

DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ
23RD DISTRICT, FLORIDA

CHIEF DEPUTY WHIP

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

CHAIRWOMAN

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION,
VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES

SUBCOMMITTEES:

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT,
AND RELATED AGENCIES
HOMELAND SECURITY



COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

SUBCOMMITTEES:

CIVIL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES
NATIONAL SECURITY

STEERING AND POLICY COMMITTEE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

July 13, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

Last fall, I shared with all of you that I would be seeking your consideration and support of my campaign to serve as Chair of the House Committee on Appropriations in the 117th Congress. At that time, I indicated that we were experiencing one of the most consequential times in our democracy, and we needed strong and strategic leadership to bring about 21st-century reforms to make the appropriations process more inclusive and safeguard Congress's power of the purse.

Now I'm writing again to propose the creation of a new tool that, if I am elected Chair, I will propose to help address a longstanding crisis that has been given new urgency: systemic racism, bigotry and injustice. I believe the weight of history and the urgency and momentum of the current moment provide an opportunity for the House Appropriations Committee to lead the way in approaching federal spending decisions with a newfound emphasis on equity and justice.

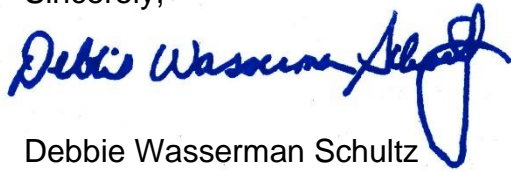
The Appropriations Committee must play a leading role in addressing federal budget inequities. That is why I am proposing the creation of a new House Appropriations Committee Advisory Panel on Equity and Justice. This panel would help the Committee refocus federal spending decisions on the issues and demands of equity, justice, and diversity. To do this, the panel would comprehensively review federal programs and the president's budget requests to identify ongoing inequities in communities of color and historically marginalized communities. The panel would also look for new opportunities in our 12 annual appropriations bills to direct resources towards communities that have suffered the deepest historical inequities and injustices.

Voices from diverse communities and backgrounds must have a seat at the table. This panel will be one of the many methods that Congress could use to build a bridge to a more equitable and just future for this nation. As we look to the difficult but promising work ahead that will be required to move our nation forward, I am even more resolute in my commitment to bring bold and transformative leadership to the role of House Appropriations Committee Chair in the 117th Congress.

This commitment includes addressing the challenges of racial inequality, lack of diversity, and historical and present-day injustices through the federal appropriations process.

This is a moment that we cannot afford to miss. A rare window is open for us to advance and affirm our Democratic priorities and bring equality and equity to our federal budgeting and spending process and truly adopt reforms that likely we won't see again in our lifetimes. We must step through this window before it closes. I look forward to having future conversations on this proposal, as well as on other reforms that I have discussed with many of you on how the Appropriations Committee can better assist you in meeting the needs of your district.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Debbie Wasserman Schultz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Debbie Wasserman Schultz