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MUFTIAH M. McCARTIN, STAFF DIRECTOR  
(202) 225-9191  
[www.house.gov/rules](http://www.house.gov/rules)



Committee on Rules  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-312 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515-6269

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(202) 225-9091

July 14, 2009

The Honorable Louise Slaughter  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Rules  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-312, the Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Madam Chairwoman:

It has often been said that the size of the Rules Committee's hearing room is inversely proportional to its power, because its main hearing room is among the smallest on Capitol Hill despite its position as the most powerful committee in the House. Some feel that because the Rules Committee's business is often messy, tradition dictates that it is best shielded from public view.

We are writing because the time for this antiquated worldview has come to an end. Recent events have demonstrated over and over that more transparency in the Rules Committee's proceedings is necessary. Whether it is a 300-page amendment dropped in Members' laps at 3 o'clock in the morning, a conference report authorizing large payouts to AIG executives, or the Rules Committee's new-found role as the arbiter of every amendment considered on the floor of the House, the public deserves to see what we're up to in the Rules Committee.

Therefore, we respectfully request that you work with the Chief Administrative Officer to install cameras in our committee room at the earliest possible opportunity for the purpose of webcasting our proceedings.

The reasons for installing cameras are many:

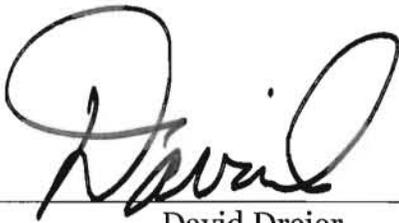
- To the best of our knowledge, we are the only major committee which does not have this capability in our main hearing room.
- While C-SPAN occasionally covers our proceedings, they are often unable to allocate their limited resources on the short notice we usually have for our meetings.

- Much of the architectural work required for the installation of cameras was completed about 4 years ago during the last renovation of the hearing room and we understand that the costs associated with installing the cameras do not come from the Committee's regular budget.
- The cameras are operated by the same nonpartisan personnel who operate the cameras in the House Chamber.

Given the minimal costs to the Committee in terms of budget and installation time, and the huge benefit to be gained from public access to our proceedings, we have nothing keeping us from moving forward with all deliberate speed.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that this important priority becomes a reality as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



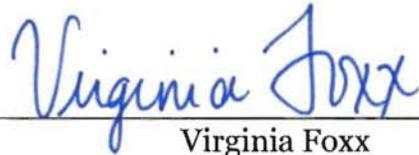
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