

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

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The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

December 20, 2024

Dear Speaker Johnson,

We write to respectfully request you to include a narrow provision permitting proxy voting for parental leave for Members of Congress who are pregnant or have just welcomed the arrival of a child in the Rules of the 119th Congress. Enabling new parents to vote while they spend time recovering from birth or bonding with their new child is an important step in modernizing the Rules of the House and supporting families. Additionally, by accommodating new mothers and fathers, we will hopefully attract more young parents to public service and we can make the House of Representatives more emblematic of the American people and reflective of the life experiences of the people we serve.

Of the more than 12,500 lawmakers elected to Congress, just 13 of these Members have been women who have given birth during their term. In today's Congress, only 37 Members are mothers with minor children, while 132 Members are fathers with minor children. These statistics did not happen by chance. According to a recent report, there are a number of barriers to mothers' representation in public office: unpredictable work hours, votes and other obligations during late nights and weekends, and often long commutes back to their district.<sup>1</sup> Allowing proxy voting for new mothers can at least reduce one of these obstacles.

New mothers aren't the only ones who face significant challenges in balancing their roles as Members of Congress and new parents. Fathers also face the impossible decision between caring for their newborn or voting on the House Floor. According to the Department of Labor, when fathers take leave to spend time with their new child, it can lead to better health outcomes for the child and the whole family.<sup>2</sup> Members of Congress often have to travel long distances to vote, but a parental proxy provision would ensure that new fathers and mothers wouldn't have to choose between taking care of their newborns and being physically at the Capitol to vote.

Therefore, we urge you to allow a narrow provision permitting up to 12 weeks of proxy voting in both Committee and on the Floor for Members who have recently welcomed the arrival of a new

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<sup>1</sup> Shirley, Luiba Gretchen. "[Report: Politics of Parenthood: Representation in the 118th Congress](#)," Vote Mama Foundation, May 2023.

<sup>2</sup> United States Department of Labor. "[DOL Policy Brief: Paternity Leave](#)," 2012.

child. Expectant and new parents in Congress are forced to make the choice between their families and fulfilling their congressional duties. Adding a narrow parental proxy voting provision is a reasonable step we can take toward modernizing Congress and making the People's House more reflective of the life experiences of the constituencies we represent.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

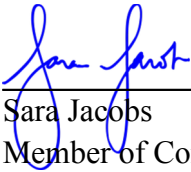
Sincerely,



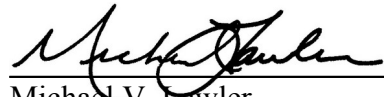
Brittany Petterson  
Member of Congress



Anna Paulina Luna  
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs  
Member of Congress



Michael V. Lawler  
Member of Congress



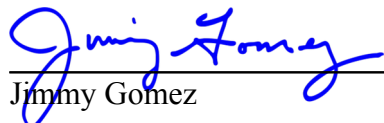
Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress



Teresa Leger Fernández  
Chair  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Jimmy Gomez  
Member of Congress



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Young Kim  
Member of Congress



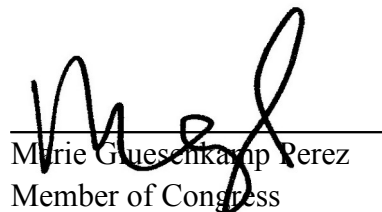
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Juan Ciscomani  
Member of Congress



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Nicole Malliotakis  
Member of Congress



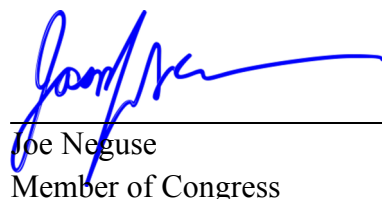
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Merie Guesenkaup Perez  
Member of Congress



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David G. Valadao  
Member of Congress



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Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress



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Dan Meuser  
Member of Congress



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Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress