

June 14, 2021

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Rules and
Administration
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Rules and
Administration
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Klobuchar and Ranking Member Blunt:

The undersigned organizations, from across the political spectrum and focusing on a wide range of issues, write to commend the bipartisan effort led by your colleagues, Senator Rob Portman and Senator Richard Durbin, on amending procedures to allow Senators to cast their votes outside of the Senate chamber in limited circumstances.

Introduced on April 29, 2021, S.Res.201 amends the Senate's Standing Rules to enable the participation of absent Senators during a national crisis. The measure allows Members of the Senate to use technology certified by Senate officers to cast their votes from outside the Senate chamber in circumstances when the Senate Majority and Minority Leaders jointly determine an "extraordinary crisis of national extent exists."

Several recent events compromised the ability of the Senate to convene and conduct business for critical periods. These events underscore the potential susceptibility of our political system to unanticipated circumstances and the importance of ensuring our democratic processes remain intact regardless of domestic emergencies. It is undeniable that new threats and unforeseen circumstances will arise in the future; this resolution allows the Senate to mitigate potential impacts on America's ability to continue to govern at full capacity.

We urge you to support this bill and thank you for your consideration. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this further. Please contact Kristie De Pena, Vice President for Niskanen Center at kdepena@niskanencenter.org, or Daniel Schuman, Policy Director for Demand Progress at daniel@demandprogress.org.

Sincerely,

Campaign for Accountability
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)
Consumer Action
Courage California
Demand Progress
Democracy Fund Voice
Free Government Information (FGI)
Government Accountability Project

Government Information Watch
Issue One
Media Alliance
NALEO Educational Fund
Niskanen Center
Project On Government Oversight
Protect Democracy
Rachel Carson Council
Senior Executives Association
Social Security Works

Norman Ornstein, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research*
Lorelei Kelly, Beeck Center for Social Impact + Innovation at Georgetown University*
Robert Cook-Deegan, Consortium for Science, Policy, and Outcomes*
Brian Baird, Member of Congress (Retired)*
Tyler Fisher, Unite America*
Kevin Esterling, University of California, Riverside*

* Affiliations listed for identification purposes only.