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katherineclark.house.gov



KATHERINE M. CLARK
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
5TH DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS

January 11, 2022

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The Honorable William J. Walker
Sergeant at Arms
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear General Walker,

I write today regarding the enforcement of House rules prohibiting Members from entering the House Chamber without wearing a mask.

House Resolution 38 requires your office to utilize authority under House Rule II, clause 3(g) to impose a \$500 fine for the first offense and \$2,500 fine for the second offense to any Member who fails to wear a mask on the House floor. These rules are designed to help minimize the spread of COVID-19.

Unfortunately, these fines have proven insufficient to prevent some Members from repeatedly violating this commonsense rule. In fact, two House members alone have accumulated more than \$100,000 in fines over the last year. This callous disregard for House rules endangers the health of Members of Congress and the professional staff whose physical presence is required to ensure continuity of government. This has only become more urgent with the emergence of the highly contagious Omicron variant and what the Attending Physician describes as "unprecedented number of cases in the Capitol community."

That is why, in addition to imposing fines, I am requesting that your office begin requiring Members who fail to comply with this rule to attend the House floor from the isolation boxes in the House Gallery. These boxes were designed to minimize the risk of exposure to quarantined Members, yet those who refuse to mask pose the same or higher risk of exposing individuals around them to COVID. This commonsense step will not only protect our dedicated House staff from Members who refuse to follow House rules, but it will also allow those Members to continue to fulfill their constitutional duty to vote on matters before the House.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I sincerely appreciate the diligence you have shown working to protect the health and safety of the House community since your appointment and I look forward to continuing that work with you in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katherine M. Clark".

Katherine Clark
Assistant Speaker of the House