clearances disaggregated by security level as well as clearances pending. (H. Rpt. 116-447 p. 10).⁵

Accordingly, I urge the committee to take the following steps:

1. Request House leadership direct the House Security Division (HSD) of the Sergeant at Arms to amend the House of Representatives Security Policy Manual to establish a procedure through which every House Member may submit a maximum of one Top Secret-cleared employee per House personal office through HSD for adjudication of eligibility to access Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI) by the Department of Defense Central Adjudication Facility. This shall not alter the established precedence of a "need-to-know" determination made by the entity in possession of the classified information or material sought.
2. Request House leadership require the HSD to ensure any staffer who receives a TS/SCI clearance is provided adequate training as to the responsibilities of that clearance, including counterintelligence training, and a further report from HSD on what additional programming and resources should be implemented and costs incurred to provide all congressional staff appropriate counterintelligence training.

Access to TS/SCI information is important not just to aid Congress in addressing traditional national security concerns, such as military and intelligence matters, but also for election security and cyber threats. The House of Representatives should also empower every Member to designate one personal office staffer who shall be provided clearance at the TS/SCI level, provided that staffer passes the background check. Receiving a clearance does not put a staffer "in access" to information, since that requires an additional determination of a need-to-know situation. However, it removes an important barrier so that staff can provide an appropriate level of responsive, unbiased, expert advice to each of us.

³ See Ward, Alexander and Forgey Quint, "Some Americans wanting out of Afghanistan not reached by State, 4 groups say" Politico National Security Daily, November 16, 2021. <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/national-security-daily/2021/11/16/some-americans-wanting-out-of-afghanistan-not-reached-by-state-4-groups-say-495122>

⁴ Legislative Branch Appropriations, 2020 Committee Report (H. Rept. 116-64, p. 13), <https://www.congress.gov/116/crpt/hrpt64/CRPT-116hrpt64.pdf>

⁵ Legislative Branch Appropriations, 2021 Committee Report (H. Rept. 116-447, p. 10), <https://www.congress.gov/116/crpt/hrpt447/CRPT-116hrpt447.pdf>

I have also submitted to the record an amendment to the House Rules that would allow one staffer from each personal office to have a TS/SCI clearance.

I greatly appreciate your time and consideration of our request and look forward to answering any questions you may have.

**AMENDMENT TO
RULES COMMITTEE PRINT 117-20
OFFERED BY MS. JACOBS OF CALIFORNIA**

Page 175, insert after line18 the following:

1 **DIVISION D—SECURITY CLEAR-**
2 **ANCES FOR HOUSE EMPLOY-**
3 **EES**

4 **TITLE XV—SECURITY CLEAR-**
5 **ANCES FOR HOUSE EMPLOY-**
6 **EES**

7 **SEC. 1501. AVAILABILITY OF SECURITY CLEARANCES FOR**
8 **EMPLOYEES OF HOUSE MEMBERS SERVING**
9 **ON CERTAIN COMMITTEES.**

10 (a) SECURITY CLEARANCES.—

11 (1) DESIGNATION OF EMPLOYEE.—Each Mem-
12 ber of the House of Representatives who serves on
13 a committee of the House may designate one em-
14 ployee of the Member’s personal office for whom the
15 Office of House Security may adjudicate the employ-
16 ee’s eligibility for access to Sensitive Compartmented
17 Information (SCI) by the Department of Defense
18 Central Adjudication Facility.

1 (2) MINIMUM LEVEL OF SECURITY CLEARANCE
2 FOR ELIGIBILITY FOR DESIGNATION.—A Member
3 may designate an employee under paragraph (1)
4 only if the employee holds a security clearance at the
5 level of top secret or higher.

6 (b) RESPONSIBILITIES OF OFFICE OF HOUSE SECUR-
7 RITY.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enact-
8 ment of this Act, the Office of House Security shall take
9 such actions as may be necessary, including revising the
10 House Security Manual, to enable the Office to adjudicate
11 the eligibility of employees for access to SCI pursuant to
12 subsection (a).

13 (c) TRAINING.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Office of House Secu-
15 rity shall ensure that any employee of the House
16 who is eligible for access to SCI pursuant to sub-
17 section (a) receives sufficient training in the respon-
18 sibilities associated with such access, including train-
19 ing in counterintelligence.

