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July 17, 2014

Honorable Pete Sessions
Chairman, House Committee on Rules
H-312, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman,

We understand that the Committee on Rules will meet in the coming weeks to consider amendments to the proposed resolution authorizing the Speaker of the House to sue the President of the United States.

Before that meeting is scheduled, the Members of our Committee must have the answers to two important questions:

1) What is the anticipated cost of the lawsuit against the President?

The draft resolution places **no limit** on the amount of taxpayer funds the Speaker may dedicate to his lawsuit against the President. The American people have a right to know – before the House votes to initiate such a lawsuit – how much money will be allocated to this exercise.

We do not expect you to provide a detailed budget for the lawsuit, and we understand that unforeseen variables will influence the ultimate cost. But there is no reason to assume that the House of Representatives cannot do what every American family must do – use its best judgment to estimate future expenditures. The President's Office of Management and Budget must provide such estimates every day. We do not see why the House of Representatives should be exempt from the ordinary budget discipline of estimating the cost of its own

activities. We request that you provide to the Committee, in advance of our markup, your best estimate of the anticipated cost of the lawsuit to the American taxpayers.

2) Which accounts will be cut in order to pay for the lawsuit against the President?

The draft resolution authorizes the Speaker to hire outside lawyers to assist him in his suit against the President. Yet the resolution does not provide any new resources. Therefore, funding for the lawsuit must be transferred from other Legislative Branch accounts.

Before the Members of the House cast their vote on this resolution, they should know which of their legitimate legislative activities will be curtailed in order to divert funds to this entirely partisan enterprise. We request that you provide the Committee, before the markup, your best estimate of the legislative branch accounts that will be reduced to cover the anticipated cost of the lawsuit.

We have learned in too many cases what happens when the House fails to disclose the anticipated cost of such activities in advance. The American public only learned, after the fact, that the House had wasted $2.3 million on its misguided intervention in the Defense of Marriage Act litigation. Another example is the resolution to launch yet another investigation of the Benghazi matter. When the Rules Committee considered this partisan legislation, we asked repeatedly – and in vain – for a cost estimate. We learned after the vote that the House plans to spend as much as $3.3 million on this duplicative and wasteful effort this year alone – more than the budgets of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs and the House Committee on Ethics.

Mr. Chairman, it is essential that the anticipated cost of the Speaker's lawsuit against our President be disclosed to the American people **before** we vote on the resolution authorizing it. We are making this request so far in advance because we want to ensure there is ample time to make the assessments necessary for a fully informed estimate. No meeting should be scheduled on the draft resolution until the answers to these questions have been made public.

Sincerely,

Louise M. Slaughter
Ranking Member

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Jared Polis
Member of Congress