



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

OPPOSE THE DISCHARGE PETITION PROCESS

“A discharge petition is a way that the membership of this body...can go around a Speaker.”

- Democratic Rep. Jared Polis, 3/26/14

Dear Colleague:

On Monday, the House is expected to consider a Discharge Petition that will force us to vote on a controversial topic – one that three separate whip counts showed a majority of Republicans on the Financial Services Committee opposed bringing up for a vote. We are unaware of any chairman – Republican or Democrat – who ever moved a bill in committee that a majority of the majority did not want to consider. An offer to host a special meeting of our Conference to try to settle this issue, regrettably, was denied. So today we’re respectfully asking you – no matter what your position on the Export-Import Bank may be – to vote no on the Discharge Petition.

First, Discharge Petitions are a tool designed to be used *exclusively* by the minority. They give Democrats control over the agenda, which is why they so eagerly signed this one and even held a “victory” press conference afterward.

Second, those among us who rightfully call for regular order need to realize Discharge Petitions are the opposite of regular order. They bypass the committees, including the Rules Committee, and they bypass our conference. In the case of the Discharge Petition filed on Ex-Im, **zero amendments are allowed**. It could have been written in a way to allow for members to offer amendments, but instead this Discharge Petition was purposefully crafted to deny members the right to offer amendments.

We certainly respect our Republican colleagues, regardless of their stance on this one issue, and regret that at a time when our Conference has already been divided that this Discharge Petition has divided us further. But this isn’t about us, nor is it about the Financial Services

Committee or the Rules Committee. It's about whether we support Regular Order or not. It's about whether members should have the prerogative to offer amendments or not. Ultimately, it's about whether a minority of our Conference will find common cause with Democrats whenever we have an internal disagreement, use this uncommon, extreme Discharge Petition process, and force a vote when a majority of the majority does not want a vote.

It is always a difficult matter when Republicans don't see eye-to-eye on an issue. But the strength of our Conference is that we commit to work together, as a team, to resolve our differences ourselves and resist the temptation to resort to gimmicks or strange bedfellows. Doing so ensures that we have the support of a majority of the majority on any vote we choose to hold. And on the issues where it is tough to bridge our differences, we can and we should hold a special Conference meeting where all Members can participate and have their views heard, so that we can, in regular order, forge the path forward.

Respectfully yours,



JEB HENSARLING

Chairman, Committee on Financial Services



PETE SESSIONS

Chairman, Committee on Rules