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

May 13, 2015

The Honorable Pete Sessions  
Chairman  
Committee on Rules  
H-312, The Capitol  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman,

As the Rules Committee meets this week to consider legislation that spans a broad range of subjects, we write to express our deep concern about the growing trend in the House of considering multiple, unrelated bills under a single rule from the Rules Committee.

As you know, the Rules Committee has traditionally reported a single rule for each bill to be considered by the House. This practice allows Members to debate and make judgments about the proper floor procedures for each measure. However, in recent years, there has been an increasing trend to force two, three, and sometimes even four completely unrelated bills into a single rule. This growing trend has significant negative consequences – both for the integrity of the legislative process and the coherence of debate on the House floor.

The integrity of the proceedings is eroded when the votes of House Members do not reflect their position on a single question – but rather on a set of complex, unrelated procedures, some of which they support and some of which they oppose. Votes on the House floor should clearly reflect where each Member stands on the question at issue – not on a hodgepodge of unconnected items.

In addition, debate on the House floor suffers when three or four unrelated bills are crammed into a single rule. Under this procedure, arguments for and against multiple measures are interspersed, which leads to disjointed, fragmented, and often confusing debates.

A vivid example occurred in April when the House considered H. Res. 231, a rule for consideration of three measures: the Congressional Budget Resolution, the Waters of the United States bill, and the resolution rejecting the DC City Council's reproductive health law. Observers of this debate were presented with an almost comical alternation between

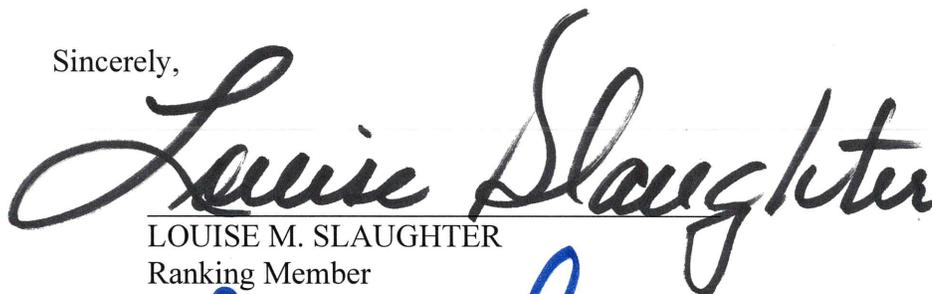
statements about the cleanliness of rivers, defense spending, and women's health policy in the District of Columbia.

It is a disservice to the House when debates lurch from one unrelated topic to the other, with no opportunity to reinforce a line of argument or rebut a misstatement. Such debates often become merely a set of unconnected statements on unrelated matters.

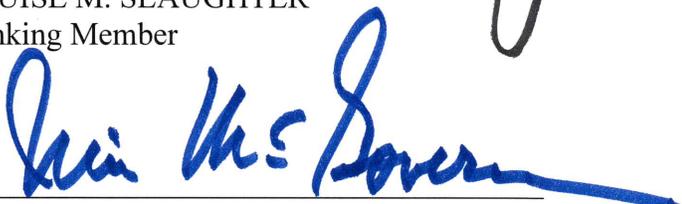
There are certainly occasions when such rules may be justified – at the end of a Congressional session or when the House is facing an imminent deadline – but this procedure is no longer used only on these rare occasions. Instead, it has become the routine practice of the House. Such rules have been used, increasingly, under the leadership of both parties over the last decade, but the practice has dramatically skyrocketed since the Republicans took control of the House in 2011. In fact, as the attached chart demonstrates, the use of these 'grab-bag' rules has increased over 400 percent since Republicans gained the majority.

Mr. Chairman, the House can do better than this. We urge you to return the Rules Committee to its traditional role of reporting a single rule for each measure, except in those rare occasions where deadlines require otherwise.

