

March 22, 2021

The Honorable Derek Kilmer
Chair
U.S. House of Representatives Select
Committee on the Modernization of
Congress
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable William Timmons
Vice Chair
U.S. House of Representatives Select
Committee on the Modernization of
Congress
Washington, DC 2051

RE: How the Members of the Fix Congress Cohort Can Strengthen Congressional Modernization

Dear Chairman Kilmer, Vice Chair Timmons, and Members of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress:

As the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress (ModCom) ramps up its operations in the 117th Congress, we, the undersigned, wanted to take the opportunity to reintroduce the members of the Fix Congress Cohort.

The Fix Congress Cohort is an informal network of organizations and experts that formed around a shared commitment to a more functional and effective Congress. This network includes representatives of nonprofits, think tanks, congressional experts, and academics, each with strong expertise in congressional history and operations.

Fix Congress Cohort members have engaged on a range of issues that impact Congress' capacity to solve problems at scale. Members of the Cohort possess policy expertise in the areas of technology and data, staff development and retention, building a diverse and inclusive workplace, bipartisanship, and increasing institutional efficiencies.

In the 116th Congress, members of the Cohort looked for opportunities to apply this expertise to the work of the ModCom. We look forward to continuing these efforts in this Congress, bolstering the Committee's recommendations to improve the first branch of our government. In anticipation of planned hearings, members of the Fix Congress Cohort are happy to share resources and research, provide or identify expert witnesses, and offer potential questions for consideration.

Additionally, Fix Congress Cohort members bring value as an association of organizations and individuals drawn from across the political spectrum. Like the ModCom, we have learned how to bridge partisan divides in service of shared values and a common goal: a strong legislative branch. Given the makeup of the Cohort, members can serve as a logical sounding board for the ModCom and a resource to help gauge how its policy recommendations may be received by a broad range of political actors and constituents.

In addition to the work of the Cohort members, a subset of member organizations engages in advocacy efforts aimed at building a Congress that is effective, efficient, and representative.

These efforts include generating support for modernization efforts among non-ModCom members of the House of Representatives, as well as [in the Senate](#). In the 116th Congress, many of these groups [put their support behind H. Res. 756](#), the Moving Our Democracy and Congressional Operations Towards Modernizing Resolution, which adopted nearly 30 of the Committee's recommendations. Other advocacy efforts by cohort members have been aimed at securing additional funding for the ModCom, as well as urging reauthorization of the Committee for the [second session of the 116th Congress](#) and the 117th Congress.

The challenges facing American communities demand a Congress capable of fulfilling its Article One responsibilities. Internally, the ModCom is leading this important effort. Achieving this goal will require a commitment from Congress to rethink and strengthen the way the institution functions.

As organizations and individuals committed to seeing a strong legislative branch, the Fix Congress Cohort members stand ready to provide information, expertise, and assistance to help the ModCom achieve its goals.

Sincerely,

Bipartisan Policy Center
Bipartisan Policy Center Action
College to Congress
The Congressional Institute
Congressional Management Foundation
Demand Progress
Democracy Fund Voice
The Governance Lab
Issue One
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
Lincoln Network
NALEO Educational Fund
Partnership for Public Service
Pay Our Interns
POPVOX
Protect Democracy
R Street Institute
Rebuild Congress Initiative
Unite America

Alexia Jordan, CNAS-Next Generation National Security Fellow*
Brian Baird, Former Member of Congress*
Casey Burgat, George Washington University, Legislative Affairs Program*
Kevin M. Esterling, University of California, Riverside*
Kevin Kosar, American Enterprise Institute*
Lorelei Kelly, Georgetown University, Beeck Center for Social Impact + Innovation*
Matt Glassman, Georgetown University, Government Affairs Institute*

Michael Neblo, The Ohio State University, Institute for Democratic Engagement and Accountability (IDEA)*

Molly Reynolds, The Brookings Institution*

Rick Shapiro, Strategic Assets Consulting*

* Affiliations listed for identification purposes only.

Cc: The Honorable Beth Van Duyne (R-TX)
The Honorable Bob Latta (R-OH)
The Honorable Dean Phillips (D-MN)
The Honorable Ed Perlmutter (D-CO)
The Honorable Emanuel Cleaver (D-MO)
The Honorable Guy Reschenthaler (R-PA)
The Honorable Nikema Williams (D-GA)
The Honorable Rodney Davis (R-IL)
The Honorable Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)