



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-6502**

October 29, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
S-230, The Capitol  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader McConnell:

The most basic responsibility of the Congress is to fund the government and keep it open, serving the American people. Right now, the Congress is failing to fulfill this responsibility. In a period of divided government, this is an objective that can only be achieved through bipartisan, bicameral agreement. Both the Democratic-led House and Republican-led Senate must take seriously the responsibility to move the appropriations process forward and meet deadlines; both must deliver for the people by taking action when action is due.

The House, under the leadership of its Democratic Majority, has adhered to these principles and taken meaningful action to meet appropriations deadlines and fund the government for Fiscal Year 2020. First, the House passed appropriations bills before the end of June that would fund 96% of the government. Next, we worked with you and with the White House to secure a bipartisan agreement on defense and nondefense spending caps in July. Furthermore, after the Senate delayed introduction of its first appropriations bill until September and was unprepared to conference with the House by the end of the fiscal year, we expeditiously moved a continuing resolution through November 21. That was done for the express purpose of allowing you to bring appropriations bills to the Senate Floor, pass them, and move to go to conference with the House. In order to achieve this responsibility, we need to agree on the 302(b) allocations for all twelve of the appropriations bills.

A month removed from enacting that continuing resolution, the Senate you lead has, unfortunately, not passed a single appropriations vehicle of its own. At the end of June, by which time the House passed legislation to fund 96% of government, the Senate had not considered legislation to fund any of it. In the three months since the bipartisan budget caps agreement was signed by the President, appropriators on both committees still lack the joint 302(b) framework necessary to take their next step and write bills in line with that agreement.

Any further delay is inexcusable. The Senate's unwillingness to do its job on appropriations is deeply irresponsible. I am urging you, as the November 21 deadline approaches, not to forgo our responsibility to act on appropriations by taking up another months-long continuing resolution but to

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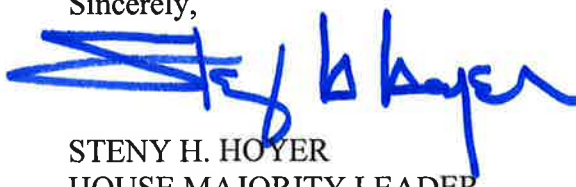
take a meaningful step forward and work together with us to reach bipartisan agreement on 302(b) allocations for all twelve appropriations bills. Such an agreement is necessary for appropriators and all of our Members to do their jobs and fund our national priorities. One of those priorities, of course, is asserting Congress's role as a co-equal branch of government, not dependent on direction from the President as to what those priorities ought to be and when appropriations bills may come to the Floor.

It is my strong belief that some in the White House favor simply enacting a year-long continuing resolution. That would be another failure of the Congress to meet its responsibility. Another continuing resolution would be inadequate to meet current needs on either the defense or nondefense priorities. That is why sending the President appropriations bills for Fiscal Year 2020 is critical. If we move forward constructively, and the Administration fails to sign our bills, so be it. But it would be irresponsible if we fail to do our work because of the Administration's focus on only one issue – its proposed border wall – instead of visiting that issue discretely in the Homeland Security bill. We must avoid setting up a false choice between funding that particular White House request and, with great adverse consequences, shutting down all or part of the United States government.

Mr. Leader, I believe we can resolve this issue by November 21 if we have the willingness not to be dictated to by a White House that cares too little about governing responsibly and too much about honoring a political promise by the President – one that he absurdly claimed would be paid for by Mexico but he is now asking American taxpayers to fund. Let us do our duty and what we know is reasonable to do within the context of our divided government. Let us give the American people some hope that their democracy and their Congress can function rationally and effectively. Surely that is not too much for our people to ask of us.

I look forward during the next few days, working together, to accomplish at least this most basic of our responsibilities.

Sincerely,



STENY H. HOYER  
HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER