

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 5, 2009

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

Dear Madame Speaker,

We hope you and your family had a joyful holiday season, and as we begin a new year and a new Congress, we look forward to working with you, our colleagues on both sides of the aisle, and President-elect Obama in tackling the many challenges facing our nation.

President Obama has pledged to lead a government that is open and transparent. With that in mind, we are deeply troubled by media reports indicating that the Democratic leadership is poised to repeal reforms put in place in 1995 that were intended to help restore Americans' trust and confidence in the People's House. Specifically, these reports note that the Majority, as part of its rules package governing the new Congress, will end six-year term limits for Committee chairs and further restrict the opportunity for all members to offer alternative legislation. This does not represent change; it is reverting back to the undemocratic one-party rule and backroom deals that the American people rejected more than a decade ago. And it has grave implications for the American people and their freedom, coming at a time when an unprecedented expansion of federal power and spending is being hastily planned by a single party behind closed doors. Republicans will vigorously oppose repealing these reforms if they are brought to a vote on the House floor.

As you know, after Republicans gained the majority in the House in 1995, our chamber adopted rules to limit the terms of all committee chairs to three terms in order to reward new ideas, innovation, and merit rather than the strict longevity that determined chairmanships in the past. This reform was intended to help restore the faith and trust of the American people in their government – a theme central to President-elect Obama's campaign last year. He promoted a message of "change," but Madame Speaker, abolishing term limit reform is the opposite of "change." Instead, it will entrench a handful of Members of the House in positions of permanent power, with little regard for its impact on the American people.

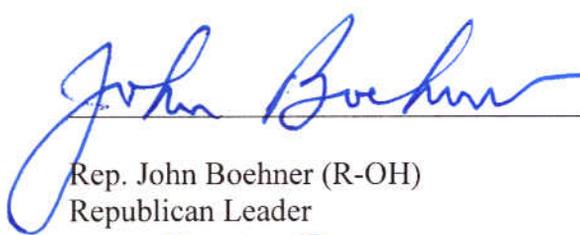
The American people also stand to pay a price if the Majority further shuts down free and open debate on the House floor by refusing to allow all members the opportunity to offer substantive alternatives to important legislation – the same opportunities that Republicans guaranteed to Democrats as motions to recommit during their 12 years in the Minority. The Majority's record in the last Congress was the worst in history when it came to having a free and open debate on the issues.

This proposed change also would prevent Members from exposing and offering proposals to eliminate tax increases hidden by the Democratic Majority in larger pieces of legislation. This

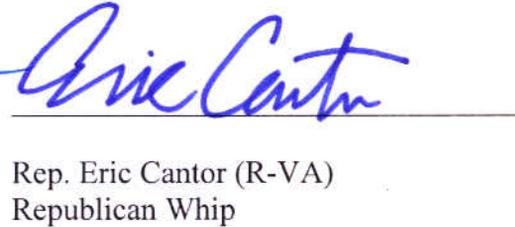
is not the kind of openness and transparency that President-elect Obama promised. This change would deprive tens of millions of Americans the opportunity to have a voice in the most important policy decisions facing our country.

Madame Speaker, we urge you to reconsider the decision to repeal these reforms, which could come up for a vote as early as tomorrow. Just as a new year brings fresh feelings of optimism and renewal for the American people, so too should a new Congress. Changing the House rules in the manner highlighted by recent media reports would have the opposite effect: further breaching the trust between our nation's elected representatives and the men and women who send them to Washington to serve their interests and protect their freedom.

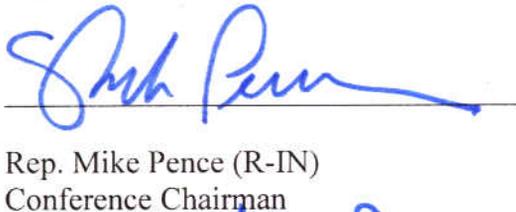
Sincerely,



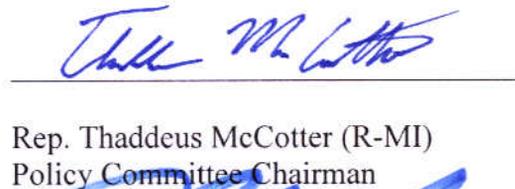
Rep. John Boehner (R-OH)
Republican Leader



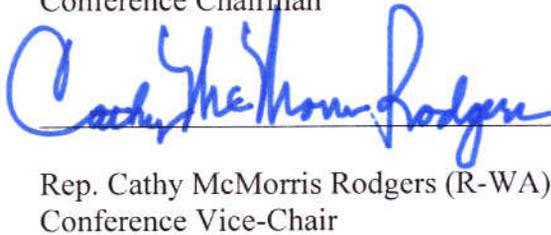
Rep. Eric Cantor (R-VA)
Republican Whip



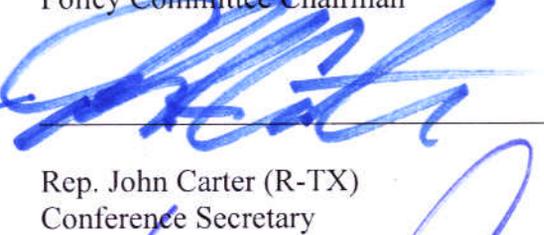
Rep. Mike Pence (R-IN)
Conference Chairman



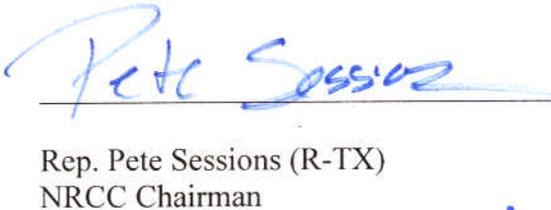
Rep. Thaddeus McCotter (R-MI)
Policy Committee Chairman



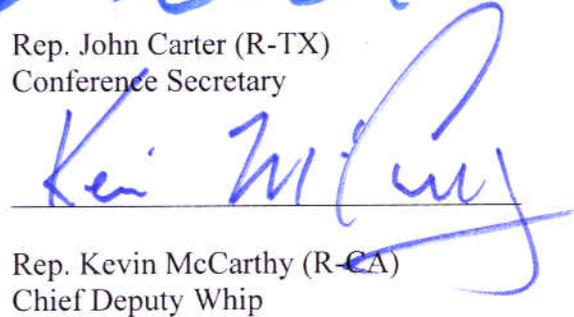
Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA)
Conference Vice-Chair



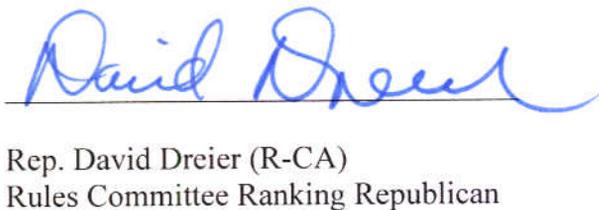
Rep. John Carter (R-TX)
Conference Secretary



Rep. Pete Sessions (R-TX)
NRCC Chairman



Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-CA)
Chief Deputy Whip



Rep. David Dreier (R-CA)
Rules Committee Ranking Republican