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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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March 19, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

I write today to talk about our futures, as we face this most recent crisis caused by the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) we should reflect on how adaptable our country and its institutions are in dire times like these. As a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, I expect to have the best resources, the brightest minds, and the capability to perform our constitutional responsibilities even in times of crisis. The global pandemic onset by COVID-19 will not be the last event to require such adaptability and we must do all we can to prepare for any circumstance.

As you know, two members of Congress have tested positive for coronavirus and many more may have been exposed. We have an obligation to adhere to official guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which directs individuals to refrain from participating in gatherings of 10 or more people. With such safeguards in place, our ability to debate and pass legislation to support the American people will be severely inhibited unless we adopt similar contingency measures in the short-term and take steps to design and implement a secure and verifiable remote system to hold hearings, establish quorums, and take votes in committee and on the floor in the long-term. That is why I am calling on you to work with the Minority Leader, the Clerk of the House, the Office of the Parliamentarian, the Committee on House Administration, the Rules Committee, and other appropriate parties to establish a remote voting system immediately. Further, acknowledging that we may find ourselves in other emergency scenarios in the future, I request your support for language in the Fiscal Year 2021 House Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill directing that the Clerk of the House assess the House of Representatives' capability to conduct committee and legislative business remotely, as well as recommendations for the design and implementation of a secure and verifiable remote voting system to be deployed in times of emergency. This type of cutting-edge and secure technology is in existence and I see no logical reason for the most powerful congress in the world to not have access to it.

My individual office has been prepared for something like this for some time now, and that is partly due to the nature of my experience before Congress. As an attorney, I worked on cases that protected consumers during times of disaster. My constituents in the 15th District of Texas have unfortunately faced hurricanes, hail, and flood dangers every year in recent memory. We are a

resilient community. Given the current state of affairs, I can think of no more appropriate time than now to institute remote voting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Vicente Gonzalez', written in a cursive style.

Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress