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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

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ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH
CONGRESS

JAMIE FLEET, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

November 17, 2015

The Honorable Candice S. Miller
Chairman, Committee on House Administration
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Chairman:

We will oppose your proposed transfer of \$300,000 held in reserve for unanticipated expenses to the Energy and Commerce Committee presumably for the purpose of funding the select panel created last month to investigate Planned Parenthood. Spending taxpayer money on this select panel is wasteful on substantive grounds and unnecessary on practical grounds. The Committee should also consider any such transfer in a public meeting to ensure the opportunity for amendments and thorough debate.

On the substance, we believe spending one cent on this investigative panel would constitute an indefensible use of public funds if not a deliberate betrayal of public trust. We cannot continue the process of establishing and funding unneeded committees for redundant and political purposes.

The taxpayer has already spent \$5 million dollars on the Select Committee on Benghazi, as part of a strategy Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy described as "fight and win." The Select Committee on Benghazi has been funded by an endless amount of administrative transfers and bureaucratic tricks with its anticipated full cost a mystery.

What will be the total cost of this select panel? Do you anticipate additional requests for funding beyond this \$300,000?

These are common sense questions that deserve answers.

In his inaugural address as Speaker of the House, Paul Ryan said "*We need to return to regular order. Now, I know that sounds like process. But it's actually a matter of principle.*"

As you know we have occasionally used an informal committee practice of a poll to members to resolve certain types of routine and administrative matters, but only if all Members acquiesce to use of a poll. Your proposal is neither routine nor administrative. The funding of a special investigative panel is not ordinary business.

By denying the Committee a chance to discuss this proposal at a meeting, subject the proposed resolution to amendment and debate is a great departure from longstanding Committee practice and certainly does not constitute the "regular order" aspired to by the Speaker.

We implore you to withdraw the proposed Committee resolution, end the taxpayer subsidy of Committees for political purposes and have this discussion as part of regular order, giving the American people a full and transparent understanding of the priorities for this Congress.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Brady
Ranking Member



Zoe Lofgren
Member



Juan Vargas
Member