

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 21, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
United States Capitol Building H-232
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

We are writing to you as members of the House GOP Doctor's Caucus. We are 18 Members of Congress with medical training, clinical experience, and time in practice who have completed educational programs and hold medical degrees. Prior to our service in the House of Representatives, all of us had professional careers in health care, and most importantly, our pre-political service involved direct patient care. We are all well-versed in evaluating risks and benefits for patients and proposed courses of action.

Following the Emergency Use Authorization for the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines in December, 2020, you rightfully made vaccines available to Members of Congress and their staff, consistent with Presidential Policy Directive 40 (2016), to meet long-standing requirements for continuity of government operations, and for that we are grateful. ¹ Many of us chose to get vaccinated as part of our effort to continue leading by example in conveying trust in the science, trust in the process, and trust in the safety and efficacy of the vaccine. We did so because of the criticality of the continuity of Congress, and it was our expectation that the COVID-19 vaccine would enable us to return to more normal operations.

We all now realize that the current state of Congress is not working. The restrictions on voting process, the phenomenon of widespread proxy voting, and remote hearings have all contributed to the current state of dysfunction. Yet, this state of dysfunction could change, and you have the authority to do that.

On March 8, 2021, the CDC issued its "Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People."² According to the new guidance, vaccinated individuals can gather with other fully vaccinated people indoors without maintaining a 6-foot distance or wearing masks. With a significant portion of Members and staff now being fully vaccinated, we request that you resume normal voting intervals, resume in-person hearings, and allow for select meetings in Congressional offices.

¹ https://attendingphysician.house.gov/sites/attendingphysician.house.gov/files/documents/e-Dear%20Colleague%2012_17_20.pdf


² <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>

If a majority of Members are vaccinated or recovered from COVID-19, why are you still preventing normal operations? As Members of Congress with medical backgrounds, we have worked vigorously to educate our constituents, and fellow Members in the House, that though the timeline of the COVID-19 vaccines was accelerated, the process was safe. The promise of a return to pre-pandemic normalcy was the goal, and Congress must set an example as many of us are fully vaccinated.


On March 19, 2021, members of the GOP Doctor's Caucus wrote a letter to the Attending Physician, Dr. Brian Monahan, asking for his medical opinion on why House procedures are still limited. While we appreciate Dr. Monahan's response to our letter, he stated that current House guidelines are based upon CDC guidelines. We would again like to emphasize that with most Members and staff being vaccinated, the science indicates that the probability of infection and transmission of COVID-19 is very low.³ As noted in the April 9th House Operations Updated Guidance, where high vaccination participation exists there are reduced COVID-19 risks and additional modifications can be made. With most Members and staff having been vaccinated, what else do you believe is needed for the House to return to regular business? We have made every effort to return to normal at this point and remain concerned that we are still operating under amended House procedures based on outdated circumstances.

This era of higher hygiene pretense must end. Let us resume the people's business, as we were all elected to do.

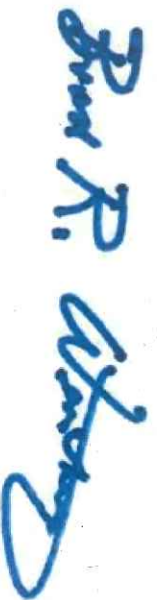
Sincerely,



Rep. Michael C. Burgess, M.D.
Member of Congress



Rep. Andy Harris, M.D.
Member of Congress



Rep. Brad Wenstrup, D.P.M.
Member of Congress

³ <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.02.08.21251329v1.full.pdf>



Rep. Brian Babin, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Rep. Larry Bushon, M.D.
Member of Congress



Rep. Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress



Rep. Scott DesJarlais, M.D.
Member of Congress



Rep. Neal P. Dunn, M.D.
Member of Congress



Rep. A. Drew Ferguson, IV, D.M.D.
Member of Congress



Rep. Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Rep. Diana Harshbarger, Pharm.D.
Member of Congress



Rep. Ronny L. Jackson, M.D.
Member of Congress



Rep. John Joyce, M.D.
Member of Congress



Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks, M.D.
Member of Congress



Rep. Gregory F. Murphy, M.D.
Member of Congress



M.C.

Rep. Mike Simpson, D.M.I.D.
Member of Congress



Rep. Jefferson Van Drew, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Rep. Mark Green, M.I.D.
Member of Congress