

# MEMORANDUM

## Description of Rules Changes 112<sup>th</sup> Congress

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Below is a brief description of, and justification for, the changes included in the proposed Committee Rules for the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress.

### **OVERARCHING CHANGES:**

- 1) **Name Change:** The Committee name has been officially changed in the Rules of the House of Representatives to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. The Committee Rules will reflect this change. This change will highlight the important work done by the Committee in the area of space and aeronautics and bring the committee back to its roots.
- 2) **Transparency:** The new Rules of the House are designed to encourage transparency in the work of the Committees and the House. There are several changes to the Committee rules which will require more notice and more public availability of information than was previously required.
- 3) **Consistency with the House Rules:** In several places it was necessary to modify the Committee Rules to ensure consistency with the modified House Rules.
- 4) **Grammatical Or Structural Changes:** In a few places, we have made grammatical or structural changes to make the Committee Rules easier to understand. We have also cross-referenced the House Rules where possible to streamline the Committee Rules; for example, the contents of a report on a measure or matter required by the House Rules, which were previously restated in the Committee Rules at Rule 8, have been incorporated by cross-reference to the House Rules section.

## **CHANGES TO SPECIFIC RULES:**

- 5) **In General:** The House Rules include a provision [Rule XI(1)(a)(2)] which states that “a motion to recess from day to day, or recess subject to the call of the Chair (within 24 hours), shall be privileged.” Our current Rules do not include language making it clear that a motion to recess subject to the call of the Chair is privileged, so we have added it here.
- 6) **Committee Rules:** In accordance with House Rules and in furtherance of transparency, we have added a provision stating that the Committee Rules, once adopted, shall be publicly available in electronic form and published in the Congressional Record not later than 30 days after the Chair of the Committee is elected in each odd-numbered year.
- 7) **Regular, Additional, and Special Meetings:** This Rule was modified to make it clear that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month shall be set-aside for meetings of the Committee.
- 8) **Meetings and Hearings Generally:** This section has been modified to include changes to the House Rules which will encourage transparency and make Committee proceedings easier to access by the public. Modifications to this section require that audio and visual coverage be available in a manner that is easily accessible to the public and that operation and use of any internet broadcast system shall be fair and nonpartisan. Further modifications to this rule include removal of the reference to specific news organizations in accordance with the new House Rules.
- 9) **Consideration of a Measure or Matter:** This rule has been modified to make it more consistent with the modified Rules of the House. Accordingly, bills and other substantive matters may be taken up for consideration only when called by the Chair and with proper notice. The modified notice rule states that a Committee meeting shall “not commence earlier than the third day on which members have notice thereof”; however, the rule does allow a meeting to begin sooner with the concurrence of the ranking minority member or by a majority vote. Finally, the modified House Rules require that the text of legislation to be considered be publicly available in electronic form at least 24 hours prior to a markup. Our Committee rules cite this minimum requirement for measures or matters, but continue to provide that to the maximum extent practicable, the measure or matter to be considered, as well as the original text of the measure to be considered for purposes of markup, will be made available 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

- 10) **Subpoena Power:** Recognizing that the House and Senate must concur in any adjournment exceeding three (3) days and the new policies of the House for constituent work weeks, as well as the practice of several other committees of the House, this rule modifies the period of adjournment under which the Chair of the Committee may authorize and issue a subpoena, in consultation with the Ranking Minority Member, to any period longer than three (3) days.
- 11) **Hearing Procedures:** This rule has been modified to include the current requirement that witnesses limit oral presentations before the Committee to five (5) minutes, with additional time allowed when granted by the Chair.
- 12) **Witness Disclosures:** This rule has been modified to make it consistent with House Rules. It will require non-governmental witnesses to provide a financial disclosure with the information specified in the House Rules and will require the Committee to make such disclosures publicly available with appropriate redactions to protect the privacy of the witness. Although the Committee form may ask for additional information to be provided, the Committee Rule will now reflect the House Rules.
- 13) **Other Committee Publications:** This rule has been modified to require additional reports on the activities of the Committee. Under the modified House Rules, the Committees are now required to submit a semiannual report on the activities of the Committee for a total of 4 activity reports per Congress.
- 14) **Subcommittees:** The jurisdiction of the Subcommittee on Research and Science Education is clarified by the addition of the following words & phrase added to existing delineated responsibilities:

“(l) computing, communications, **networking**, and information technology;”  
“(K) **research, development, and demonstration relating to nanoscience, nanoengineering, and nanotechnology.**”
- 15) **Committee Records:** This rule has been modified to address changes to the House Rules in the interest of transparency. The modified rule requires that any record vote of the Committee be made available in electronic form within 48 hours. Additionally, a provision has been added to this rule to require that any amendment to a measure or matter that is adopted by the Committee will be made publicly available in electronic form within 24 hours.