

House Democrats Voice Support For H. Res 965

Chairwoman of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), Rep. Judy Chu (CA-27):

“With the economy on hold and families worried about how they will survive the coming months, the work for Congress is urgent. But so is the need to maintain social distancing and prevent further spread of the virus. As Dr. Fauci said, a rush to reopen the country could lead to new spikes in COVID-19 cases. That includes Congress with our thousands of employees. I applaud Leader Hoyer, Chairman McGovern, and Chairwoman Lofgren for finding a common-sense solution that allows us to continue our vital work without threatening to undo the incredible efforts of many frontline heroes to contain this virus.” [5/13/20]

Chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, Rep. Karen Bass (CA-37):

“The global health crisis due to COVID-19 has forced us all to quickly rethink and restructure the way we do things. As more governments across the world adapt and evolve, we cannot afford to be left behind. It is possible for Congress to effectively serve this country and protect the public health at the same time. That is why I support the resolution to allow remote voting and virtual committee proceedings. Over the last few weeks, we have relied heavily on technology to keep our constituents engaged and draft critical coronavirus response legislation for our country. We must continue to utilize and explore the opportunities technology provides and set an example of global leadership.” [5/15/20]

Rep. Daniel T. Kildee (MI-05), Rep. Ed Perlmutter (CO-07), Rep. Andy Levin (MI-09), Rep. Alan Lowenthal (CA-47), Rep. Brenda Lawrence (MI-14), in a letter to Chairman of the House Rules Committee Rep. Jim McGovern (MA-03) and Ranking Member Rep. Tom Cole (OK-04):

“We write today in strong support of the H. Res. 965, which temporarily implements remote voting in the full U.S. House of Representatives and remote committee proceedings during this public health emergency due to the coronavirus...The implementation of H. Res. 965 would allow committees to hold virtual hearings, markups, and depositions enabling Members to perform vital oversight, conduct fact finding and bring legislation to the Floor. Especially during this national emergency, Congress must continue to do the work of American people, especially overseeing the trillions of dollars allocated by the federal government so far to combat the pandemic. Members also have the responsibility to model compliance with the guidelines recommended by the leading science and health experts without dereliction of our duties...It is our hope that these rules are only necessary for a short period of time and the House of Representatives can return to their normal functions in a safe manner to help families and workers impacted by this terrible health crisis.” [5/13/20]

New Democrat Coalition Chair, Rep. Derek Kilmer (WA-06):

“The public health crisis at hand—which has turned things upside down for families, students, frontline workers, and small businesses alike—is simply too big of a challenge to wait for action. Like so many businesses across our country, Congress is adapting to the new safety measures dictated by this crisis. With these new changes instituted, Congress can continue to make progress for the people and respond to this crisis.” [5/14/20]

Congressional Progressive Caucus Co-Chair, Rep. Mark Pocan (WI-02) in a letter to Chairman of the House Rules Committee Rep. Jim McGovern (MA-03):

“I write in support of efforts to ensure Members of Congress are able to vote on essential legislation while not physically present in Washington, D.C during the coronavirus pandemic. Numerous states,
Office of the House Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer, 5/15/20

including the Wisconsin Legislature, and other nations, including the British Parliament, have already instituted successful virtual legislative meeting procedures.... I support remote voting efforts in Congress in whatever form they may take, and plan to vote in favor of implementing legislation when it is presented to the full U.S. House of Representatives. I thank you for your friendship and look forward to continuing to work together on this and other matters.” [5/14/20]

Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Rep. Mark Takano (CA-41):

“Despite working virtually to ensure the safety of our witnesses, stakeholders, and staff, our Committee has relentlessly worked to advocate for veterans and fulfill our oversight of VA’s response to this crisis. We led the Democratic Caucus and held the first ever live, public, and entirely virtual bipartisan full committee forum on veteran homelessness.

“We successfully safeguarded benefits for student veterans by passing legislation -- now signed into law -- worked to ensure that our most vulnerable veterans receive their stimulus check without unnecessary burden, continued conversations with VSOs on their legislative priorities, and advocated for veterans in emergency legislation passed by Congress. Our business may have temporarily adjusted, venues may have changed, and our communications moved online, but our commitment to fighting to ensure VA can deliver the best care and services to our veterans throughout this national emergency has never stopped.

“What the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs has been able to accomplish during this public health emergency is proof that Congress is willing and capable of adapting in response to this crisis in order to effectively serve the American people. The Resolution allowing for remote voting and virtual committee proceedings that the House is voting on today will help Congress continue doing the important work that needs to get done and holding the Trump Administration accountable – that’s why it has my support.” [5/15/20]

Member of the Blue Dog Coalition, Future Forum, and Problem Solvers Caucus, Rep. Stephanie Murphy (FL-07):

“During a national crisis, Congress must have the flexibility to continue serving the American people. This resolution is a strong step toward embracing secure, 21st century technology that empowers us to fulfill our constitutional responsibilities while doing our part to stop the spread of the virus. I commend Leader Hoyer for his work in crafting this reasonable, commonsense proposal, and it has my full support.” [5/14/20]

Freshman Class Representative to the House Democratic Steering and Policy Committee, Rep. Deb Haaland (NM-1):

“When we were elected in 2018, the freshman class was sent to Congress to ensure that the underrepresented people in our country have a voice in our government. The people we represent have borne the brunt of the coronavirus pandemic, and it has posed unprecedented challenges to our ability to conduct the business of the American people and govern our nation. The temporary rules changes House Democrats are making today will enable Congress to resume essential business and provide a clear path forward for how we will operate in the coming months. These changes will allow us to conduct committee hearings and markups remotely so that we can do oversight of pandemic response efforts and move critical legislation forward. They will also enable us to vote by proxy on the House floor and create a path for the use of secure remote voting technology so that the House can act quickly, yet safely, on important bills. We need these changes so that we can do the work of the American people while protecting the health of our colleagues, our staff, and the public.” [5/14/20]