20 (2) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after
21 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Office of
22 House Security shall submit a report to the House
23 on the programming and resources the Office re-
24 quires to carry out paragraph (1).

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1 (d) MEMBER DEFINED.—In this section, a Member
2 of the House of Representatives includes a Delegate or
3 Resident Commissioner to the Congress.

4 (e) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-
5 tion may be construed to waive any “need-to-know” deter-
6 mination made by any entity of the executive branch with
7 respect to the eligibility of any individual’s access to any
8 information or material.

9 **SEC. 1502. EXERCISE OF RULEMAKING AUTHORITY.**

10 This title is enacted by Congress—

11 (1) as an exercise of the rulemaking power of
12 the House of Representatives, and as such it is
13 deemed a part of the rules of the House of Rep-
14 resentatives, and it supersedes other rules only to
15 the extent that it is inconsistent with such rules; and

16 (2) with full recognition of the constitutional
17 right of the House of Representatives to change the
18 rules (so far as relating to the procedure of the
19 House) at any time, in the same manner, and to the
20 same extent as in the case of any other rule of the
21 House.



TESTIMONY FOR COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION HEARING,
MARCH 2023

Mr. HOYER. “I thank the Chairman, Ranking Member, and their colleagues on the Committee on House Administration for holding this hearing today and for inviting us to testify. One of the committee’s most important responsibilities is managing the Members’ Representational Allowance (MRA) and the pay and benefits that our hard-working Congressional staff receive.

“Much like the rest of our government, the House depends on competent, devoted public servants to function effectively for the American people. From developing critical legislation to supporting our constituents, our staffers carry out crucial work on behalf of the country. Nevertheless, the House faced retention problems because of the longer hours, lower pay, and fewer benefits that many staffers received. House Democrats recognized these issues and took action to advance key initiatives that help the House recruit and retain the most talented and hardworking individuals and build a workforce that reflects the diversity of the nation that we all serve. Crucially, we secured cost of living adjustments, new benefits, and pay floor and pay ceiling increases for our Congressional staff. House Democrats are committed to building on this progress in the months and years ahead.

“I have long advocated for Congress to find ways to improve pay and benefits for our staff. I’ve been fortunate to have Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries and former House Administration Committee Chair Zoe Lofgren as partners in that effort. Sending numerous

letters and testifying before this committee and others like it that have influence over House personnel, we made important progress on this issue in the 117th Congress.

“When I testified before the House Modernization Committee in 2021 on this priority, I outlined the approach that we ought to take to enhance our recruitment, improve staff retention, and build a more diverse Congressional workforce. First, I said that we needed to modernize our system for staff pay. The House made important strides toward that goal these past few years. We successfully pushed Congress to secure a 21% MRA increase across the board in the Fiscal Year 2022 appropriations package. Similarly, in the Fiscal Year 2023 Omnibus, we secured a 4.6% MRA increase to accommodate a cost-of-living adjustment for staff consistent with their Executive Branch counterparts in the military and civilian workforce. To further reflect that intent, we also raised both the pay floor and pay ceiling for House staff. Going forward, we need to continue to include annual cost-of-living adjustments in the MRA, committee, and leadership budgets.

“The second strategy for staff recruitment and retention that we have emphasized is improving benefits to set our staff and their families up for success. The CAO Task Force on a Diverse and Talented Workforce identified many commonsense measures that would make a tremendous difference in the lives of our staff, such as tax-advantaged 529 college-savings plans and a fund to help our staff cover adoption costs and afford fertility treatments not covered by insurance. With the help of then Appropriations Committee Chair Rosa DeLauro, we managed to secure one of the CAO’s recommended benefits in the Fiscal Year 2023 Omnibus: expanded child-care support for House staff through Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts. Indeed,

no one should have to choose between caring for their children or advancing their career. Given the House daycare's limited capacity, and to support district staff living around the country without access to even those limited slots, many House staff need these enhanced supports to help cover child-care costs at the centers near their home. Implementation of this vital program falls under your committee's jurisdiction, which is why I urge you to take swift action to adopt the rules necessary to make this resource available to House staff.

