



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

July 9, 2008

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
H-232, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

The Internet is a powerful tool for promoting openness and transparency in government. It has given individual Americans an unprecedented window into the daily actions and policy debates of their Congress. The result has increasingly been a better informed electorate – better equipped with real-time information about what is happening in their government, and more empowered to hold their leaders accountable.

It has come to my attention that the Democratic-controlled Committee on House Administration, at the recommendation of the Democratic chairman of the Commission on Mailing Standards (Franking Commission), is considering the adoption of new congressional rules that would effectively shut down what has emerged as a free and helpfully uncensored pipeline of real-time information between the American people and their elected leaders. Specifically, the Committee is considering the adoption of new rules that would require outside websites such as YouTube to comply with House regulations before Members of Congress could post videos on them. Under the proposal, the House Administration Committee would develop a list of “approved” websites, and Members of Congress would be restricted to only publishing content using these sites.

If this proposed rule were to be implemented, Americans who currently use free websites such as YouTube to obtain uncensored daily information on congressional policy debates would suddenly be forced to visit websites “approved” by the House Administration Committee in order to continue getting such information. This would amount to new government censorship of the Internet, by a panel of federal officials that is neither neutral nor independent.

I believe Members of Congress should have the ability to choose whichever service they believe will best assist in communicating with their constituents, and not be limited to only services “approved” by the House Administration Committee or any other government entity. We must encourage, not restrict, the free and open flow of uncensored information between the American people and their elected leaders over the Internet.

Members should be allowed to use technologies, websites, and services (paid or unpaid) to communicate with their constituents via text, video, or audio, so long as the content posted by

the Member complies with House rules and Franking content regulations. Members should be allowed to use free communications and networking services so long as those services are available on the same terms and conditions available to others. This view has been expressed formally to the Democratic Chairman of the Committee on House Administration, Rep. Robert Brady, by the Committee's senior Republican member, Rep. Vern Ehlers (R-MI), and by Reps. Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) and Tom Price (R-GA).

Millions of Americans get information about what is happening in their government through the Internet and free websites like YouTube. I am writing to seek your assurance that the Democratic majority does not intend to deprive them of this right, and to request that you join me in opposing the proposed new rules.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John", with a large, stylized flourish extending from the bottom left.

Rep. John Boehner (R-OH)  
House Republican Leader