

April 22, 2019

The Honorable Ron Johnson  
The Honorable Gary Peters  
U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs  
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC, 20510

Dear Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member Peters:

We, the 12 undersigned organizations, urge the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs to favorably report the Federal Advisory Committee Act Amendments of 2019 (“FACA Amendments Act”), H.R. 1608. The legislation, which passed the House of Representatives on March 12, will make advisory committees more transparent, strengthen the independence of advisory committees, improve oversight of the advisory committee process, and close implementation loopholes. Companion legislation was introduced in the Senate in April by Sens. Portman and Hassan, S. 1220.

The FACA Amendments Act will make advisory committee more transparent by requiring disclosure of information about the committees. Agencies would be required to disclose committee members’ names, how those members were chosen, any stakeholder interests those members represent, and justifications for any conflict of interest waivers granted to members.

In addition, the FACA Amendments Act will strengthen advisory committee independence. The legislation prohibits political loyalty as a basis for making appointments. It insulates committee recommendations from agency interference. And it ensures that committee members comply with federal ethics and conflict of interest laws.

The FACA Amendments Act will improve oversight of the advisory committee process. It authorizes the GSA Administrator to issue rules implementing the act. Furthermore, it requires the GAO to review agency compliance and report its findings to Congress.

Finally, the FACA Amendments Act will close loopholes in the implementation of FACA. It clarifies that FACA applies to subcommittees as well as committees, closing the loophole whereby a committee avoids public meetings by conducting its business through subcommittees. Also, committees formed at the request of an agency or president will be subject to FACA even if established by a contractor.

The FACA Amendments Act has passed the House on multiple occasions, most recently by voice vote in 2016. We hope that this Congress, under your leadership, this legislation can be duly considered and move forward to become law.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our views. If you have any questions, please contact Daniel Schuman, policy director, Demand Progress, at 240-237-3930 or [Daniel@DemandProgress.org](mailto:Daniel@DemandProgress.org).

Sincerely,

Campaign for Accountability

Campaign for Liberty

Center for Media and Democracy

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)

Defending Rights & Dissent

Demand Progress Education Fund

Government Accountability Project

Government Information Watch

National Security Counselors

Project On Government Oversight

Senior Executives Association

Transparency International