“The 118th Congress must build on this progress. In addition to implementing the staff child-care benefit quickly, I hope that your committee will continue to work with us to maintain a strong staff-pay system and to secure other key benefits like 529 plans and financial support for adoption and fertility treatment. These are investments not only in our staff and their families but also in our institution's ability to operate For The People.

“Democrats and Republicans ought to come together on this issue, and I look forward to working with the Chairman, Ranking Member, and the entire Committee on House Administration to ensure that we can recruit and retain the best individuals for our crucial work here in the People's House.

Testimony of Rep. Richard Hudson
Before the Committee on House Administration
March 7, 2023

Modernizing and Securing Members Telephone Townhalls and Communication

Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony to the Committee and for soliciting proposals on how the House of Representatives can better serve its members and more importantly our constituents.

I appreciate the opportunity to present my proposal to improve constituent engagement by all members of the House of Representatives. As we know, the government oftentimes lags in keeping up with technology, and the U.S. House of Representatives is no exception. Our D.C.-based duties sometimes keep us away from our Districts for extended periods of time, but these are the times when we should be seeking input back home the most. In addition, with the looming threat of surveillance from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), our communications with constituents deserve robust cyber and data security protections. For this reason, I believe it is time to allow the House to offer access to a service for members to communicate with their constituents as much as they like, both telephone townhalls and text messaging.

Modernizing our communications will help Congress be more accountable to our constituents. Last Congress, nearly 400 Members used a telephone townhall platform totaling between 1,500- 2,000 events. These events were paid for individually by each office on a per-event basis. In addition, over half of the members in the House reached out to 10,000 constituents per week via SMS messages. These texts were paid for on a per-phone number basis.

As you can see, the large majority of members in the House of Representatives use these services. This Committee should leverage economies of scale and encourage the solicitation of bids for a House-wide contract for a communications platform that can provide such services. This would create efficiencies for our offices by reducing the need to negotiate with a vendor every time a member wants to host an event. It would allow us to benefit from bulk pricing given the number of events held and volume of messages sent on an annual basis. And finally, unlimited access to telephone townhalls and SMS messaging would encourage Members to be more disciplined and proactive about keeping their constituents informed regularly, a responsibility we all share.

By providing a House-wide service, the Committee can also be sure members are protecting their data and their constituents' data. Over the years, we have seen numerous reports of CCP agents targeting Members of Congress. To that point, any vendor selected for this, or other constituent-facing services should adhere to strict cybersecurity protocols. These cybersecurity threats continue to evolve, and so too must our technology to address these threats to protect ourselves, our constituents, and this institution from bad actors.

I appreciate your consideration of this cost-saving proposal to facilitate and encourage constituent outreach for the benefit of all Members in the U.S. House of Representatives. Leveraging economies of scale will significantly improve our communication with the very people who send us here for the privilege to represent them.

**Testimony of Representative Sara Jacobs Before the Committee on House Administration
Concerning TS/SCI Clearances for House staffers
March 8, 2023**

Good morning, Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle. I appreciate the opportunity to testify before the Committee on House Administration today regarding providing more access to TS/SCI clearances for House personal office staffers.

Staff access to Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information (TS/SCI) is vital to ensure prompt and effective action on issues related to national security, election security, and cyber threats. As Members of Congress, we have the ability to access classified information, but House staff often lack the necessary clearance to provide Members support on matters requiring such levels of security. The lack of clearance creates unnecessary roadblocks for House Members seeking to legislate and conduct oversight, and ultimately undermines efforts to uphold the public interest.

It is imperative that each personal office in the House of Representatives is granted one TS/SCI clearance so that a designated staffer can support each Member with classified matters. Currently, House Rules only allow for each office to have two personal staffers with Top Secret (TS) clearance but does not allow for any staffers with Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI) clearances. The Executive branch has been classifying more information at the SCI level, which effectively limits the support that staffers with just TS clearance are able to provide.

In the 1970s, an informal agreement was struck between then-Speaker O'Neill and the CIA Director to limit the number of security clearances.¹ In practice, this meant that only relevant committees and leadership could have staffers apply for TS/SCI clearances.² This agreement has created a precedent for the Office of House Security — at the direction of House leadership — to refuse to process new or transfer existing TS/SCI clearances for personal staff. This has left the majority of House Members without the resources necessary to engage with information classified at the TS/SCI level. Despite this agreement, the Executive branch did not reduce the level at which it grants TS/SCI clearances.

