

119th



House Rules

Recommendations



Introduction

The start of a new Congress provides a unique opportunity to fundamentally alter the processes and procedures within the House of Representatives. On the first day of a new Congress, the House of Representatives convenes to adopt a rules package through a resolution. This legislative package is considered while adhering to the Constitution and general parliamentary principles.

The rules package serves to adopt and amend the formal House rules, along with separate orders specific to that Congress. Typically, the rules are adopted and modified from those of the previous Congress, incorporating changes that reflect the priorities and perspectives of the incoming majority. Throughout US history, there have been instances where the rules have been significantly modified from one Congress to the next.

These chamber rules are separate from party rules. Party rules govern the Democratic Caucus and Republican Conference and control a wide range of matters, including the selection of committee members, the process for reaching policy decisions, and the protocols for a Member stepping down in the wake of a scandal. Historically, these rules have been kept out of public view, but they work in tandem with the chamber rules. Additionally, most committees adopt their own rules to address governance questions not covered by the chamber rules. This report and recommendations do not address party or committee rules.

POPVOX Foundation's recommendations take into account how the Supreme Court's 2024 decision in *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo* to overturn the *Chevron* doctrine will place significant strain on Congressional capacity and compel the House to enhance its capabilities to conduct regulatory oversight and craft legislation with clear intent.

The recommendations to adapt House rules and procedures will greatly increase the House's capabilities to serve constituents and fulfill its Article One mandate.

If you are interested in learning more about these recommendations, or would like to request a briefing, please [contact us](#).

Sincerely,

The POPVOX Foundation Team

ABOUT POPVOX FOUNDATION

With a mission to inform and empower people and make government work better for everyone, POPVOX Foundation is focused on ensuring that democratic institutions are equipped to address the “pacing problem” — the gap between emerging technologies and governance. Learn more at popvox.org.

Top Recommendations

ESTABLISH A HOUSE CHIEF DATA OFFICER

The House should establish a Chief Data Officer (CDO) responsible for coordinating the Congressional Data Task Force, advising on legislative data publication, supporting the Legislative Data and Transparency Conference, assisting the public with legislative data, facilitating internal strategy coordination, consulting with experts, and partnering with the Committee on House Administration to standardize and maintain a comprehensive data map, all under the purview of the House Inspector General. In addition, the CDO should be tasked with monitoring the Legislative branch's access to programmatic data, ensuring that it aligns with current and future needs, including the preparation of a strategic plan aimed at providing House committees with continuously updated data to effectively monitor programs within their jurisdiction.

ESTABLISH A JOINT COMMITTEE ON CONTINUITY

The House should establish a joint committee to enhance the resilience and continuity of legislative operations, addressing potential disruptions, examining current procedures, identifying gaps, and proposing solutions to maintain Congress' stability and functionality during emergencies.

SIMPLIFY THE HOUSE SCHEDULE

The House should pass a rule to reform the Congressional calendar to create a predictable schedule of two weeks of legislative work followed by two weeks of district work, reducing travel days, increasing session days, and improving time management and work-life balance for Members and staff.

Technology and Data

ESTABLISH A HOUSE CHIEF DATA OFFICER

The House should establish the role of a CDO, who would be responsible for coordinating the Congressional Data Task Force, tracking datasets released by the Legislative branch, and advising offices on the publication of legislative information as data. Additionally, the CDO would support the annual Legislative Data and Transparency Conference and assist the public in locating and obtaining legislative data. The CDO office would serve as a forum for convening relevant internal stakeholders to facilitate strategy coordination, procurement, and knowledge-sharing. The CDO would also consult with internal and external experts and act as a clearinghouse for routing technical inquiries, issues, and ideas appropriately. They should be responsible for partnering with the Committee on House Administration (CHA) to establish and uphold data standardizations, access, and maintain a House-wide data map that provides a clear overview of the various data sources and how they can be effectively utilized. Additionally, the CDO should monitor the access the Legislative branch has to programmatic data, ensuring that committees have the necessary tools and information to conduct effective oversight. This monitoring would include preparing a strategic plan to provide committees with continuously updated data, enabling them to better monitor programs within their jurisdiction and respond to emerging issues in real time. This position would be under the purview of the House Inspector General. For additional information on the creation of a Chief Data Officer, see [testimony](#) by Dr. Nick Hart, president of the Data Foundation, before the House Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress (ModCom).

MANDATE COMMITTEE SCHEDULING DATA ENTRY

The House should pass a rule mandating committee clerks to input committee scheduling in a timely manner to ensure better coordination and transparency of committee activities. To ensure proper notification to the House Clerk's office, it is recommended that inputting the hearing into the committee scheduling tool be established as a mandatory step in the workflow for hosting a hearing. The committee clerk must complete this scheduling in the tool to facilitate the presence of all necessary personnel. This recommendation aims to streamline and enhance the coordination of committee activities, reducing scheduling conflicts and improving transparency. By utilizing a updating committee scheduling in a timely manner and utilizing the shared scheduling tool, [Deconflict](#), it will become much easier for Members to plan and participate in committee meetings. This approach would lead to more efficient use of time and resources, benefiting both legislators and the public. This aligns with [ModCom recommendation 196](#).

