

# Is Congress more dangerous than the southern border?



*FILE – The chamber of the House of Representatives is seen at the Capitol in Washington, Feb. 28, 2022. Just seven Republicans, along with most Democrats, used remote voting in the House when it began two years ago as the pandemic erupted. So far this year, over half of GOP lawmakers have used the proxy voting system at least once, along with nearly all Democrats. More than 50 of the Republicans who've used it this year also once signed onto a lawsuit seeking to declare the practice unconstitutional. (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite, File)*

In May 2021, in the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the halls of Congress were empty. One year later, I'm ecstatic to see school children, staff, tourists, and my fellow members fill our nation's Capitol, as managing COVID-19 becomes just another part of daily life. The beauty of the people's House is its accessibility to the American public. We all have a constitutional right to petition our government for a redress of grievances, and thankfully, that right is once again accessible after the U.S. Capitol was closed for nearly two years.

Despite this wonderful change of pace and a return to almost normal, Speaker of the House [Nancy Pelosi](#) recently announced the [extension](#) of remote voting through June 28 due to risks of COVID-19 as a “public health emergency.” Although the vast majority of House members are vaccinated and masks are no longer required indoors, Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) believes it is still too dangerous to properly function as a governing body and vote on the House floor in-person.

The proxy voting system has been abused by members on both sides of the aisle from the start. Instead of only proxy voting when infected or exposed to COVID-19 or when another COVID-19 related factor kept a member from traveling to Washington, D.C., members routinely stay home or travel elsewhere for any reason they please.

Simply watch any vote on C-SPAN to see the ridiculous number of M.I.A. members. Or watch a committee hearing where members tune-in from a boat, their car, or even their beds. These absent legislators are neither ill, nor exposed to COVID-19. They simply would rather be home or at other events. I warned about the consequences of lazy governance from the beginning of proxy voting and have refused to proxy vote or virtually vote in committee as a result. My constituents entrusted me with the voting card of the 4th District of Arkansas, and I intend to use it wisely and in person.

When members cannot look each other in the eyes and discuss the issues affecting Americans, solutions suffer, debate is ineffective, and policies become more partisan. Moreover, when they are not present, members cannot meet with the advocacy groups and constituents who heavily affect decision making as the experts in their respective fields. When responsibility gives way to convenience, our republic suffers.

As frustrating as Speaker Pelosi's decision is, its hypocrisy truly came to light

in April when President [Joe Biden](#) announced his decision to allow Title 42 to expire on May 23. Title 42 is an immigration order requiring immigrants to remain in their country of origin until their paperwork is processed based upon COVID-19 as public health emergency. He claims that this order is no longer needed as a health measure, ostensibly because COVID-19 isn't an emergency anymore. Apparently, if you believe Democrats, COVID-19 is still an emergency inside the chamber of the House of Representatives, but it's nothing to worry about on our southern border. I find that impossible to believe.

In fact, this week, a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) court filing revealed that 234,088 migrants were [encountered](#) at the border in April, the highest in DHS history. In this nod to the radical left, President Biden ignores his advisors who [fear](#) that allowing Title 42 to expire will cause a "mass migration event" and sow chaos at a time when we need stability in America.

If President Biden, the leader of the Democratic Party, can expose Americans to certain anarchy at the border by reasoning that the pandemic has come to an end, then Speaker Pelosi can insist members of Congress show up for work. Is voting in Congress more dangerous than crossing our southern border? What kind of message does this send the American people? Apparently, it's fine to expose border patrol officers to COVID-19 and an overwhelmed border, but we must put House members in protective COVID bubbles because they're too lazy or preoccupied to do their jobs properly.

Our nation is facing myriad crises including a historic [baby formula](#) shortage, [inflation](#) not seen in 40 years, gas prices [topping](#) \$4.00 a gallon in every state, and a dangerously overrun southern border. Congress needs to do the job we were sent to Washington, D.C. to do. We were sent to advocate and vote according to our constituents' values, but that job is simply impossible to manage effectively when the members are not in

Washington, D.C. I encourage my fellow members to vote in-person regardless of Speaker Pelosi's extension of proxy voting. We have a duty to the American people to not cut corners when dealing with policy that will drastically affect folks' lives. I also call on the American people to hold their representatives accountable to showing up to work and give the sacred, constitutional role of legislating their full attention.

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