The lack of clearances for House staff is particularly concerning when Members of Congress have to vote to declare a national emergency or authorize the use of military force. The House Security Manual's practices are outdated and do not account for the drastic increase in the

¹ For the correspondence between the Speaker and the CIA Director, see https://s3.amazonaws.com/demandprogress/documents/1978_correspondence_on_clearances.pdf.

² See "A Primer on Congressional Staff Clearances: Which Staff Can Obtain Security Clearances, at What Levels, and Who Decides?" Daniel Schuman and Mandy Smithberger (February 2020), https://docs.pogo.org/report/2020/A_Primer_on_Congressional_Staff_Clearances_2020-02-05.pdf.

amount of information that the Executive branch is classifying at the TS/SCI level. Over the last decade, the amount of classified information has increased by 250% and information classified at the TS and TS/SCI level increasing by over 370%.³ As more information is being classified, the number of staffers that can support Members of Congress at briefings on TS/SCI level information is decreasing.

The number of congressional staffers with TS/SCI level clearances is incredibly low when taking into account the hundreds of thousands of Executive branch employees and interns with clearances, as well as many non-citizens and thousands of foreign politicians, foreign government civilians, foreign military personnel, and foreign contractors. And yet, congressional staffers are disproportionately impacted by their lack of clearances with approximately 300 in the Senate, and even less in the House.⁴

Providing select House personal staff with TS/SCI clearances will not necessarily give staffers unfettered access to classified information. Rather, the TS/SCI clearance is just the first step in gaining access to classified information. It must also be demonstrated by the entity holding the classified information that individuals need access to each SCI component and the staffers must sign nondisclosure agreements.⁵

The lack of sufficient clearances for staff undermines Congress's ability to legislate and conduct effective oversight. Staff without clearances cannot provide unbiased, expert advice to Members of Congress on critical issues. Even staff with TS/SCI clearances at the time that they were hired are not allowed to use their clearances for their congressional work. The absence of such advice and the time spent in acquiring such clearance weakens our ability to legislate and conduct effective oversight. The policies in place have made Members unduly reliant upon staff outside their offices.

I introduced a bipartisan amendment to H.R. 5314, the Protecting Our Democracy Act, during the 117th Congress that would permit one TS/SCI clearance per personal office.⁶ This proposal would:

³ 2017 Report to the President, Information Security Oversight Office, National Archives and Records Administration, <https://www.archives.gov/files/isoo/reports/2017-annual-report.pdf>.

⁴ See "A Primer on Congressional Staff Clearances: Which Staff Can Obtain Security Clearances, at What Levels, and Who Decides?" Daniel Schuman and Mandy Smithberger (February 2020), https://docs.pogo.org/report/2020/A_Primer_on_Congressional_Staff_Clearances_2020-02-05.pdf.

⁵ A more in-depth discussion of the importance of expanding TS/SCI clearance available can be found in the testimony of Mandy Smithberger before the House Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee (March 2020) <https://www.congress.gov/116/meeting/house/110517/witnesses/HHRG-116-AP24-Wstate-SmithbergerM-20200304.pdf>.

⁶ Amendment to H.R. 5314, the Protecting Our Democracy Act during the 117th Congress: https://amendments-rules.house.gov/amendments/JACOCA_033_xml211202115449942.pdf.

1. **Request that House leadership direct a revision to the House Security Manual to allow one staffer in each House personal office to be eligible to apply for access to Sensitive Compartmentalized Information.** This would enable each Member of Congress to designate one staffer with the necessary clearance to help them conduct oversight and legislative work that requires access to classified information.
2. **Recommend that House leadership impose a new required annual training for House staff on counterintelligence threats, classified information disclosure laws, and the proper handling of classified information.** This training would ensure that staff with access to sensitive information understand their responsibilities and are better equipped to safeguard national security.

The costs of implementing these reforms are likely to be minimal, and the benefits could be significant.⁷ The Senate changed its practices to allow each Senator to designate one personal office staffer eligible to apply for a TS/SCI clearance.⁸ The House of Representatives should follow the same approach and empower every Member to designate one personal office staffer who shall be provided clearance at the TS/SCI.

