

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 4, 2016

The Honorable Pete Sessions  
Chairman, Committee on Rules  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Louise M. Slaughter  
Ranking Member, Committee on Rules  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Sessions and Ranking Member Slaughter,

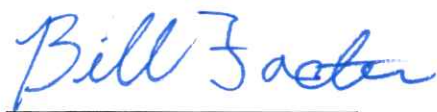
We write to you today to ask that you remove the unilateral subpoena power of committee chairs for the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress. The Subcommittee on Rules and Organization of the House recently held a hearing on proposed changes to the standing rules of the House and we appreciate your request for input.

At the beginning of the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress, several House committees, including the Energy and Commerce Committee and the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, adopted new rules that gave their chairmen the authority to issue subpoenas without consulting the ranking members of those committees. This change signals a break with years of tradition and has proven to be a power too easily abused. For example, the Science, Space, and Technology Committee has issued over 20 subpoenas during the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress, this exceeds the combined number of subpoenas issued by the Committee in the last three decades. The newly created Select Panel investigating Planned Parenthood has used its unilateral subpoena power to harass and endanger researchers, patients, and providers. The Financial Services Committee has issued 14 subpoenas; 6 for document productions and 8 for depositions to the agencies both within and outside of the Committee's jurisdiction. These are just a few examples of the wide-spread abuse of unilateral subpoena power this Congress.

This is not a partisan issue. Neither Democratic nor Republican chairs should have this authority and, to their credit, some committees such as the Committees on Appropriations, Intelligence, Armed Services, and Veterans' Affairs wisely chose not to expand subpoena power for their chairs. The 114<sup>th</sup> Congress has shown that unilateral subpoena power can too easily be used as weapon against those expressing views with which a committee chair does not agree, and we write to urge that this rule be changed to prevent further abuse and partisanship.

We urge you to correct this overreach in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress and look forward to working with you to ensure that this body operates in a manner worthy of our Constitutional duty.

Sincerely,




Bill Foster  
Member of Congress



Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Member of Congress



Elijah Cummings  
Member of Congress



Chris Van Hollen  
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress



Keith Ellison  
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress



Michael E. Capuano  
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress



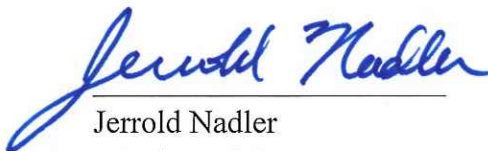
Sam Farr  
Member of Congress



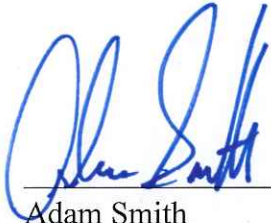
Don Beyer  
Member of Congress



Ed Perlmutter  
Member of Congress



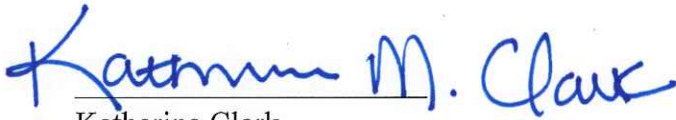
Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress



Adam Smith  
Member of Congress



Donna F. Edwards  
Member of Congress



Katherine Clark  
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress



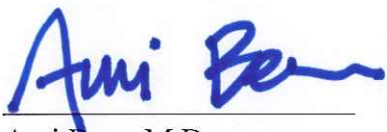
Michael M. Honda  
Member of Congress



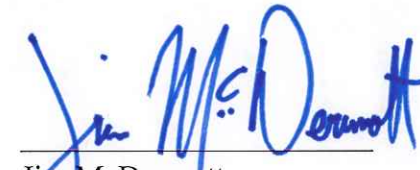
Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress



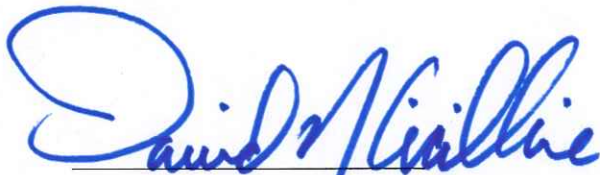
Mark Takano  
Member of Congress



Ami Bera, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Jim McDermott  
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman

Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress

Elizabeth H. Esty

Elizabeth H. Esty  
Member of Congress

Paul D. Tonko

Paul Tonko  
Member of Congress

John Yarmuth

John Yarmuth  
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis

Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress

Jackie Speier

Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress

Suzan DelBene

Suzan DelBene  
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly

Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress

Sander M. Levin

Sander M. Levin  
Member of Congress

Kathleen M. Rice

Kathleen M. Rice  
Member of Congress

Anna G. Eshoo

Anna G. Eshoo  
Member of Congress

*Mike Doyle*

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Mike Doyle  
Member of Congress