

PETE SESSIONS, TEXAS  
CHAIRMAN

VIRGINIA FOXX, NORTH CAROLINA  
TOM COLE, OKLAHOMA  
ROB WOODALL, GEORGIA  
MICHAEL C. BURGESS, TEXAS  
STEVE STIVERS, OHIO  
DOUG COLLINS, GEORGIA

HUGH N. HALPERN, STAFF DIRECTOR  
(202) 225-9191  
www.rules.house.gov



ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

LOUISE M. SLAUGHTER, NEW YORK  
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

JAMES P. MCGOVERN, MASSACHUSETTS  
ALCEE L. HASTINGS, FLORIDA  
JARED POLIS, COLORADO

MILES M. LACKEY, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

MINORITY OFFICE  
H-152, THE CAPITOL  
(202) 225-9091

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

February 5, 2015

The Honorable Pete Sessions  
Chairman, Committee on Rules  
H-312, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman,

We understand that the Republican Leadership is considering a House vote to authorize another lawsuit against the President of the United States, this time over his executive actions on immigration. My Democratic colleagues and I believe this would be seriously misguided considering that the President clearly had the authority to take these executive actions. In addition, there is a broad consensus of legal opinion from across the political spectrum that a single House of Congress does not have standing to pursue such a lawsuit against another branch of Government to settle such political and policy disputes.

But if the Republican Leadership insists on authorizing another lawsuit, it is vital that the House in general and the Committee on Rules in particular follow the regular order. We must begin by holding a public hearing in our Committee, with outside expert witnesses, as we did last July when you decided to sue the President over his implementation of the Affordable Care Act. The Minority must also be given adequate notice of the hearing in order to have sufficient time to schedule expert witnesses. Hearing from experts – scholars with experience studying and writing about the constitutional and immigration law issues at stake – is essential if decisions made by the Members of the Committee and the full House are to have any meaning. If our votes are not well informed, we are not doing our jobs properly. We do indeed have witnesses interested in providing testimony but, of course, they need advanced notice in order to prepare for and arrange an appearance.

Following a hearing in our Committee we should then hold a separate meeting at a later date to mark up the resolution authorizing the lawsuit, as such a resolution would presumably be in our jurisdiction as it was last year. Only then should we mark up a rule providing for consideration of the resolution authorizing a suit.

I remain disappointed that the Majority is considering filing another such lawsuit at all and I am convinced that its primary purpose is political. But, regardless of our disagreement about the merits of a lawsuit, there is a right way to do important business in the House, and there is a wrong way.

I look forward to receiving your reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Louise M. Slaughter".

Louise M. Slaughter  
Ranking Member