

U.S. Rep. Gallagher: Urges Speaker Pelosi to reopen the Capitol complex

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-WI) today joined Rep. Rodney Davis (R-IL) and more than 130 of his colleagues in [sending a letter](#) to Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) urging her to reopen the Capitol complex to the public. The letter comes after Washington D.C. lifted COVID-19 restrictions and fully reopened on June 11, 2021.

In part, the lawmakers wrote, "The failure to follow public health guidance and the best up-to-date scientific knowledge to reopen the House is a failure of leadership. The American people are the ones that are most negatively affected as a result. The Capitol and the House of Representatives cannot justify continuing to be closed to the public given the facts. It is time to open the House and get back to work."

You can read the full text of the letter [HERE](#) or find it below:

Dear Madam Speaker:

We write today to urge you to fully reopen the House of Representatives. The positive impact of increasing vaccination rates and decreasing cases of COVID-19 are clear to see. Businesses are open, sporting venues and cultural institutions have welcomed back fans and visitors, and restrictions have been lifted. On June 11, Washington D.C. fully reopened and lifted the restrictions put in place to stop the spread of COVID-19. Unfortunately, the United States Capitol and the People's House have failed to do the same. The Capitol remains closed to the American people and the House continues to maintain policies that run contrary to science of COVID-19. It is time for you to reopen the House and get back to serving the American people. Weekly case numbers in the United States have reached their lowest point since March of 2020 at the very start of the pandemic, and every day hundreds of thousands of Americans are being vaccinated. This also holds true for the Washington D.C. metropolitan area and the Capitol Hill community specifically. Over the last two weeks cases are down 36% in Washington D.C. and over 40% in both Virginia and Maryland. On Capitol Hill, no congressional staffer is known to have tested positive in weeks and no Member of Congress is known to have tested positive in months. This can no doubt be attributed to the institution's steady access to vaccinations. The Office of the Attending Physician has administered over 10,000 COVID-19 vaccinations to the congressional community with at least 95% of Senators, 84% of House Members, and 84% of the House community at large vaccinated. These percentages are undoubtedly lower than the true vaccination rate given some individuals who have chosen to get vaccinated in their community. Even this lower percentage far surpasses the rate of vaccination frequently defined by leading experts as the threshold for achieving herd immunity.

Despite the data and the facts, the Capitol and House of Representatives are still closed and people's constitutional right to petition their government remains severely constrained. Most committee rooms remain closed. Proxy voting remains in place and lengthened voting blocs impedes Congress' ability to get work done in an efficient manner. Tourists and school groups from across the country are unable to visit their elected Representatives in-person or walk through the halls of democracy. When asked directly, the Attending Physician could not provide clear metrics or a target percentage of vaccinations to fully reopen the House and said that he would defer to you to make such decisions. This comes as no surprise given the discrepancies between guidance issued to the Senate compared to guidance issued to the House throughout the pandemic, which has clearly shown that public health and science are not the driving factors in these decisions. Furthermore, there has been a clear lack of leadership exhibited by the Majority that has led to a piecemeal approach to partial reopening by legislative branch entities, some of whom have no formal plan to reopen at all. No legislative branch entity, other than the U.S. Capitol Police, is fully in-person and no legislative branch entity is fully open to the public.

The failure to follow public health guidance and the best up-to-date scientific knowledge to reopen the House is a failure of leadership. The American people are the ones that are most negatively affected as a result. The Capitol and the House of Representatives cannot justify continuing to be closed to the public given the facts. It is time to open the House and get back to work.

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