



BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER

November 12, 2020

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

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
House Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

As the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress enters its final months, the Bipartisan Policy Center strongly endorses an extension in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress. This select committee—created thanks to your leadership—has been the most successful committee to reform Congress in nearly half a century. As the committee’s final report makes clear, however, more work on modernizing the People’s House remains to be completed.

At a moment when restoring the public’s trust in Congress is an imperative, the work of the Modernization Committee is a shining example of how committees should operate. As an impressive testament to that fact, each of its 97 recommendations received unanimous bipartisan support from the committee’s twelve members. That is precisely the kind of collaboration and consensus-building Americans are craving from their leaders.

From the very beginning, the committee’s members, particularly Chairman Rep. Derek Kilmer and Vice-Chair Rep. Tom Graves, established a mutual understanding of how the committee should function and which issues it should tackle. The committee’s hearings were fact-finding and not finger-pointing exercises, and members experimented with mixed seating and questioning arrangements. Behind the scenes, productive partisanship allowed the members to agree to meaningful changes that will benefit the House for years to come.

The spread of COVID-19 unfortunately slowed the committee’s work and limited the achievements to which it aspired, as was the case for many other committees in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress. But COVID-19 also laid bare just how much further the House needs to go in its modernization efforts. The chamber benefited greatly from the Modernization Committee’s foresight in recommendations it had already made on technology, staffing, constituent communications, and other areas. Further examination by the committee in the next Congress will aid the House, especially its newest members, in navigating the duration of the pandemic. Perhaps more importantly, it will provide an opportunity to identify lessons learned and prepare for future scenarios.

The Modernization Committee and its members have rightly earned accolades, and their work could not be more important in a time when faith in government institutions is low. We should trust the committee and its members’ judgment that there are significant areas which still require attention, allow them to continue their work, and extend the committee with robust resources in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress.



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Thank you again for your support for this important work.

Sincerely,

Michele Stockwell  
Senior Vice President, Bipartisan Policy Center

CC: Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, The Honorable Steve Scalise, Rules Committee Chairman Jim McGovern, Rules Committee Ranking Member Tom Cole, House Administration Chairwoman Zoe Lofgren, House Administration Ranking Member Rodney Davis