

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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February 9, 2021

Dear Chairwoman Johnson:

As we embark on the 117th Congress, I look forward to continuing our bipartisan commitment as the leaders of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee to advancing American research, innovation, and competitiveness. However, I write today concerned that one of the Committee's first acts this Congress will be abdicating its responsibilities and jurisdiction in the budget reconciliation process.

As you know, on February 5, the House and Senate passed S. Con. Res. 5, a shell budget for fiscal year 2021. I understand that the majority's stated intent of the resolution is to pave the way for using budget reconciliation to push through a partisan COVID-19 relief package. Section 2001(h) of the resolution directs that the Committee on Science, Space and Technology "shall submit changes in laws within its jurisdiction to increase the deficit by not more than \$750,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2021 through 2030." The concurrent resolution further directs that these changes should be submitted to the House Budget Committee by no later than February 16, 2021.

Your staff has informed my staff that the Committee majority does not intend to hold a Committee markup or other business meeting to consider legislation to meet our reconciliation instructions, leaving us out of compliance with the resolution. While the House Rules Committee is authorized to make in order amendments to achieve compliance with the instructions under Sec. 310(d)(5) of the Congressional Budget Act, I am very concerned about our Committee ceding its jurisdiction and obligations to another Committee. It is very unfortunate that the House Democrat leadership is undertaking a partisan process to meet the needs of Americans as we battle and recover from this pandemic. However, I strongly believe Members of the Science Committee have the right and responsibility to weigh in on the budget issues and COVID-19 response needs in our jurisdiction.

I am committed to continuing to advance relief for Americans, particularly for the research enterprise and students in the STEM pipeline and there is significant bipartisan support for needed legislation that is targeted and directly related to our response to the pandemic.

This includes legislation we have sponsored together such as the Research Investment to Spark the Economy Act (H.R. 869) and the Supporting Early-Career Researchers Act (H.R. 144). But I believe the best path forward for these bills and others, is through regular order, so that all Members may have the opportunity to provide input into the legislative process.

I look forward to discussing this matter with you further.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frank Lucas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "F" and "L".

Frank Lucas
Ranking Member