

November 13, 2018

Hon. Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Charles Schumer, Minority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Paul Ryan, Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Richard Shelby, Chairman
Senate Committee on Rules and
Administration
305 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Amy Klobuchar, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Rules and
Administration
305 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Gregg Harper, Chairman
Committee on House Administration
1309 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Robert Brady, Ranking Member
Committee on House Administration
1307 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Harassment and Discrimination Reform in the 115th Congress

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Pelosi, Chairman Shelby, Ranking Member Klobuchar, Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady:

Exactly one year ago, many of us joined over 1,500 of our fellow former congressional staff members in urging you to undertake a series of reforms aimed at recognizing and combating the problem of sexual harassment and discrimination on Capitol Hill. Today we write to thank you for your efforts on the issue to date, and to express our hope that you will take the necessary steps to bring those efforts to fruition before the end of the 115th Congress.

Over the past year, we have been heartened to see this issue begin to receive the attention it deserves, in Congress and in workplaces across the country. We welcomed the quick action in both the House and Senate to mandate sexual harassment prevention training for all members and staff. And we were thrilled when legislation passed the House in February, and the Senate in May, to meaningfully reform the antiquated system for reporting and adjudicating claims of harassment and discrimination in the legislative branch.

We understand that negotiations on the Congressional Accountability Act reform legislation are ongoing, and we have been encouraged by reports of progress and positive discussion. Unfortunately, time is running out to make these improvements a reality. As the lame duck

session begins, many critical and time-sensitive issues will be competing for Congress's attention. We implore you to continue making this one your focus.

As you work to craft a final agreement, there are several fundamental components we hope will be included. First, it is critical that counseling and mediation be voluntary and that victims have the ability to opt in to these alternatives, rather than being forced to opt out. Some of us have personal experience navigating the Office of Compliance process and know first-hand that these requirements can be used to further pressure victims at an already difficult time. Second, it is important that reform legislation provide for meaningful, independent investigation of harassment and discrimination claims. Third, American taxpayers deserve to know when Treasury funds have been used to settle employment claims in Congress. We urge transparency and regular public reporting of such taxpayer-funded settlements, while ensuring that victims' privacy is protected, and we believe that non-disclosure agreements should never be required without the victim's consent. Finally, the legislation should require members of Congress to personally reimburse the Treasury for settlement of any claim of harassment or discrimination committed by that Member.

Again, we are grateful for your attention to these issues and applaud your efforts over the past year. Failure to pass a final bill at this point would be deeply disappointing to the hundreds of former staffers who have advocated for reform, and deeply unfair to the thousands of current staffers who continue to be denied some of the most basic resources and protections against workplace harassment and discrimination. It is our fervent hope that the 116th Congress will begin with a fairer, safer, more supportive system in place for all those who serve there.

Sincerely,

Kristin Nicholson, Co-Founder
Congress Too

Travis Moore, Co-Founder
Congress Too

Anna Kain

Ally Coll Steele

Lauren Greene

Kristie Small

Katherine Cichy

Rebecca Weir

Melanie Sloan

Winsome Packer