These policy changes are long overdue and necessary for the House to ensure that it has the resources to conduct effective oversight and provide the public with the information they need to hold their government accountable. The proposed changes would provide greater clarity, flexibility, and accountability in the management of classified information, thereby enhancing the security of the nation and strengthening public trust in government institutions.

I greatly appreciate your time and consideration of our request and look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress

⁷ DCSA billing rates for FY22/23 are available online. The tier 5 clearance tier encompasses TS, SCI, and Q investigations, all of which are billed at the same rate. (The House already provides for TS and Q clearances.)

⁸ "Senate Personal Offices Now Allowed a Staffer With TS/SCI Clearance," First Branch Forecast (Nov. 16, 2021) <https://firstbranchforecast.com/2021/11/16/senate-personal-offices-now-allowed-a-staffer-w-with-ts-sci-clearance/>.

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**WRITTEN STATEMENT
OF
CONGRESSMAN TROY E. NEHLS
TEXAS 22ND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT**

**BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

MEMBER DAY

MARCH 8TH, 2023

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and members of the House Administration Committee, I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today.

First, it has come to my attention that the overwhelming desire for the public to enter our nation's Capitol—following it being closed during the COVID-19 pandemic—has created significant delays for advocates, constituents, and Congressional staff to enter the buildings.

In fact, it now takes my staff upwards of 25 minutes to make their way through security, in order to do their jobs and the work of the American people. My constituents have also missed their meeting times as a result of these prolonged wait times.

Without jeopardizing the safety and security of the Capitol complex, I recently sent a letter to the Sergeant at Arms requesting the creation of a “fast pass” designation on full-time Congressional staff badges, after being granted written permission by a member of Congress.

This would allow staff with the designation to enter the House buildings without having to go through a security screening.

I urge this Committee to work with the Sergeant at Arms and my office to implement this designation, in order to ensure the American public can fully participate in our legislative process and our staff can enter the House buildings in a timely and efficient manner. Staff being able to bypass security will help unclog the lines for our constituents.

Next, I would like to address the inappropriate and likely illegal actions that Capitol Police conducted in my office in the 117th Congress.

On November 20th, 2021, Capitol Police entered my office without my knowledge and photographed confidential legislative products. USCP leadership said the officer entered a “wide-open door” to my office to ensure no one had wandered into an unattended office. However,

anyone in this room will tell you, those doors do not stay open on their own.

While looking for an “intruder,” this officer decided to take pictures inside my personal office. As a former sheriff, I can tell you: Training is needed.

Two days later, on Thanksgiving week of that year—a week that few staffers are on Capitol grounds— three intelligence officers attempted to enter my office while the House was in recess. Upon discovering a member of my staff, special agents dressed in plain clothes began to question him as to the contents of a photograph taken illegally two days earlier. Again, I tell you: training is needed.

So why was the Capitol Police Leadership maliciously investigating me in an attempt to destroy me and my character? Maybe it is because I have been a vocal critic of former Speaker Pelosi, Yogananda Pittman, and other Capitol Police Leadership about their handling of January 6th.

Whatever the reason is, I urge this Committee to reinvestigate this event themselves, in order to ensure members of Congress and their staff are not subject to biased investigations by USCP leadership.

More training is also needed to ensure the USCP is a protection force, as opposed to an investigation force.

Having taken the majority in the House, it is up to House Republicans to ensure accountability of Capitol Police leadership.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today and I look forward to answering any of your questions.

**Testimony of Representative Mike Quigley Before the Committee on House Administration
Concerning Access to Congressional Research Service Reports
March 8, 2023**

Good morning, Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle. Thank you for allowing me to testify before the Committee on House Administration concerning access to Congressional Research Service (CRS) reports.

