
**STATEMENT BEFORE THE HOUSE
APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
ON THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH
ON THE OFFICE OF THE CLERK, FY2019**

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Chairman Yoder and Ranking Member Ryan, Members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify about the operations of the Office of the Clerk.

HOUSE OPERATIONS

From the introduction of new bills on the House Floor to the presentment of enrolled bills to the White House for signature by the President, our office is integral to the legislative process. As you know, the Clerk's Office is a nonpartisan organization that provides the procedural assistance and support necessary for the orderly conduct of official business of the House of Representatives, its Members, and Committees. We work to ensure the integrity of the legislative process while continually seeking to improve public access to House and Committee proceedings.

Support for Legislative Proceedings

The Clerk's Office supports the legislative process from introduction to engrossment and presentment. The bill clerks process all bills and resolutions when they are introduced. The tally clerks record all Floor votes cast through the Electronic Voting System (EVS) and manually in the Well of the House, maintain the *House Calendar*, and process all Committee reports filed with the House. The journal clerks produce the constitutionally mandated *Journal of the House of Representatives* and handle all Presidential Messages.

When bills and resolutions pass the House, the enrolling clerks prepare the official text for transmission to the Senate or the White House. