

FAQ: The Discharge Petition Process to Open the Government

Q: What is the “Open the Government” Resolution and how will you be able to pass it in the House?

A: The “Open the Government” Resolution will use House parliamentary rules to force a floor vote on a “clean” continuing resolution at Senate-passed funding levels for the Federal Government through November 15th. To pass this urgent Resolution quickly, we intend to gather the required 218 Member signatures from Democrats and Republicans for a discharge petition so that majority rule can be restored to the House and the current government shutdown can be ended.

Q: What parliamentary procedures are required?

A: There are four steps required. **First**, the Resolution is introduced. The Resolution allows us to offer a clean continuing resolution at the Senate funding level by stripping the text from an existing, germane bill – in this case, HR 1164, the “Government Shutdown Prevention Act” – and replacing it with the clean language.

Second, after seven legislative days from the date of introduction, we will file a petition to discharge the Resolution from the Rules Committee. Each day the House is gavelled into session is a legislative day.

Third, once the discharge petition is filed, we will collect the signatures from both Democrats and Republicans. To sign the discharge petition, Members simply go to the clerk's desk on the House floor and sign.

Fourth, once we collect 218 signatures, we will make a Motion on the House floor to discharge the Resolution from the Rules Committee and call for its immediate consideration. Motions to discharge are only permitted on the second and fourth Mondays of a month. The earliest a vote could occur under this procedure is Monday, October 14th. If the Resolution is adopted, the House would finally be able to consider and vote on a clean continuing

resolution to reopen the federal government. By the terms of the Resolution, HR 1164 is brought to the floor and replaced in total by one amendment: a clean continuing resolution like the Senate's.

Q: Why are we introducing the “Open the Government” resolution?

A: A majority of House Members would vote for the Senate-passed Continuing Resolution if given the opportunity, but the Republican Leadership has been too intimidated by an extreme faction of their party to let the majority of the House work its will. This Resolution is an opportunity for a simple majority of members to take the House back from this Tea Party minority.

Q: What is the next step if the Resolution and the amendment pass the House?

A: The amendment goes to the Senate for consideration. Unlike other bills sent by the House, this amendment would be free of poison pills, like defunding or delaying health insurance coverage for millions of Americans. And it would provide for government funding levels already passed by the Senate.