

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 10, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi,

As Congress begins the 117th Congress, bipartisan cooperation is more important than ever to address the American peoples' needs in the wake of the global COVID-19 pandemic. This unprecedented crisis demands no less than our full attention and the commitment to work collaboratively across the aisle. Therefore, we were incredibly disappointed to learn that, in spite of President Biden's stated desire to pursue a bipartisan COVID-19 relief package¹, Democrats are instead moving forward with a rushed, partisan process that will take the unprecedented action of circumventing standard markups in each of our respective committees. This also goes against what Majority Leader Hoyer said on February 3, 2021 on the House floor, "Next week is going to be an entire committee week in which 12 committees will consider how to achieve the objectives set forth in the budget resolution."

The jurisdictions of our committees span important issues, ranging from energy security and prosperity to vital space and science programs and growing our leadership and security in the global arena. Members picked to serve on our committees spend years developing experience and expertise on these issues. By refusing to mark-up reconciliation legislation in our committees, we are ceding our jurisdictions to the Rules Committee, which has no subject matter expertise in these areas. Not only will this damage the authority of our committees moving forward, it is also an affront to our members who have been specifically chosen to serve on our panels. Furthermore, this decision undercuts the most basic rights of the minority, such as submitting dissenting views and offering amendments. Democrats should welcome open deliberation and robust discussion and abandon further weaponization of the reconciliation process.

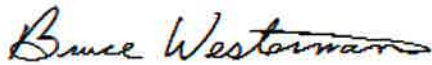
S. Con. Res. 5 directed our committees to collectively increase the deficit by nearly \$12 billion. According to the Congressional Budget Office, our projected deficits will increase our national debt to 104 percent of Gross Domestic Product this year and to the highest amount in the nation's history in just two short years.² Adding an additional \$11.75 billion to our deficit during this daunting fiscal crisis without holding so much as a single hearing is deeply irresponsible and ill-considered. One of our most important duties as lawmakers is to ensure that we are good stewards of taxpayer money and resources. Abdicating this core responsibility is not only detrimental to our constituents, it is also a disservice to future generations that will face the consequences of our reckless spending. We owe it to them to at the very least hold markups so we can properly understand the full ramifications of our policies on the COVID-19 crisis and our national debt.

¹ Diamond, Jeremy et al., "Biden still seeking bipartisan Covid-19 relief package despite stalemate," January 28, 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/28/politics/biden-bipartisan-covid-19-relief/index.html>.

² Congressional Budget Office, "The 2020 Long-Term Budget Outlook," September 21, 2020, <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/56516>.

Republicans on our committees are ready to get to work for the American people and are prepared to constructively contribute to bipartisan discussions on COVID-19 relief. This is impossible without Democratic cooperation to make this process fair and transparent. Therefore, we are calling on you to stop shutting us out and instruct your Chairmen to immediately schedule markups in our respective committees no later than February 16, 2021 to restore transparency, accountability, and legitimacy to the budget reconciliation process.

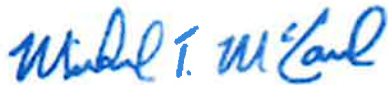
Sincerely,



Bruce Westerman
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources



Frank D. Lucas
Ranking Member
Committee on Science, Space, and
Technology



Michael T. McCaul
Ranking Member
Committee on Foreign Affairs

cc: The Honorable Steny Hoyer, Democratic Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Republican Leader, U.S. House of Representatives