



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

TERRI A. SEWELL
7TH DISTRICT, ALABAMA

December 14, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
H-232, United States Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader of the Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Speaker Ryan and Leader McConnell:

My home state of Alabama recently held a special election to fill the United States Senate seat vacated by United States Attorney General Jeff Sessions. Since Sessions' appointment on February 8, 2017, Alabama has been represented by an unelected appointee, Sen. Luther Strange, who has taken 258 votes in the Senate, including consequential and structural changes to the tax code, sweeping changes to the healthcare system, and lifetime appointments of federal judges. Voters in the state of Alabama have gone without full elected representation in the Senate for 307 days.

On December 12, 2017, Alabama voters elected Doug Jones to fill the Senate seat vacated nearly a year ago and to manage any legislative activity currently before Congress. I trust that you understand the importance of having this duly elected voice representing Alabama in the Senate as Congress considers deeply impactful legislation on issues ranging from taxes to healthcare.

It was Leader Mitch McConnell who in 2010 urged the Senate to halt the legislative process related to the Affordable Care Act until a newly elected Senator could be seated after a special election in Massachusetts. At the time he said, "The best thing we can do is stop this bill and to start over on a truly bipartisan basis and get it right." We are urging a similar approach to the tax reform effort before Congress.

Tax legislation that would fundamentally revamp the federal tax code has been rushed through the legislative process without public input, written behind closed doors. As analysts have said it is "riddled with bugs, loopholes and other potential problems that could plague lawmakers long after their legislation is signed into law."

In light of the tax reform process that has brought us to this point, and the response of voters in the state of Alabama, I strongly urge you to delay further consideration of this package until Senator-elect Doug Jones is sworn in.

Sincerely,

Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress