

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 9, 2020

The Honorable Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Krishnamoorthi:

I write regarding your letter of August 13, 2020, inviting Peter Navarro, Assistant to the President for Trade and Manufacturing Policy, to testify at a hearing of the Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy on September 16, 2020. In accordance with long-standing Executive Branch precedent that presidential advisers generally do not testify in Congress, we respectfully decline the invitation to make Mr. Navarro available for testimony before the Subcommittee.

As you know, administrations of both political parties have consistently declined to make members of the White House staff available to testify before congressional committees and subcommittees, a practice that is rooted in the constitutional separation of powers. *See Testimonial Immunity Before Congress of the Former Counsel to the President*, 43 Op. O.L.C. \_\_\_, \*2 (May 20, 2019) (“[T]he White House has opposed sending senior advisers to testify for almost as long as there has been an Executive Office of the President.”); *see also id.* at \*8–12 (discussing multiple instances since 1948 in which presidential advisers declined to appear); Letter from Robert F. Bauer, Counsel to the President, to Darrell E. Issa, Chairman, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (June 16, 2011) (“White House staff generally do not testify before Congress.”) (Obama Administration declined invitations for Counsel to the President and former Director of the White House Office of Political Affairs); Letter from Lloyd N. Cutler, Counsel to the President, to Samuel S. Stratton, Chairman, Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Armed Services (Sept. 30, 1980) (“Congress has always respected the privilege of the President to decline requests that the President himself or his immediate White House advisers appear to testify before Congressional committees.”) (Carter Administration declined invitation for Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs).

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Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter further.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael M. Purpura". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" and the last name "Purpura" being the most prominent parts.

Michael M. Purpura  
*Deputy Counsel to the President*

cc: The Honorable Michael Cloud, Ranking Member