The Committee on House Administration (CHA), along with the Senate Rules and Administration Committee and the Joint Committee on the Library has the authority to instruct the Library of Congress regarding improving public availability of CRS reports and other non-confidential products.¹ I come here today to respectfully request that your committee exercise that authority with respect to CRS reports.²

Congress directed the CRS to publish CRS reports online in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018.³ The legislation required online publication of reports available on CRS's Congressional Intranet as of the date of enactment. It also encouraged the CRS director to "make additional CRS products that are not confidential products or services" available online, which includes thousands of non-confidential CRS reports, memoranda, and other publications. Nonetheless, the CRS has said it will not publish additional CRS products online without further specific direction from Congress.⁴

Congress has endorsed public availability of non-confidential CRS reports, as have former CRS employees,⁵ civil society,⁶ and academics.⁷ Long-standing congressional policy has allowed Members and committees to distribute CRS products to the public and now directs the CRS to prospectively make the reports publicly available. "Non-current CRS reports," i.e., reports not published on CRS's internal website after the 2018 Appropriations law's enactment date, still have relevance for Members of Congress, staff, and the public. These reports provide context for issues under deliberation and illuminate choices made by Members of Congress concerning policy questions that still are relevant today. CRS maintains a digitized archive of some non-current reports for use by CRS employees that are often shared with congressional staff.

¹ FY 2021 Omnibus Appropriations bill, and decades of prior Appropriations bills, declare the Committee on House Administration or the Senate Committee on Rules may authorize the Library of Congress "to pay any salary or expense in connection with any publication, or preparation of material therefor (except the Digest of Public General Bills), to be issued by the Library of Congress." P.L. 116-260.

² Dr. Wendy Ginsberg, a House Oversight Subcommittee Staff director and former analyst with the CRS, called for online publication of other non-confidential products in her October 2021 testimony before the House Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress. "With the public dissemination of many of their products now permissible, CRS must use distribution channels much more effectively to remain relevant." Direction from Congress on CRS reports already exists and research into implementation has been conducted by the CRS. See Testimony of Dr. Ginsberg, available at <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/MH/MH00/20211021/114068/HHRG-117-MH00-Wstate-GinsbergW-20211021.pdf>.

³ P.L. 115-141 § 154, [https://www.congress.gov/bills/115th-congress/house-bill/1625](https://www.congress.gov/bills/115/congress/house-bill/1625).

⁴ See The Recap: Library of Congress Virtual Public Forum, Oct. 18, 2020 "The Library of Congress made it clear it would not act to improve public access to CRS reports (by improving how the reports are published or releasing the archival reports) or to make available an API to Congress.gov data without express and explicit direction from Congress." <https://congressionaldata.org/the-recap-library-of-congress-virtual-public-forum/>.

⁵ Letter to Congress from 25 former CRS Employees (April 28, 2017).

https://s3.amazonaws.com/demandprogress/letters/CRS_Employees_Call_for_Public_Access_to_CRS_Reports_2017-04-28.pdf

⁶ Coalition letter to the Committee on House Administration (February 4, 2020)

https://s3.amazonaws.com/demandprogress/letters/Coalition_Urges_House_Administration_Committee_to_Expand_CRS_Report_Access.pdf

⁷ Letter to Dr. Hayden from various academics (September 1, 2021), https://s3.amazonaws.com/demandprogress/documents/2021-09-01_pdf-CRS-Reports_Policy-Agendas-Project.pdf.

Congress requested that the CRS identify requirements necessary to publish already-digitized reports online through the Appropriations committee report language adopted by the House in FY 2021.⁸ The directions were as follows:

Access to Archival Materials: The Committee requests that within 60 days of enactment of this Act the CRS provide a report to the Committee evaluating the possibility of publication of CRS reports contained in its CRSX archive, specifically examining the feasibility, cost, and benefits of integrating all or a subset of the reports online. This analysis should include an assessment of the utility to the public and Congress of online access to the reports.

Alternate Format for Public Reports: The Library is requested to provide to the Committee within 60 days of enactment of this Act a report describing the process, timeframe and costs of making available to the public all currently available non-confidential CRS reports in HTML format rather than PDF, or a successor format when appropriate. The Committee understands that CRS already publishes reports on its internal website in HTML. Making this change in format for external audiences would facilitate the use and re-use of the information contained in the reports.

