



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

July 29, 2020

Ms. Liz McBride-Chambers  
Director  
Office of Employee Assistance  
U.S. House of Representatives  
140 Ford House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Director McBride-Chambers:

I want to thank you and your team at the Office of Employee Assistance (OEA) for working hard these past few months to provide support to House staff who have faced unprecedented and stressful work conditions as our nation confronts the COVID-19 pandemic. The services you provide have been helpful to staff trying to navigate difficult situations with their employing offices, seeking counseling services to cope with the psychological impacts of this pandemic, and looking for help dealing with one of the country's most stressful workplaces even under normal circumstances. The OEA and its staff have the gratitude of Members and their staff alike.

As you may be aware, Rep. Louis Gohmert (TX-01) tested positive for COVID-19 on July 29. It has become known that he both attended public hearings in the Capitol complex and interacted with his staff even after receiving his test results – and chose not to wear a mask while doing so. Indeed, press reports alarmingly indicate that he and other Members have berated staff for wearing masks and required staff to be present in the office in person. Several Members have been repeatedly warned to don masks during committee hearings after refusing to do so. Moreover, at the urging of their leadership, many Republican Members are not engaging in proxy voting, instead traveling to and from Washington and risking exposing themselves and others to COVID-19. Certainly, those staff who are in proximity to mask-less Members are apprehensive about having to be in close contact with them, a justifiable concern.

I write to ask if you and your team at the OEA have sufficient resources to assist staff working under such difficult and stressful conditions. If there is anything that OEA requires in order to meet the higher demand created by the reckless behavior of Members who are putting their employees in danger, please do not hesitate to reach out. I hope you will also take additional measures in the coming days and weeks to publicize the services you have available to Members and staff who may not be aware of them. We are all in this together, and the House must ensure that health guidelines are followed by all and that all employees have access to the conflict resolution and mental health resources that OEA provides.

Thank you again for all your hard work and the dedicated service of your OEA staff. I look forward to discussing this with you further, and I appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steny Hoyer", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

STENY H. HOYER  
HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER