

# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT





# TWENTYTWENTY

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Dear Neighbor,

As we reach the end of this year, and the end of the 116th Congress, I am glad to share with you an Annual Report on the work I have done as your representative to the United States Congress.



2020 has been an eventful and historic year. The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly affected all of us in many ways. In Congress, I have worked with my colleagues from both sides of the aisle, as well as with our local and state leaders, to protect the health, security, and well-being of our community and our country. At the same time, my team and I have continued to work on other matters of importance to our community—from our health care to our economy to our infrastructure.

As the 116th Congress comes to a close, I am optimistic about the possibilities for the 117th Congress. Over the last two years, I took nearly 700 votes, more than 80 percent of which were overwhelmingly bipartisan. I cosponsored more than 200 bills and introduced thirteen original bills and eleven amendments. I hosted town halls and roundtable discussions—in person, on the telephone, and online—on important matters including coronavirus, flooding, health care, prescription drug prices, and small business concerns. My team and I have assisted more than 3,400 constituents with matters before federal agencies and we have participated in more than 2,400 meetings with constituents and their advocates.

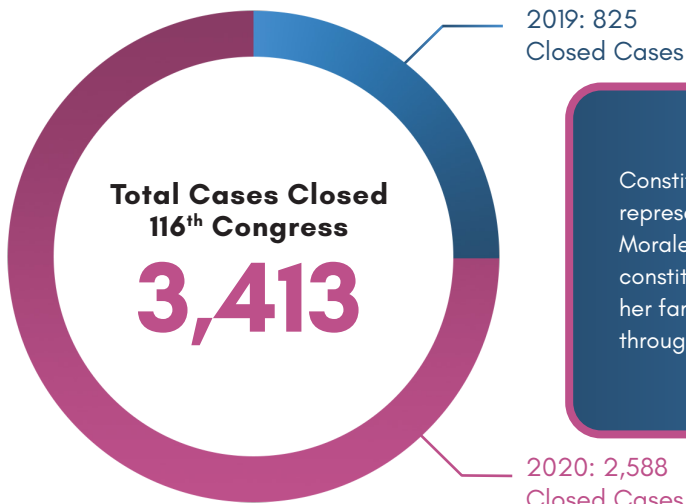
I am grateful for the partnership of people across our community in these efforts. And I am proud to take the voice of our community to the Congress.

Best wishes,

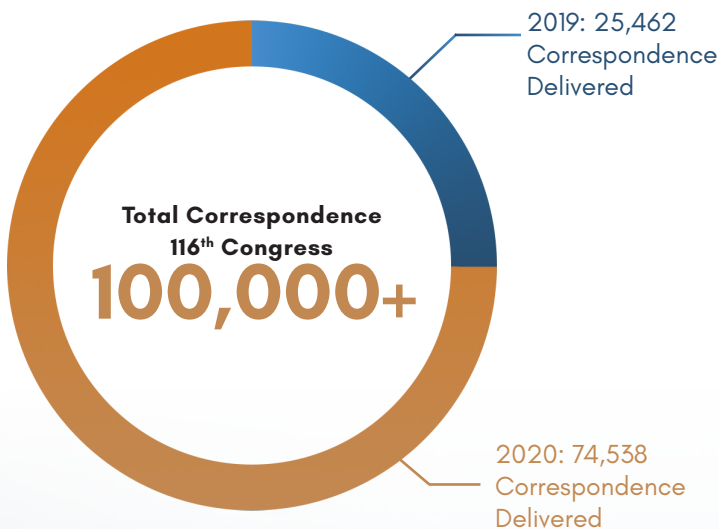
Handwritten signature of Lizzy Hefner

# AT WORK IN HOUSTON

Prior to COVID-19, my team and I held in-person constituent meetings, town halls, and roundtables. Starting in March, we have continued our work online and over the phone, holding telephone town halls and community conversations that focus on the issues our community faces, including prescription drugs, COVID-19, and small business relief as well as virtual meetings and roundtable discussions.



Constituent Services representative Claudia Morales assisted this constituent in obtaining her family's service medals through Veterans Affairs.



## By the Numbers

**4,822**

Phone calls received during COVID-19 on matters other than casework

**\$187,123,544**

Federal grant dollars returned to the district

**\$380,462.78**

Federal dollars returned to constituents through IRS, Social Security Administration, and Veterans Affairs





## 2020 Roundtables

- Prescription Drugs
- Carbon Capture
- Restaurants
- Energy Corridor
- Hurricane Harvey
- Small Business



Meeting with Bellaire HS students, January 2020

## Constituent Meetings

# 2,402

## 2020 Events for the Community

### In Person

- TX-07 Town Hall: City of Jersey Village, January 25, 2020
- Across the Aisles: Copperfield Kroger, February 17, 2020
- Community Conversation on Health Care: Memorial Drive United Methodist Church, February 19, 2020

### Telephone Town Halls

- COVID-19 Telephone Town Hall, March 16, 2020
- COVID-19 Telephone Town Hall, March 26, 2020
- COVID-19 Telephone Town Hall, April 9, 2020
- COVID-19 Telephone Town Hall with Dr. Peter Hotez, April 22, 2020
- COVID-19 Telephone Town Hall with Dr. Umair Shah, Marvin Odum, and Rep. Armando Walle, May 12, 2020
- TX-07 Mid-Year Telephone Town Hall, June 24, 2020
- COVID-19 Telephone Town Hall, July 26, 2020
- TX-07 Telephone Town Hall, August 31, 2020
- TX-07 Telephone Town Hall on the Buffalo Bayou and Tributaries Resiliency Study Interim Report, November 15, 2020
- Year-End Telephone Town Hall, December 16, 2020

### Webinars

- SBA Loan Webinar, April 3, 2020
- SBA Loan Webinar, April 8, 2020
- SBA Loan Webinar, April 17, 2020
- SBA Loan Webinar, April 28, 2020
- SBA Loan Forgiveness Webinar, August 4, 2020



Community Conversation on Health Care, February 2020



Across the Aisles in Copperfield, February 2020

A continuing list of our office's events is available at:  
[fletcher.house.gov/Events](https://fletcher.house.gov/Events)



TX-07 Town Hall in Jersey Village, January 2020



# SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19

## WORKING A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY

In response to local and national health guidance, I closed our offices for in-person meetings in March. Our staff in Washington and Houston has worked remotely. We continue to vote on legislation, but the U.S. Capitol has been closed to most visitors and how we do our work has changed, as it has for so many. I have been so pleased to see how effectively we have been able to do the district's work while adjusting to new ways of doing it.

I have held virtual rather than in-person meetings throughout the pandemic and had lots of telephone calls. Our telephone town hall meetings with local leaders and public health officials and experts, including Dr. Umair Shah (Harris County), Dr. David Persse (City of Houston), Dr. Peter Hotez (Baylor/TCH), have been very well attended. We also connected constituents with the Small Business Administration Houston Office, hosting five EIDL/PPP webinars. We have had roundtable discussions and individual meetings over Zoom. And our constituent services team has worked around the clock to solve problems.

## LETTERS AND LEGISLATION

Throughout the pandemic, my colleagues and I have advocated for our communities' priorities to be included in legislation that responds to the magnitude of this crisis. With the shift to virtual work, much of this work involved sending letters to House and Senate leaders, as well as the administration, identifying priorities and needs as we heard them in our districts. Focused on relief for our neighbors, I worked with them to introduce the [bipartisan LIFT UP Act](#) to extend CARES Act debt forgiveness for businesses in our community with Hurricane Harvey-related loans. I also introduced the [Protecting the PPP Act](#) to ensure that small business owners with forgiven Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans are also eligible to receive tax deductions for wages and other expenses paid during the period of the loan. And I introduced the [Stop COVID-19 Test Surprise Medical Bills Act of 2020](#), legislation to end surprise medical billing for COVID-19 tests and to ensure anyone can get one without having to pay. I am glad to report that many of our community's priorities are reflected in the legislation that Congress passed.