To this end, I respectfully request that CHA direct the CRS to make further improvements with respect to online publication of CRS reports. All Members of Congress should have direct access to these reports upon demand. Currently, there is no way for them to know what report titles exist. Similarly, all members of the public should be on equal footing with one another with respect to access. And yet, well-resourced groups pay for access from third-party subscription services, including for non-current reports unavailable on CRS's internal and external websites. By comparison, other legislative branch agencies publish current and historical reports online, including the Law Library of Congress. It is time for the CRS to catch up.

Accordingly, I urge the committee to take the following three steps:

1. Direct the CRS to create a plan for and to proceed with publication of CRS reports contained in its CRSX archive. These documents already are in a digital format and are cataloged in an electronic repository replete with metadata. CRS should commence with making them publicly available online, on a Library of Congress website if possible and with the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO) if not. The CRS should consult with civil society experts that already republish CRS reports and previously issued recommendations on how the CRS could most usefully publish reports online.⁹ In addition, the CRS should consult with other elements of the Library of Congress on how to best integrate its products into *Congress.gov*, which would further the Library's efforts as a whole to make its collections more accessible to the public. As CRS reports have already been reviewed and issued by CRS, the focus should be on putting the digital documents online and incorporating existing metadata.

⁸ Legislative Branch Appropriations, 2021 Committee Report (H. Rept. 116-447, p. 36-37), <https://www.congress.gov/116/crpt/hrpt447/CRPT-116/hrpt447.pdf>.

⁹ Civil society letter concerning Draft Library of Congress Memo on CRS Report Website (June 8, 2018), https://s3.amazonaws.com/demandprogress/documents/2018-06-08-Civil-Society-Memo_on_CRS_Reports-Website-Implementation.pdf

2. Direct the CRS to create a plan and timeline for publication of non-current CRS reports that are not already in digital format. I urge the CRS to draw inspiration from the Law Library of Congress, which recently scanned more than 6,000 of its law reports dating back decades and published them online, and used crowdsourcing to improve the accessibility and utility of the reports.¹⁰ Accordingly, CRS should consider the extent to which they can partner with legislative branch entities or others to publish non-current reports not yet digitized by CRS. Furthermore, the agency should also consult with entities that have experience with scanning and publishing significant volumes of government publication as well as entities with particular domain expertise in republishing CRS reports or legislative branch data generally.

3. Direct the CRS to publish the text of CRS reports online in addition to PDFs. Many CRS reports have been published on CRS's internal website in HTML format and other reports may exist in legacy Microsoft Word or WordPerfect formats that could be published as is or be converted to HTML or markdown. Publication of CRS reports as HTML or in semi-structured data formats will encourage their wide re-use, improve accessibility for persons with disabilities, and extend the reach of CRS in connecting with its congressional users. Furthermore, reports that exist only as scanned files could be published online and an additional layer of data could be created through OCR or crowdsourcing techniques. CRS should prioritize the publication of HTML for reports already available online as PDFs. The Library of Congress need not publish the HTML on the CRS reports website so long as the HTML is available in a central repository, such as the bulk data repository maintained by GPO.¹¹

Congressional Research Service reports enrich the legislative process and help inform public debate. I greatly appreciate your time and consideration of my request and look forward to answering any questions you may have.

¹⁰ Historical Legal Reports from the Law Library of Congress, Library of Congress, <https://crowd.loc.gov/campaigns/legal-reports/>.

¹¹ Bulk Data Repository, Government Publishing Office, <https://www.govinfo.gov/bulkdata>.



Congresswoman Nikema Williams
2023 Committee on House Administration Member Day Testimony

For the last two election cycles, millions and millions of Georgians have come out in record numbers to vote and make their voices heard. In presidential years, in midterms, and in runoffs, the people of Georgia have made it clear that they want the opportunity, access, and freedom to vote.

And while I like to say that Atlanta Influences Everything, we are seeing record turnout and engagement all around the country. And no one would be happier to see so many people exercising their fundamental right to vote than my friend, mentor, and predecessor, Congressman John Lewis.

He fought and bled to ensure people who look and think like me and many of my constituents are considered full citizens, with all the respect, dignity, and rights that entails. Of course, he knew his fight was not finished - it is incumbent on all of us to keep his legacy alive.

