

Sensenbrenner opposes House proxy voting proposal

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Washington, D.C. - Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner (WI-05) offered the following statement after voting against H.Res. 965 - Remote Voting by Proxy in the House of Representatives:

“The House Democrat proposal to allow for a system of proxy voting on the floor of the House of Representatives is not one I can support. This is the most consequential change to House rules in decades. These changes are advertised as short term and limited to the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. Likely, they would create a rules precedent that will be followed in the future. A precedent that can easily be construed as unconstitutional and subject to legal challenges.

By allowing each member to represent up to 10 proxies, Democrats could unilaterally pass legislation with only 22 of their members present. Just like the balance needed between the health of our citizenry and the health of our economy, balance is needed in the function of the House of Representatives. We are in unprecedented times that require unprecedented action from Congress. Appropriate steps must be taken to ensure the safety of members and staff. But we must not abandon the rules of the House. Members of Congress must still debate and vote in person.

Necessary precautions are needed to ensure congressional hearings are run securely & efficiently. Extending the length of time votes are held open and allowing members to vote in staggered blocks are just some of the steps the House has taken to deal with the current crisis. The subtle nature of bi-partisan policy making cannot be replicated remotely.

The House of Representatives has withstood the events of the Civil War, the

Spanish Flu, World War II, and 9/11 just name a few. Through all these monumental events, the House met in person, debated, and passed important legislation to get this nation back on track. While the House should adhere to the guidelines of social distancing, we must also conduct our essential duty.”