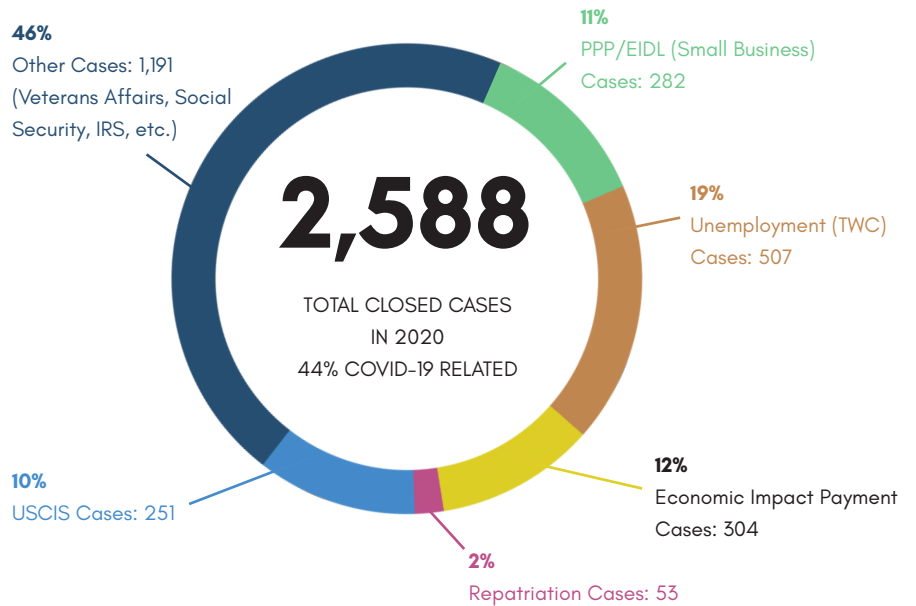
## RESOURCES

- [COVID-19 Community Resource Guide](#)
- [COVID-19 Community Resources Webpage](#)
- [Small Business Resource Guide](#)



## CASEWORK

**COVID-19 related casework represents more than 44% of all cases closed by TX-07 staff in 2020.** Constituents who own and manage businesses in our region asked for assistance in working with the Small Business Administration on Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) and the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP); those facing unemployment called on our staff to help get in contact with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC); those who had trouble obtaining their Congressionally mandated Economic Impact Payments (EIP) called in for help with the IRS; and those abroad whose flights were canceled during the early months of the pandemic called on our staff to help them get home.



## MAJOR COVID-19 LEGISLATION PASSED

**H.R. 5074, the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act**, an emergency response funding package totaling \$8.3 billion, including:

- \$3 billion to develop treatments and a coronavirus vaccine;
- \$2.2 billion in public health funding for prevention, preparedness, and response measures;
- protecting public health by allowing Medicare providers to extend telemedicine services to seniors; and
- protecting against price gouging; and supporting small businesses affected by the epidemic.

**H.R. 6201, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act**, to bolster the federal government's response to the pandemic and address its impacts on Americans' health and economic security by:

- providing free coronavirus testing for everyone who needs a test, including the uninsured;
- increasing funding for Medicaid to support local health systems;
- providing emergency paid sick leave to millions of workers and reimbursing small businesses for providing leave; and
- enhancing unemployment insurance.

**S. 3548, the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act**, to provide meaningful relief for health care providers on the front lines of this crisis, hospitals and health care systems, individuals, businesses, and our first responders on the front lines of this crisis. The bill includes:

- Direct payments to American families of up to \$1,200 for adults and \$500 per child under the age of 17;
- \$377 billion to provide relief for small businesses, making payroll, rent, mortgage, and utility costs eligible for SBA loan forgiveness; and
- \$150 billion to state and local governments to help pay for new expenses related to COVID-19 response, including an estimated \$11 billion in funding to Texas.

