The Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress received the following statements of support from good governance organizations following the advancement of its latest recommendations.

**Alliance for Congress:** “While the challenges that Congress faces are great, the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress continues to lay the groundwork for a stronger, healthier, and more effective institution,” said Jeff McNichols, director of the Alliance for Congress.

"Promoting collaboration and civility through new programs such as the Congressional Leadership and Staff Academies, enhancing Congressional support services, and focusing on evidence-based policymaking are all critically important to help Members of Congress perform their jobs effectively. With a swelling partisan divide between members and dwindling public trust in the institution, this set of recommendations is more crucial than ever.

“The Alliance for Congress applauds the work of the Modernization Committee as well as the expert voices and civil society organizations who informed these latest recommendations. These targeted interventions will incentivize collaboration, improve lawmakers’ ability to pass solution-driven and evidence-based legislation, and help Congress come together on behalf of our diverse nation. We urge their swift implementation."

**Former Members of Congress:** “As a representative of hundreds of Former Members of Congress, I know these bipartisan recommendations are exactly the kind of reform our Article I Branch needs to incentivize working across the aisle, develop a more collaborative environment, and orient policymaking to be evidence based,” said Peter Weichlein, CEO of the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress. “I applaud all the hard work the Select Committee has done over the last several months to develop pragmatic recommendations that can be enacted and tangibly improve the institution of Congress. I also sincerely appreciate how open the Committee has been to the ideas of FMC and other stakeholders.”

**Congressional Management Foundation:** The Congressional Management Foundation heartily commends the House Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress on its latest set of recommendations. Like it has in the past, the Committee has not shied away from the difficult topics – and exploring how to improve collaboration and civility among Members and staff is surely a challenge. Additionally, the recommendations regarding key congressional support agencies and evidence-based policymaking, if implemented, would significantly improve the support Members and Congress and staff need to develop sound and well-researched public policy decisions.
We encourage the House of Representatives to quickly adopt these recommendations and integrate them into its practices. The very purpose of Congress is to bring together representatives of the people throughout this nation - with a myriad of interests, cultures, and outlooks - to solve common problems. Without civil relationships, productive collaboration among Members and staff, and the highest-possible quality support from Legislative Branch agencies, Congress cannot develop public policy that truly meets the needs and aspirations of the People.

To that end, CMF also urges the House and Senate to look to the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress as an example of the significant potential for civil, collaborative, evidence-based problem-solving. Its operations have served as a model for other committees of strategic planning, coordination, idea-generation, vetting, and consensus-building. In our four decades of working with Congress, CMF has rarely seen a group of legislators work so closely together to astutely assess public policy needs, analyze the implications, and chart a course that benefits both the institution and the people it serves.

The House of Representatives would be wise to quickly adopt these recommendations and continue its trajectory toward a more modern, inclusive, collaborative, and productive legislative chamber.

**Pop Vox:** We congratulate Chair Kilmer, Vice Chair Timmons, and all of the Members of the House Select Committee on Modernization on the approval of 11 new recommendations to strengthen Legislative Branch capacity and effectiveness through collaboration, expertise, technology and data.

We especially note the recommendation to establish a bipartisan, bicameral Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking to encourage and facilitate better use of data in the legislative process and recommendations clarifying legislative support agencies’ need to access federal data to advise legislators and facilitate oversight. Additional work in this area is essential to addressing the “pacing problem” whereby Congress lags the private sector — and the executive branch — in making use of updated technology and analysis to increase the accuracy and effectiveness of its work. These recommendations are an important first step in what must be a long-term commitment by the institution to fundamentally upgrade the legislative process to meet the challenges of our ever-changing world.

The ModCom continues to provide a welcome oasis of bipartisan comity and institutional foresight. These recommendations — if embraced by the committees of jurisdiction and relevant agencies — have the potential to substantively improve the institution and the quality and effectiveness of the work of the People’s House for decades to come. We commend the committee and its dedicated staff for this exceptional work.

— Marci Harris, Co-founder, POPVOX Foundation
Lincoln Policy: The House Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress is building a track record of bipartisan success with nearly two-thirds of its recommendations from the 116th Congress being enacted to date. On Wednesday, the Select Committee passed its latest series of recommendations—including several proposals that would reform the way that Congress works with the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

The Committee’s latest recommendations include the following that are related to GAO and other Congressional support agencies:

These recommendations will require action by other Committees and the House of Representatives as a whole. But the Modernization Committee’s bipartisan support for strengthening GAO highlights the strong interest among lawmakers to leverage nonpartisan oversight to improve governance.

In October, Lincoln Network’s Head of Policy, Zach Graves, testified before the Modernization Committee about this opportunity and urged several of these reforms:

The Modernization Committee’s recommendations to authorize the STAA, for example, would be an important step to ensuring that GAO moves forward using these new technologies to modernize oversight while also providing valuable advice to Congress to strengthen its science and technology capacity.

In addition, the Modernization Committee’s recommendation to require an annual report from the Comptroller General estimating the cost of unimplemented recommendations would have the potential to spur significant cost savings. Since 2010, GAO has annually reported on opportunities for the government to address duplication across federal programs and achieve cost savings. This work has resulted in $429 billion in savings between 2011 and 2019, according to GAO’s recent estimate.

Congress’s watchdog reports that “tens of billions more” savings could be achieved if currently open recommendations were implemented. But exactly how much could federal agencies save if they implemented the more than 4,600 currently open recommendations? An annual report to Congress estimating the potential cost savings would be valuable information for Congress to require agencies to implement GAO’s reforms. The House Appropriations Committee requested a similar report in report language accompanying the legislative branch funding bill earlier this year.

The Modernization Committee’s recommendation to require GAO to provide legislative options to Congress each year could also spur constructive legislative reforms to improve governance. While GAO has an impressive track record of seeing its recommendations implemented,
Congress and federal agencies could do more to act on the watchdog’s nonpartisan oversight findings in a timely manner. For example, a quarter of GAO’s recommendations are generally not implemented within four years and many of the issues on GAO’s current high-risk list were first identified in the 1990s. Providing annual legislative options for Congress could be a good starting point for legislative reforms to address these challenge areas.

While much more must be done to ensure that Congress can fulfill its responsibilities under Article I of the Constitution, these recommendations and the broader work of the Modernization Committee are important steps forward.