

February 5, 2019

The Honorable Adam Schiff  
HVC-304, The U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Schiff:

We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to ensure that the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) business meeting, scheduled for Wednesday, February 6, is open to the public and press as required by the rules of the House of Representatives. Currently, the committee announcement declares the meeting is “closed.”<sup>1</sup>

House Rule XI (2)(g)(2), concerning open meetings, requires that business meetings held by standing committees be open to the press and public except when the committee holds a record vote in open session to close it.<sup>2</sup> House Rule X, clause 11(d)(1), applies this provision to HPSCI. Committee proceedings may only be closed for a limited number of reasons stated in the rules.

HPSCI has not yet had an opportunity to meet in the 116th Congress and accordingly has not held a public, roll call vote to close its proceedings. In addition, the meeting location, HVC-304, is a Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility. Accordingly, even were the meeting deemed “open,” the some press would be unable to attend. House rules require access for “radio, television, and still photography coverage.”

We understand that it likely is inconvenient for the committee to hold its business meeting in a room open to the public and then to move to a secure room should the committee vote to close the proceedings. However, the principle of defaulting to an open and accountable government and the requirement that moving to closed proceedings occur only after a public vote, enshrined in the House rules, controls in these circumstances.

We appreciate your thoughtful attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Campaign for Liberty  
Constitutional Alliance  
Demand Progress Education Fund  
Defending Rights & Dissent  
FreedomWorks  
Government Information Watch  
GovTrack.us

National Security Counselors  
Project On Government Oversight  
R Street Institute  
Restore The Fourth  
Revolving Door Project  
RootsAction.org

cc: The Honorable Devin Nunes

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<sup>1</sup> <https://docs.house.gov/Committee/Calendar/ByEvent.aspx?EventID=108866>

<sup>2</sup> <https://rules.house.gov/sites/democrats.rules.house.gov/files/116-1/116-House-Rules-Clerk.pdf>