**H.R. 133 Omnibus Appropriations and Emergency Coronavirus Relief.** Congress attached emergency COVID-19 relief as a part of the year-end omnibus spending bill, to provide (as of this publishing):

- \$600 Economic Impact Payments per adult and child;
- \$300 per week of Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits for millions out of work, averting expiration of benefits;
- \$284 billion for a new and second-round of Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans; a simplified loan forgiveness process for PPP loans under \$150,000; and
- \$20 billion for targeted EIDL grants of \$10,000;
- \$13 billion in increased SNAP and child nutrition benefits to help relieve the hunger crisis; and
- \$25 billion for rental assistance and an extension of the eviction moratorium.

# WORKING IN WASHINGTON

## COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

### House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

- Vice Chair, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management
- Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials
- Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment

### House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

- Chair, Subcommittee on Energy
- Subcommittee on Environment



January 15 — I chaired the Science, Space, & Technology Energy Subcommittee Hearing, "The Department of Energy's Office of Science: Exploring the Next Frontiers in Energy Research and Scientific Discovery."



March 5 — Dr. Peter Hotez, Dean at Baylor College of Medicine and Co-Director of Texas Children's Hospital Center for Vaccine Development, testified before the Science, Space, and Technology Committee about coronaviruses.



Prior to COVID-19 restrictions, I met with constituents and groups on Capitol Hill. Those meetings continue now in virtual settings.  
*Pictured: Multiple Sclerosis Society advocates.*



Taking a minute between votes at the Capitol to remind Texans to #MaskUp with my colleague from Dallas, Congressman Colin Allred.

## LEGISLATIVE OVERVIEW

116<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS

LED:

**24** BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS  
**11** AMENDMENTS

CO-SPONSORED:

**266** BILLS  
**76%** BIPARTISAN

VOTES:

**693** TOTAL  
**95%** BIPARTISAN  
**83%** OVERWHELMINGLY BIPARTISAN  
(More than 2/3 in the House voting in favor)

[Click here](#) to learn more.

## CAUCUS AND TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP

- New Democrat Coalition
  - Co-Chair, Task Force on Trade
  - Health Care Task Force
- Natural Gas Caucus, Co-Chair
- Access to Legal Aid Caucus
- Animal Protection Caucus
- Asian Pacific American Caucus
- Black Maternal Health Caucus
- Corrosion Prevention Caucus
- Diabetes Caucus
- Energy Export Caucus
- Equality Caucus
- Gun Violence Prevention Task Force
- Humanities Caucus
- NASA Caucus
- Oceans Caucus
- Oil and Gas Caucus
- PFAS Task Force
- PORTS Caucus
- Pro Choice Caucus
- Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency Caucus
- Small Brewers Caucus
- Sportsmen Caucus
- Task Force for Combating Antisemitism
- Venezuela Democracy Caucus
- Voting Rights Caucus



# Protecting Health Care During the Pandemic

As a member of the New Democrat Coalition, I serve on its Health Care Task Force, working with fellow members to strengthen the Affordable Care Act, build on its successes, address its deficiencies and gaps, and improve access to and affordability of quality, affordable health care for all Americans.



With panelists at the Community Conversation on Health Care, February 2020

**Problem: People are struggling to afford health care coverage and the prescription drugs that they need.**

**Solution:** The House passed H.R. 1425, **Patient Protection and Affordable Care Enhancement Act**, which puts a cap on insurance premiums, expands eligibility for insurance subsidies, and provides incentives for states that have not expanded Medicaid to do so. I was glad to support and vote in favor of this bill, which also drives down the costs of prescription drugs by giving Medicare the power to negotiate directly with the drug companies and creating incentives for drug companies to agree to price reductions.

**Problem: The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) proposed a new rule, the Medicaid Fiscal Accountability Rule, that would have cost Texas hospitals \$11 billion Medicaid payments just in 2020 alone – leading to increased state and local taxes to replace the lost funding.**

**Solution:** When the rule was proposed, I immediately led a bipartisan letter with my Texas colleagues opposing this plan. I also introduced **H.R. 6521, which prohibited CMS from implementing the proposed rule for two years after the COVID-19 public health emergency ended to provide additional relief for hospitals during this time.** Following these efforts, CMS announced that it was withdrawing the rule from its regulatory agenda.

