

December 16, 2010

Dear Majority Leader– Elect Eric Cantor:

I have now had several days to review the Congressional Calendar and return to my District to listen to many of my constituents' views regarding the schedule for the First Session of the 112th Congress.

I believe this schedule does not sufficiently reflect the concerns of the American people as expressed on November 2nd.

The election demonstrated that the voters, including the citizens of the 22nd District of Florida, wanted the United States Congress to aggressively address the many challenges facing our nation. As we both know Congress needs to work to create jobs, reduce the deficit, strengthen our economy, limit the size of government, and contend with a plethora of national security issues.

Even though the schedule contains 123 days and 32 weeks of session which is consistent with first sessions in previous Congresses, I believe the citizens of this nation, as demonstrated by their action at the ballot box this year, do not want a Congress that is consistent – even in terms of scheduling – with the past.

Further, the schedule, as proposed, means the House of Representatives will not meet the mark of 90 days in session until September of 2011, just a matter of days before the end of the Fiscal Year. The American people expect the Congress to do a thorough review of our nation's spending priorities, and I believe the number of days in session do not provide an adequate amount of time for such oversight.

I am sure we both agree that the issues before us today require the Members of Congress to go beyond what has been the accepted practice in the past to meet the challenges of the future.

I am very concerned that the House of Representatives consistently stays in session for only two weeks on Capitol Hill, followed by one week in the District. Further, the schedule puts the House of Representatives in recess when the U.S. Senate is in session -- and vice-versa. Certainly the Republican-controlled House of Representatives and the Democrat-controlled Senate are going to need to work in concert to enact legislation to move this nation forward.

I understand from more senior colleagues limiting votes during the day between 1:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. will allow the essential committees work to be uninterrupted by votes on the floor. Further, the elimination of many ceremonial pieces of legislation will allow for more time on the House floor to work on essential business. Finally, establishing an adjournment date of December 8, 2011, sends a message to the American people that their House of Representatives is going to work all twelve months of the year. I want to thank you for initiating these important changes.