

Dear Democratic Colleague,

We have all been shaken by the election of Donald Trump and by what it means for the American people whom it is our honor and responsibility to champion.

Three priorities right out of the gate are jobs, veterans and Medicare. While the President-elect has indicated an interest in infrastructure, we must insist on a bill that puts good-paying jobs for workers first – not one that is a corporate tax break disguised as an infrastructure bill.

The Koch brothers' plan to privatize the VA health system would be deeply harmful to our veterans. Veteran service organizations have already communicated their eagerness to work with us to prevent this disastrous privatization scheme.

On Medicare, the GOP is feeling emboldened to shatter the sacred guarantee that has protected generations of seniors. Vice President-elect Mike Pence voted three times for the Ryan budget which would voucherize Medicare. If Speaker Ryan presses forward with his plans to end Medicare as we know it, we will stand firmly and unified to stop him – just as we did in 2005 when President Bush tried to privatize Social Security.

Making this fight requires all hands on deck. Each day since the election, I have been listening to scores of Members eager to participate fully in these fights.

One group of Members has presented a valuable set of consensus changes which I have presented to the Leadership and many of the Ranking Members, and have received a positive response:

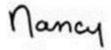
- Require each committee to create a Vice Chair or Vice Ranking Member Position to be filled by individuals who have been a Member of the committee for four terms or less. I have suggested that those Members participate in the Wednesday Ranking Member meeting.
- Upon the next vacancy, make the Assistant to the Leader position an elected position to be filled by a Member who has served fewer than three terms;
- Make the Democratic Policy and Communications Chairmanship an elected position reserved for a Member who has served less than five terms. Upon discussion across the Caucus, I propose to expand it to three co-chairs to cover more fully the priorities of Members.

• Create five regional Vice Chairs, elected by the Members of their region, to serve at the DCCC and support the work of the Chair. I was pleased to receive this suggestion, because it was first advanced by DCCC Chairman Ben Ray Luján. I look forward to hearing from Members on how we divide into the five regions.

In the course of my conversations with Members, I was especially interested in their desire to have a stronger role in their committees. This is music to my ears, because that is exactly what was essential to our success in 2006. I am enclosing some of what we did then, which is needed once again under a Republican President and Republican Majority.

I am grateful for the support that so many Members have offered with candor and conviction. There is hard work ahead. But with the strength, wisdom and resourcefulness within our Caucus, I know House Democrats are equal to the challenge before America.

Best wishes to you and your families for a happy Thanksgiving.



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Committee Responsibilities for Generating Information and Aggressive Oversight

In 2006, we engaged in aggressive oversight and data and analysis dissemination. Today, both the public and the press around the country will be seeking critiques of Trump and GOP Congressional proposals. Disseminating our analyses and message is far easier to do than in 2005-2006, because social media is a message multiplier that enables us to engage with our constituents more effectively.

The Republican Majority in Congress and the Trump Administration will undertake sweeping initiatives while Republicans will conduct minimal oversight into the actions and decisions of a White House of the same party.

It is essential that Democrats use their committee powers to ensure a full disclosure of the impacts of legislation, executive actions and regulatory decisions by Republicans, together with an aggressive and creative use of both the formal press/media and social networking.

- Ranking Members must have full authority to initiate confidential requests to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the Congressional Research Service (CRS), the departmental Inspectors General (IGs), the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) or other research or investigative entities with the same priority as the chairman of the committee.
- Ranking Members at both the full and subcommittee level should be directed to conduct frequent hearings into proposed legislation or Executive Department initiatives, either in Washington or in appropriate locales around the country

- All Ranking Members must re-examine and report on their communications capabilities, web pages, press contacts, specialty press and social media capacities to ensure the maximum dissemination of materials developed by the committee including periodic "reports" that expose the shortcomings and impacts of Republican initiatives or inaction.
- All Ranking Members would now be strengthened by the leadership of the Vice Ranking Members. All Democratic Members of the committee should be encouraged to raise ideas for hearings, investigations and reports that should then be considered by the staff and Ranking Member and discussed if necessary by the committee Caucus, in order to encourage the full participation of all committee Members in the work of the committee.
- The weekly Ranking Member meeting, including Vice Ranking Members, should be used to solicit ideas and progress reports on projects designed to gain visibility for Democratic responses and initiatives. The Ranking Members should come every week ready to discuss new ideas and respond to questions about existing projects.

A strong charge to the Ranking Members, the addition of Vice Ranking Members, and rigorous follow-up at the Member and staff level are essential at the outset of the new Congress. It is with this intense involvement of the committees that we are able to expose the painful reality and risks to the American people of the Republican agenda.

I am confident that the continued expansion of our leadership and enthusiastic committee engagement will strengthen our impact as we stand up for the American people.