In October, I was [glad to announce](#) \$1 million in federal funding for The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research at Memorial Hermann (TIRR) to support the Independent Living Research Utilization program (ILRU).

"The Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU) Program at TIRR Memorial Hermann is grateful to receive this grant..." said Rhonda Abbott, Interim Senior Vice President and CEO of TIRR Memorial Hermann. "This commitment continues the legacy of advocacy work that forms the foundation of TIRR Memorial Hermann."

Federal Grant Awarded

# \$1 Million

to allow ILRU to continue its mission during the pandemic, providing social services for people with disabilities and older adults to lead independent lives in their communities.

for the **Independent Living Research Utilization program (ILRU) at the Institute for Rehabilitation and Research at Memorial Hermann (TIRR-MH)**

CONGRESSWOMAN  
**LIZZIE FLETCHER**

# Improving our Infrastructure

In Congress, I serve on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee in order to address our community's flood mitigation and surface transportation challenges.



Previewing METRO's new Uptown Silver Line Bus Rapid Transit, August 2020

**Problem: In Houston, aging infrastructure negatively impacts our community's ability to endure major flooding events.**

**Solution:** I secured several bipartisan amendments to H.R. 7095, the **INVEST (Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation) in America Act**. These amendments help improve infrastructure resiliency of our bridges and utilities, expand federal support for natural gas and propane as alternative fuels, and ensure high-speed rail projects can secure necessary funding.

**Problem:** Texas is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Damage from Hurricane Harvey cost an estimated \$125 billion, and costs from other severe weather-related disasters are expected to rise in the years ahead. **Our infrastructure needs to be more resilient to withstand strong storms.**

**Solution:** I introduced H.R. 5994, the **Built to Last Act**, to direct the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to make climate change data available to standards-developing organizations (SDOs). Most SDOs, which set infrastructure standards, only look at historic data, but do not use climate change information. This bill would help make sure that forward-looking meteorological information is used in standard-setting, which informs how building codes and design standards are implemented across the country.

**Problem: Current law requires local and state agencies to apply for and receive federal funds before beginning disaster recovery projects.** Purchasing the land or starting construction without an application response disqualifies the project from receiving federal assistance. This prevents important recovery projects from starting as quickly as possible.

**Solution:** I introduced H.R. 2548, the **Hazard Eligibility and Local Projects (HELP) Act**, to eliminate this restriction and allow certain disaster mitigation projects to begin without the risk of losing potential federal funds. It passed the House on December 17, 2019 and was introduced in the Senate in February by a bipartisan group of Senators. Following Hurricane Laura, I [renewed my call](#) for the Senate to pass this bill to get Gulf Coast communities—and communities across the country—the help they need.







Unveiling the Moving Forward Framework with House Leadership and colleagues on the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, January 2020

**Problem:** We rely on our infrastructure to take us to work, to support local and international businesses as they trade through the Port of Houston, and to keep our communities and cities safe from flooding. **As the Gulf Coast Region continues to face severe weather events and natural disasters, we must prioritize resilient and effective infrastructure that supports our growing region.**

**Solution:** As a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I added several provisions to H.R. 7575, the bipartisan **Water Resources Development Act of 2020**, that would invest in Houston’s water infrastructure and improve flood protection projects in the Houston region and across the country.

These provisions secured authorization for the Port of Houston Expansion Channel Improvement Project; mandated a new federal study to uncover gaps in flood management coordination between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and other agencies; and increased the federal share of local natural infrastructure projects designed to increase resiliency. It passed Congress in December.

**Problem:** After Hurricane Harvey, many Texans took out loans through the Small Business Administration (SBA) for disaster recovery with the understanding that the loans would not disqualify them from additional grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). **But a "duplication of benefits" rule disqualified their grant applications, and although the rule changed in June 2019, no funding was appropriated to remedy this error.**

**Solution:** I worked with my colleague Representative Dan Crenshaw (TX-02) to **introduce an amendment to provide \$45 million in additional relief for households impacted by Hurricane Harvey.** The amendment passed the House as part of disaster supplemental legislation in February 2020.