ALLOW ELECTRONIC BILL COSPONSORSHIP

The House should update its procedures to allow Members to electronically add or remove their names as cosponsors to a bill. The permanent addition of cosponsorship electronically was established through the [eHopper](#) but there is a need to amend House Rules and build functionality into the e-Hopper to allow Members to electronically remove their cosponsorship from legislation. If a Member was added in error, consideration should be given to ensuring that there is no “(withdrawn)” designation on Congress.gov. This aligns with [ModCom recommendation 34](#).

Standing Committees, Select Committees, and Task Forces

ESTABLISH A JOINT COMMITTEE ON CONTINUITY

The House should promptly establish a Joint Committee on Continuity to review and enhance the resilience and continuity of legislative operations. This recommendation aims to address potential disruptions that may affect legislative activities and the continuous representation of constituents. Recognizing work previously undertaken by the ModCom, this joint committee would examine current procedures, identify gaps, and propose solutions to maintain the stability and functionality of Congress during emergencies or interruptions of various degrees. By establishing this committee, Congress would proactively work to safeguard its bicameral operations, audit existing plans of action, and ensure that it can continue to serve the public effectively under any circumstances. Specific areas of focus could include an examination of existing emergency response training and resources provided to Members and staff, review of alternate-location contingency planning, and evaluations of Congress' preparedness to respond to a number of tabletop exercises. This recommendation comes from [ModCom recommendation 171](#), which suggests that Congress establish a joint committee tasked with reviewing House and Senate rules and other matters to ensure the continuity of representation and Congressional operations for the American people.

ESTABLISH A JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

House Rules should include language establishing a Joint Committee on the Legislative Branch, consisting of members from both the House and Senate. There is currently no standing committee in Congress focused solely on oversight and policymaking regarding internal Legislative branch operations, technology, budgeting, and other institutional matters. These issues span both chambers but are handled in a fragmented manner. This new joint committee would merge with the Joint Committee on Printing and the Joint Committee on the Library to examine issues related to Legislative branch operations, technology, staffing, and facilities, and to propose reforms when needed. Additionally, the committee would conduct oversight on legislative budgets, responsiveness to constituents, and modernization efforts. It could introduce joint resolutions related to the Legislative branch, which would then go to the House and Senate floors. The committee should aim for equal membership between House and Senate members to facilitate bipartisan and bicameral cooperation.

ESTABLISH A STANDING COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION OF FEDERAL ELECTIONS

The House should establish a Standing Committee on the Administration of Federal Elections. This committee should hold oversight jurisdiction of states' administration of federal elections, election integrity, voter accessibility, and transparency. Currently, the Committee on House Administration Subcommittee on Elections has six members (including four from the majority and two from the minority party), and has historically influenced legislation on all aspects of federal elections, including corrupt practices, contested elections, campaign finance disclosures, and the credentials and qualifications of House Members. This work is instrumental and continues to grow in significance with the increased Congressional review of federal elections. The House should consider creating a standing Committee on Administration of Federal Elections to ensure this oversight has the proper resources, staff, and membership. Meanwhile, the jurisdiction of the Committee on House Administration should be adjusted and refocused on oversight of the House's internal operations, oversight of the Legislative branch agencies, Member and staff resources, and institutional modernization.

CODIFYING AND EXPANDING CAPACITY OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

In the event the House chooses to establish a House Committee on the Administration of Federal Elections, it will be imperative for the chamber to codify the responsibilities of the Committee on House Administration. CHA has witnessed a significant expansion in its scope and responsibilities, including the establishment of a new subcommittee dedicated to modernization implementation as well as the ongoing oversight of Legislative branch offices and entities. Given the increasing importance of effectively integrating emerging technologies into Congressional operations, it is imperative that the Committee receives adequate funding and staff resources to successfully fulfill its mandate to oversee and pursue policy implementation ensuring the House's adaptation to modern technological opportunities and threats.

ESTABLISH A TASK FORCE ON THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Congress should establish a Task Force on the Legislative Process composed of a bipartisan, bicameral group of members to convene and discuss rule changes that mandate reciprocal consideration for widely supported, bipartisan legislation. This recommendation aims to ensure that legislation with broad bipartisan support receives due consideration in both chambers of Congress. Rep. Williams [D, GA] introduced a bipartisan concurrent resolution, [H.Con.Res.8](#), to establish such a task force. Former ModCom Chair Derek Kilmer [D, WA] and Vice Chair William Timmons [R, SC] cosponsored the concurrent resolution. By fostering dialogue and cooperation, this task force would help streamline the legislative process and reduce partisan gridlock. This aligns with [ModCom recommendation 131](#).

