



## Congress of Tomorrow Project

★ JOINT COMMITTEE ON REFORM ★

### Statements of Support

#### Joint Committee Legislation Would Enable Needed Reforms

"Reps. Darin LaHood (R-IL) and Daniel Lipinski (D-IL) today introduced legislation that would, for the first time in over 25 years, create a mechanism to obligate Congress to evaluate and improve its procedures and processes. Our society, communications systems, and national imperatives have changed dramatically since that last self-examination in the early 1990s. While Congress has worked to accommodate these new realities, much will be gained from a broad and deliberate assessment of institutional strengths and needs.



BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER

"The current polarization and breakdown in long-respected norms and tradition have significantly affected the ability of Congress to conduct the people's business. While some are nostalgic with rosy memories of gentler times, the Bipartisan Policy Center believes that the Congress and other critical institutions must strengthen their capacity to govern a divided nation. This challenge is the focus of the BPC's Commission on Political Reform, which proposed a comprehensive package of congressional reforms designed to strengthen the congressional workforce and increase the capacity to reconcile competing interests. BPC recommendations include the introduction of bipartisan caucus meetings, a more vigorous committee process, the consideration of more amendments in both chambers, and an increase in the number of days Congress works in Washington.

"The Joint Committee will provide a forum for consideration of a broad range of ideas to confront gridlock and restore the public's faith in the world's greatest democratic institution."

*Washington, D.C.*— **John Fortier**, director of the Democracy Project at the Bipartisan Policy Center, released this statement on new legislation that would establish a Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress.



#### Congressional Institute Praises Joint Committee to Reform Congress

The Congressional Institute praised the introduction of a resolution to form a bipartisan Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress that will propose revisions to rules, procedures, and structures of Congress to make it work better and be more accountable to the American public. For years now, there's been talk of reforming Congress, but tinkering with rule and procedures has given us little in the way of real reforms. With that in mind, U.S. Reps. Darin LaHood and Dan Lipinski—a Republican

and Democrat, respectively, and both from Illinois—recently introduced a resolution to create a Joint Committee on Congressional Reform that will be a launching pad to make Congress effective, vital and relevant.

The Joint Committee is not a new idea. It has worked in the past when Members of Congress recognized that the institution had reached rock bottom when it comes to productivity and effectiveness.

If the 115th Congress can be remembered as one of the few Congresses that dedicated itself to institutional reform. Given the way things are going, it has little to lose and much to gain. It might even create the Congress America needs—and deserves.

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“Today, American politics is characterized by partisan gridlock that paralyzes our political institutions and contributes to voter disillusionment and division. The passage of H.Con.Res. 28 establishing a Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress—a bipartisan venue through which Congress can identify and adopt measures to improve the legislative branch’s ability to fulfill its core responsibilities—represents an important opportunity to restore public confidence in our governance process. By considering changes to the rules that affect how Congress operates, elected officials can create new incentives to work together and demonstrate to their constituents that leaders in Washington can rise above their differences and work together to address the greatest challenges facing our country.



Democracy Fund Voice

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CONGRESSIONAL  
MANAGEMENT  
FOUNDATION

“A resilient Congress is essential to a functioning democracy. However, at this time, citizens, scholars, and even Members of Congress and staff are questioning whether Congress has the capacity to meet the expectations and aspirations of the American people.

It is time for Congress to re-examine its structure, processes, and operations through a Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress. For nearly 40 years the Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) has conducted a significant amount of research with congressional offices, Members, staff, and institutional offices. It is clear to us that a thoughtful, bipartisan effort aimed at improving the institution would result in a better Congress, better laws, and better service to the American people.

For this reason, CMF applauds Representatives Darin LaHood and Dan Lipinski for calling for a Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress. We urge Members of Congress and their staffs to support this process to evaluate and improve Congress so that it can continue to perform its vital role in our democracy and fulfill its constitutional responsibilities.”

**Congressional Management Foundation**

STATEMENT ON THE PROPOSAL JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE ORGANIZATION OF CONGRESS

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**PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE  
STATEMENT ON CONGRESS OF TOMORROW PROJECT**

The Partnership for Public Service is pleased to endorse the Congress of Tomorrow Project and the proposal for a Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress. The American people deserve a government



**PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE**

that addresses the issues they care about – but Congress has struggled to fulfill even its most basic responsibilities and hindered the ability of federal agencies to serve the public.

Much more is required of Congress in solving our nation’s problems and delivering results for citizens. This includes working with the executive branch to find common ground, a need addressed in the Partnership’s report, [“Government Disservice: Overcoming Washington Dysfunction to Improve Congressional Stewardship of the Executive Branch.”](#)

For Congress to serve as an effective steward of federal agencies, it must be willing to pursue the kind of transformational change that the Congress of Tomorrow Project would make possible.

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Like any organization, Congress needs to rework its operations and structures from time to time. A joint committee to reorganize Congress would be a great help in upgrading our national legislature to fulfill its constitutional duties and govern in the 21st century.

Kevin R. Kosar, co-director, Legislative Branch Capacity Working Group

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## **More Statements of Support**

Congress needs structural and process reform. Its structure must allow it to address 21<sup>st</sup> Century concerns in a timely way and its processes must reinvigorate the marriage between policy setting and spending priorities. The first step should be a bipartisan, bi-cameral committee empowered to develop the essential elements of reform.

Former Congressman Bob Walker of Pennsylvania, House Chief Deputy Whip and Chairman of the Committee on Science, Space and Technology

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“If you believe your legislative responsibility under our Constitution is being fulfilled adequately, please feel free to disregard this proposal.

“But if you are concerned as so many of us are that Congressional inertia has eroded the power of the legislative branch of government, I urge you to support most, if not all, of these proposals to change the Rules of Procedure for the House and Senate.”

Bob Livingston, Member of Congress (Retired), former Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations

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I was very gratified to see that Congressman Darin LaHood and his Democratic colleague Dan Lipinski, have introduced a resolution creating a Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress. This extraordinary mechanism is a means of bringing about change in the legislative process, in political behavior, and in those important relationships among policy makers so essential to governing.

The late Robert H. Michel, former Member of Congress from Illinois, and House Republican Leader 1981-1994

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“My 18-year career serving in Congress was very rewarding. However, the current dysfunctional nature of the process and the disintegration in the relationship among the members, which prevent work from getting done, are damaging the House and causing people to lose faith in their government. It’s time we do something about it and I fully endorse the creation of a Joint Committee as part of the solution.”

David L. Hobson, former member of Congress from Ohio. Member of the House Committee on Appropriations and Chairman of Military Construction and Energy and Water Appropriations subcommittees