

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

January 3, 2011

The Honorable David Dreier
233 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Dreier:

It is my understanding that the House Republican Caucus will be meeting in the coming days to discuss changes to the Rules of the House for the 112th Congress.

I am sure you will agree that the new House Rules, the foundation for the work of this Congress, should be constructed in as bipartisan and transparent a manner as possible. In that vein, I would like to request that you include a change to the proposed Rules of the House that would require Committees to post a plain English section-by-section analysis of the bill on their public websites 72 hours before a bill is considered on the House Floor.

If we as a body cannot explain to the American people in readable, concise language what a bill does and why it is necessary, Congress should probably not be considering it. Increasing transparency and accountability in Congress is a bipartisan aspiration with our nation's best interest at heart. When I served in the Florida Legislature, I introduced SB2586 to require that clear and unambiguous language be used for any ballot initiative. This change would have been a tremendous improvement for transparency in Florida, and providing detailed explanations of federal legislation using plain, straightforward language will empower more of our citizens to engage in the democratic process and contribute to the making of our laws.

Requiring plain English summaries of bills in advance of consideration on the House Floor will give all Americans the opportunity to review legislation and decide for themselves how they feel about the important issues of our time. I have included proposed language of this change with this letter. It is my hope that you will consider making this common sense change to the proposed rules. I am looking forward to working with you to provide the opportunity for more Americans to better understand the substance of the issues we will be debating during the 112th Congress.

Sincerely,



Theodore E. Deutch

AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 5

OFFERED BY MR. DEUTCH OF FLORIDA

At the end of section 2, add the following new subsection:

() **PLAIN ENGLISH SECTION BY SECTION.**—At the end of clause 3 of rule XIII, add the following new paragraph:

“(i) It shall not be in order to consider a bill or joint resolution reported by any committee unless a plain English section by section analysis of the bill or joint resolution has been posted on its public website for at least 72 hours.”.