

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

April 23, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Speaker:

On April 2, 2020, you announced your intention to create a new select committee to review the Administration's ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹ Yesterday, without any further debate, the Chairman of the Rules Committee introduced H.Res. 935, a resolution authorizing the creation of a select subcommittee to exist within the Committee on Oversight and Reform. The full House will vote on H.Res. 935 this afternoon.

The few available details about the select subcommittee—that it will have unequal numbers of Democrats and Republicans, the Chairman will have subpoena authority and will be chaired by Representative Jim Clyburn, a member of Democratic leadership—raise serious concerns as to whether the select subcommittee is truly intended to conduct meaningful, bipartisan oversight and “not a kind of an investigation into the administration,” as you initially stated.² Representative Clyburn's previous comments suggesting the crisis presents a “tremendous opportunity to restructure things to fit our vision” further demonstrate a complete lack of bipartisan oversight of the Administration's response.³

The House of Representatives has an established framework under Rules X and XI of its Rules that govern meaningful oversight and investigations by standing committees within their jurisdiction. Each standing committee has adopted its own rules and memoranda of understanding regarding the conduct of any oversight and investigation, particularly as it relates to the role of the Minority party. Our standing committees have the respective institutional knowledge and expertise to ensure the appropriate questions are asked and answered. It is unclear what gaps exist within the Rule X and XI framework that necessitate the creation of a special select committee to oversee the Administration's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To be sure Madam Speaker, transparency and accountability are of the upmost importance as we oversee the administration's response to this national emergency. We should harness all appropriate resources in conducting our oversight. At the same time, we should do so in such a way that preserves the existing committee oversight and investigative framework.

¹ Clare Foran, Haley Byrd and Manu Raju, *Pelosi announces House committee on coronavirus crisis to exercise oversight of pandemic response*, CNN, Apr. 2, 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/02/politics/coronavirus-house-committee-pelosi/index.html>.

² Mike Lillis, *Pelosi forms House committee to oversee coronavirus response*, The Hill, April 2, 2020, <https://thehill.com/homenews/house/490798-pelosi-forms-house-committee-to-oversee-coronavirus-response>.

³ Tobias Hoonhout, *Dem Rep. Told Colleagues Coronavirus Bill Is 'Tremendous Opportunity to Restructure Things to Fit Our Vision'*, National Review, March 23, 2020, <https://www.nationalreview.com/news/dem-rep-told-colleagues-coronavirus-bill-is-tremendous-opportunity-to-restructure-things-to-fit-our-vision/>.

Letter to Speaker Pelosi

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Walden". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G".

Greg Walden
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy
and Commerce

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patrick T. McHenry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

Patrick McHenry
Ranking Member
Committee on
Financial Services

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Brady". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K".

Kevin Brady
Ranking Member
Committee on Ways
and Means