Unfortunately, not everyone has gotten that message. Instead of celebrating civic engagement and the strength of our democracy, they see the American people making their voice heard as a threat. They try to pass draconian voter suppression laws and aggressively gerrymander districts. They favor certain types of voting used by the voters they like and limit the types of voting used by those they don't. They allow and encourage voter intimidation and confusion, and when all of that fails, just substitute their own will for the will of the voters and local governments.

We know this first hand in Georgia. After nearly 5 million Georgians showed up in the 2020 elections, then in record numbers for the January runoff, they didn't rejoice in their constituents being heard or the efficient administration of our state's biggest ever election. Instead, they went right to work making sure this success of democracy never happened again.

Georgia's Jim Crow 2.0 voter suppression law, SB 202, which was signed into law by Governor Brian Kemp, undermines what should be our shared desire for inclusive, accessible elections administered by independent and protected election officials. It made it harder to vote by mail, limited access to ballot dropboxes and early voting, let anyone challenge anyone else's voter registration for any reason, and allowed the State Election Board to replace or override county election officials at will.

And when these didn't work as well as they'd like, they're going farther!

We've seen the Georgia legislature replace election boards in 11 counties across the state, replacing hard-working, committed, bi-and-non-partisan election workers, frequently people of color, with people chosen specifically *for* their partisan, anti-democracy credentials. Because they believe that people who don't look and think like them, people who look and think like I and many of my constituents do, do not deserve to have power in this country.

We're seeing efforts now to make it even harder to vote. In Georgia, they're trying to ban dropboxes. SB 202 already made it so dropboxes were only open during business hours and inside or near staffed offices. Now, because of some nonsense conspiracy theories, they want to get rid of them. All this does is waste the valuable time of voters and election workers, and makes voting harder. They also want to set specific and heightened standards on unhoused voters, making them targets for voter intimidation and confusion.

It gets worse! SB 202 allowed anyone to challenge anyone else's voter registration, leading to hundreds of thousands of baseless challenges, each of which must be reviewed and receive a hearing. And now they want to make these challenges easier! This is already creating a massive administrative burden on overworked, under-resourced election officials, preventing them from doing their jobs ensuring our elections run smoothly. And let's be clear, the registrations being challenged are those of low-income people who might move around, college students, or people whose names make conspiracy theorists suspicious; they are targeting, harassing, and intimidating those most marginalized in an attempt to say that they are not welcome in our elections

We might not be counting jelly beans in a jar, but these efforts seek the same result—suppressing the votes of people of color and those most marginalized. We also have to understand these efforts as a pattern. During Reconstruction, more than 1,500 Black people were elected to office from 1865-1877. And this scared people who viewed Black people having power as a threat. Their backlash led to things like literacy tests and poll taxes and Grandfather clauses and all-white primaries to deny people who look like me and many of my constituents the rights of citizenship they were entitled to.

The vote suppressors of today may use different tactics, but they are animated by the same fears and aiming towards the same goals. They use big data and sophisticated software to target people of color with "almost surgical precision." They look at who votes in which way, then if they like you, they make it easier to vote the way you want; if they don't, they make it harder.

We need to be out loud and on purpose about standing up for the full humanity, dignity, and rights for all citizens, no matter their race, gender, age, language status, ethnicity, disability, bank account, or ZIP Code. The right to vote is fundamental - we need Congressional action to ensure our constituents can have their voice heard in our democracy. And we must name the problem and put it into current and historical context.

I look forward to joining with anyone who wants to get into some Good Trouble and being a co conspirator for justice with me, because either you're on the side of our democracy or you're not.

If there is no further business, I think——

Mr. MORELLE. May I just—I just want to thank you, if it is Okay. Chairman STEIL. Please.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you and the Members and the witnesses. This was really an important conversation, the first time I have had the privilege on this Committee of having a Members conversation.

I thought the comments on both sides were very thoughtful. These are important issues. Obviously, the work of this Committee will continue, because Congress is always going to be meeting new challenges.

I just want to thank you and my colleagues. I thought this was a very fruitful conversation.

I yield back.

Chairman STEIL. I thank the Ranking Member. I think it was a productive conversation. I think it really sets us up for some great opportunities to find some nonpartisan solutions here on Capitol Hill and to advance this institution.

If there is no further business, I thank the Members for their participation.

Without objection, the Committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:47 a.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