House and Committee Scheduling

SIMPLIFY THE HOUSE SCHEDULE

The House should pass a rule reforming the Congressional calendar to reduce the number of travel days. Rep. William Timmons [R, SC] proposed an alternative, predictable House schedule: two weeks of legislative work followed by a two-week district work period. This would reduce the number of Member travel days, increase the number of days the House is in session, and provide a regularity to the proceedings that allow Members and staff to better manage their time and have an improved work-life balance.

REFORM THE HOUSE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

Reforming the House Committee schedule is a critical step toward enhancing the legislative process, improving work-life balance, and fostering greater public trust and engagement. Currently, the House faces several challenges in committee scheduling, including frequent conflicts that force Representatives to choose between important sessions, leading to incomplete participation and inadequate review. Unpredictable and extended committee sessions strain Representatives and staff, impacting their productivity and well-being. To address these challenges, this proposal suggests implementing standardized committee meeting times with a weekly schedule and designated time blocks to minimize overlap and conflicts. Advanced digital tools, like [Deconflict](#), will be utilized for scheduling and notifications, ensuring real-time updates.

Congressional Operations

ALLOW REMOTE VOTING ON THE HOUSE FLOOR DURING EMERGENCIES

The House should pass a rule allowing fully remote deliberations and voting on the floor and in committees to maintain legislative functions during emergencies that make physical presence unsafe. To ensure the integrity and security of remote voting and to protect against unauthorized access and manipulation, it is essential to implement robust security measures, including advanced encryption methods and multi-factor authentication. Clear criteria for activating remote voting, such as national emergencies or security threats, should be established to ensure preparedness. Regular testing and updates of systems are necessary to handle unexpected crises efficiently. The House may consider authorizing the use of remote voting for Members who take maternity, paternity, or medical leave as a means of ensuring system viability and maintenance. Maintaining accountability through transparent procedures to track and verify votes is crucial to prevent misuse of remote voting capabilities.

LIFT THE STAFF CAP IN PERSONAL AND COMMITTEE OFFICES

The House should lift its staffer-per-office cap to better meet the current needs of Congressional offices. Established by law in 1979, the cap is now outdated and restrictive. The ModCom issued [recommendation 151](#) to raise this cap. The current limit often prevents offices from offering opportunities to worthy employees or prior-intern candidates. Many offices could benefit from the flexibility to accommodate more part-time staff or paid interns. Raising the cap would enhance the capacity of offices to manage their workload more efficiently and create more job opportunities and internships, fostering professional development and contributing to a more robust workforce.

AUTHORIZE ONE-CLICK ACCESS TO COMMITTEE VOTES

The 119th House should include explicit authorization for one-click access to committee votes in its rules package to maintain transparency. This recommendation has already been implemented, providing greater transparency and accountability in the legislative process. However, the Parliamentarian recommends including explicit authorization in the 119th Congress rules package to formalize this practice. Ensuring easy access to voting records allows the public to stay informed about their Representatives' actions and promotes accountability.

CLARIFY FELLOWS & DETAILEES USE OF EQUIPMENT

The House should clarify the rules to ensure fellows and detailees receive the same technological resources as professional staff (i.e., official laptops, official cellular devices, and — where deemed necessary and appropriate by the appointing office — VPN access tokens). This recommendation aims to ensure that these individuals, who contribute significantly to Congressional work, have access to the necessary tools and resources to perform their duties effectively. Providing equal resources would enhance their productivity and integration into the Congressional workforce, ultimately benefiting legislative operations. This aligns with ModCom [recommendation 111](#). Fellows and detailees who are to receive VPN access should be required to undergo a security review similar to vendors of the House.

Bipartisanship

ENABLE DUAL SPONSORSHIP OF LEGISLATION

The House should adopt the practice of authorizing two Members from opposing parties to serve as joint sponsors of a bill, resolution, or joint resolution. This recommendation encourages bipartisan collaboration and increases the likelihood of legislative success by demonstrating cross-party support from the outset. Rep. Cleaver [D-MO] has introduced bipartisan legislation, [H.Res. 668](#), the BUDS Resolution, to this end. Dual sponsorship would signal a commitment to cooperation and compromise, fostering a more collaborative legislative environment. This proposal aligns with [ModCom recommendation 195](#).

REQUIRE BIPARTISAN COMMITTEE RETREATS

The House should pass a rule requiring committees to hold at least one bipartisan Member retreat once per session of Congress. Members have few opportunities to interact across party lines, away from Washington, DC. This lack of interaction across party lines discourages Members from getting to know their colleagues and from working collaboratively to build bipartisan coalitions. These retreats would encourage Members to make connections with their colleagues, find common ground, and help build civility into House processes. Personal relationships build trust, which is necessary for effective lawmaking in a polarized environment.