### Second Annual Hurricane Harvey Round Table



# Keeping Houston the Energy Capital of the World

In January, I was elected Chair of the Subcommittee on Energy of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, where I have called hearings to explore the Department of Energy's role in scientific discovery and the importance of advancing the commercialization of new energy technologies.



**Problem:** Carbon capture technology has the potential to be a game-changer in decreasing greenhouse emissions. Local businesses developing carbon-capture technology are relying on federal tax credits (45Q carbon capture and sequestration tax credits) to make substantial investments, but **many businesses are currently unable to receive the full benefit of these credits, slowing down investment in critical research and development of these technologies.**

**Solution:** I introduced H.R. 7896, the **Redeeming Effectiveness to Carbon Oxide Utilization Plus Sequestration (RECOUPS) Act** of 2020, a bipartisan bill to provide a direct-pay option for Section 45Q tax credits for carbon capture and sequestration.

**Problem:** People are concerned about the safety of nearly 2.5 million miles of pipeline across the country, but outdated regulations prevent efficient testing of new safety technologies.

**Solution:** I introduced the **Pipeline Safety Pilot Program Act**, which establishes a pilot program for pipeline safety enhancement at the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA). This will allow testing of cutting-edge pipeline safety technologies in real-world applications.

**Problem:** The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, signed into law in 2017, implemented a Net Operating Loss provision that penalized businesses whose accounting cycles do not line up with the tax year.

**Solution:** I introduced a bipartisan bill with Congressman David Schweikert and Congressman Brendan Boyle to **correct this technical error and help businesses complete their taxes fairly.** Our local businesses can now better use their tax cuts to strengthen our economy, create jobs, and invest in their businesses. [This saved local businesses in the energy industry billions of dollars.](#)



# Leading on Issues Important to Our Community



At my local post office, August 2020

**Problem:** Postmaster Louis DeJoy instituted operational and procedural changes to USPS to reduce overtime, restrict extra mail transporting trips, reduce the number and use of processing equipment at mail processing plants, and test new mail sorting and delivery policies at post offices across the country – **limiting the effectiveness and accuracy of our country's mail delivery system at a critical time.**

**Solution:** I signed multiple letters to Postmaster DeJoy calling for a reversal of these detrimental policies, coordination with election offices to ensure on-time ballot delivery, and increased transparency over operational changes at USPS. In addition, I co-sponsored H.R. 8015, the **Delivering for America Act**, to prohibit USPS from implementing any changes to operations that would impede prompt, reliable, and efficient service.

Requests from constituents to support the Postal Service was one of the top issues of 2020.



Celebrating Juneteenth and Co-Sponsorship of H.R. 7232, June 2020

I co-sponsored H.R. 7232 to **establish Juneteenth as a federal holiday** and led its introduction with my colleague Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee.



Delivering Valentines to Veterans at DeBakey VA, February 2020

**Problem:** SkillBridge is a job training program that connects members of the armed services who are transitioning out of service to technical industry training, apprenticeships, and internships. Currently, service members must complete a SkillBridge program within 180 days before discharge or release from active duty. **Once members are released from duty, they cannot continue with the program, limiting the number of options that service members have when applying to apprenticeships and other job training through this program.**

**Solution:** I introduced H.R. 7453, the **Skillbridge Extension Act**, which alters the eligibility requirements for the program so that service members who enroll in a program that extends beyond their discharge or release will remain eligible to complete the training, ensuring additional opportunities for service members.



Celebrating Harris County's naming of the Deputy Dhalival Memorial Tollway, October 2020

H.R. 5317, the **Deputy Sandeep Singh Dhalival Post Office Act**, passed both the House and Senate and was signed into law by the President on December 21, 2020.

Read more about legislation I have introduced, co-sponsored, and supported [on my website](#).



**Houston Office**

5599 San Felipe Road, Suite 950  
Houston, Texas 77056  
Phone (713) 353-8680

**Washington, D.C. Office**

119 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20003  
Phone (202) 225-2571

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