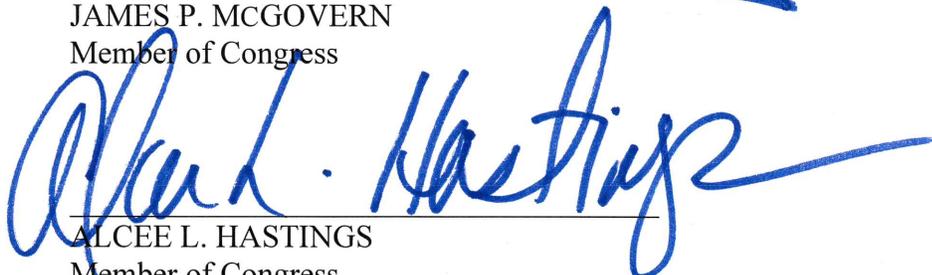
Sincerely,



LOUISE M. SLAUGHTER  
Ranking Member



JAMES P. MCGOVERN  
Member of Congress

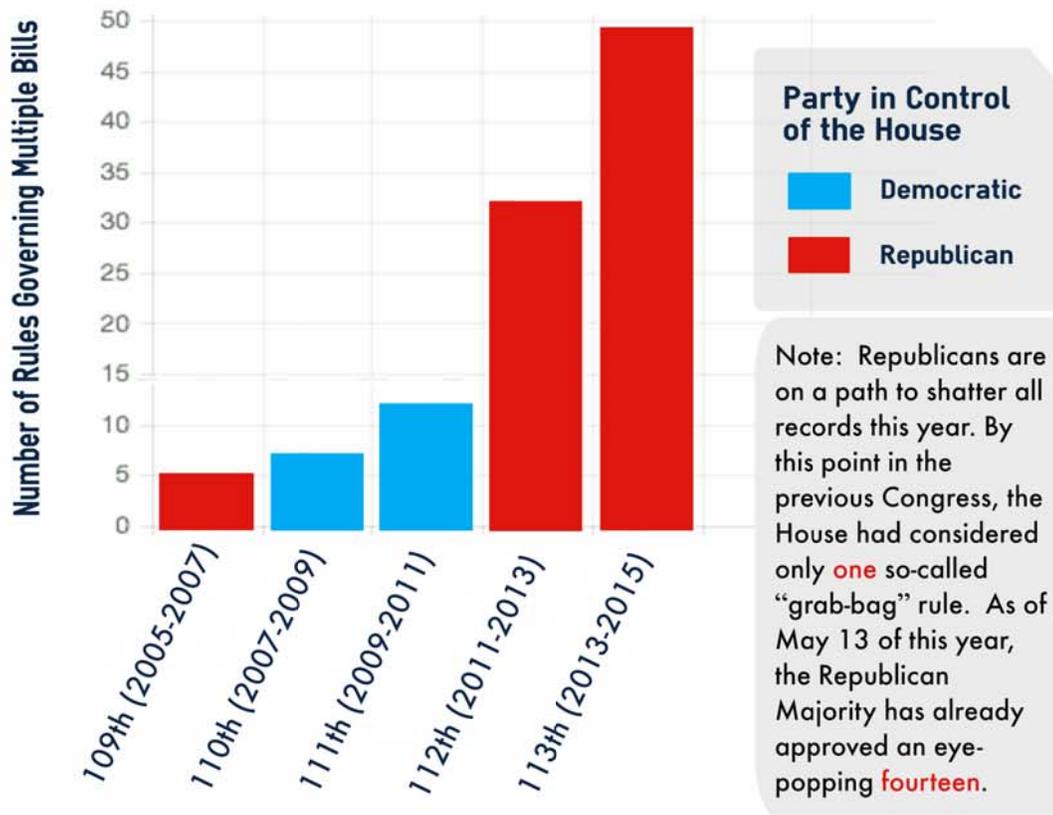


ALCEE L. HASTINGS  
Member of Congress



JARED POLIS  
Member of Congress

# Rules Governing Multiple Bills



Congress	Party in Control of the House	Number of Rules Governing Multiple Bills
109th (2005-2007)	Republican	5
110th (2007-2009)	Democratic	7
111th (2009-2011)	Democratic	12
112th (2011-2013)	Republican	32
113th (2013-2015)	Republican	49