

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

July 12, 2016

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan:

We are writing to respectfully request that you revise the Speaker's policy which currently prohibits Members from making audio or video recordings or taking still photographs on the House Floor as well as allow C-SPAN to control its own camera feed.

Recently House Democrats took to the House Floor as a way to draw to attention to the issue of gun violence prevention legislation. Because during much of that time the House was not in session, the only way for the public to see what was happening was through Member use of live video streaming.

C-SPAN cannot control its own cameras, and so it could not provide its normal television coverage. Allowing it to do so would provide the American people a better view of its democracy in action.

Such an interest is clearly present. While one may disagree with the actions of House Democrats, the public demonstrated an overwhelming interest in watching the only available coverage, which had to be provided by these live streams from Members. On one platform alone, Facebook Live, streams were watched over three million times.

This is just one example of the public's appetite for more access to its political leaders. Allowing audio/video recordings and still photographs on the House Floor when the House is in or out of session would be a tremendous way of connecting more people, particularly millennials who so often use this technology, with our democracy. Such recordings and images should only be allowed, however, with the consent of those being covered, for we want Members to be able to feel free to meet and talk on the Floor confidentially.


We understand and respect your obligation to enforce House Rules which require order and decorum. However, what amounts to a violation of order and decorum can and should change with the times. Using smart phones to record and take photographs simply is not in every instance the breach of decorum it once may have been.

We encourage you to allow C-SPAN to control its cameras and to allow Members to conduct audio or video recordings and take still photographs on the House Floor in a way that both maintains the order of the House, respects Member confidentiality, and uses commonplace, modern technology to better connect the American people with the workings of the House. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress



Beto O'Rourke  
Member of Congress



Scott H. Peters  
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress



Brendan F. Boyle  
Member of Congress



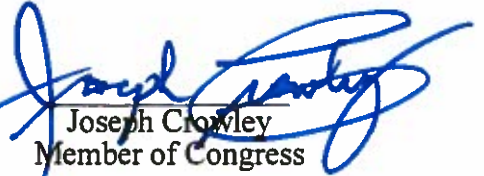
Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress



Karen Bass  
Member of Congress



Kathleen M. Rice  
Member of Congress



Joseph Crowley  
Member of Congress



Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress



Steve Israel  
Member of Congress



Ted Lieu  
Member of Congress



Janice Hahn  
Member of Congress



Cheri Bustos  
Member of Congress

Ann M. Kuster  
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress



Gregory W. Meeks  
Member of Congress



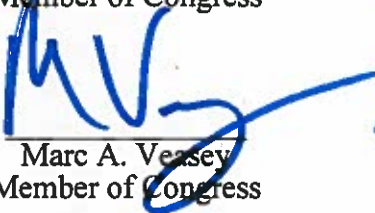
Theodore E. Deutch  
Member of Congress



Raul Ruiz  
Member of Congress



Tony Cardenas  
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey  
Member of Congress



Katherine M. Clark  
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress



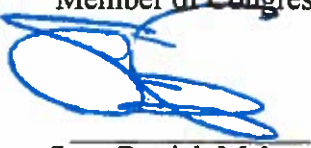
Pete Aguilar  
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress



Sean Patrick Maloney  
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley  
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress



Brad Sherman  
Member of Congress



Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress



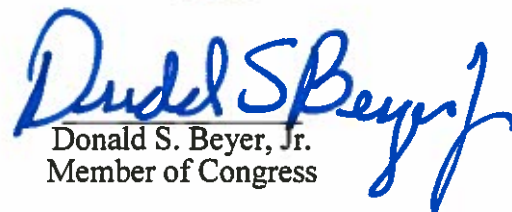
Andre Carson  
Member of Congress



Jared Polis  
Member of Congress



David Loebsack  
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer, Jr.  
Member of Congress



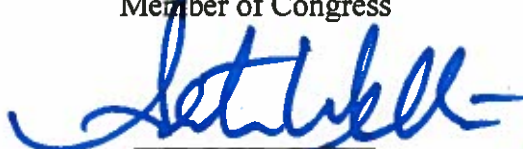
Ami Bera  
Member of Congress



Filemon Vela  
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton  
Member of Congress



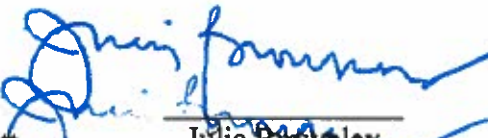
Hakeem S. Jeffries  
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress



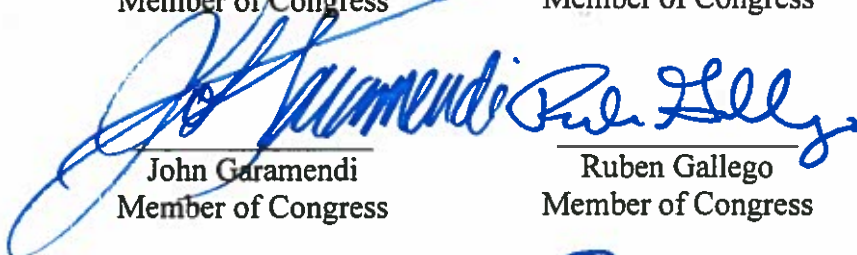
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress



John Garamendi  
Member of Congress



Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress



Richard M. Nolan  
Member of Congress



Alan S. Lowenthal  
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly  
Member of Congress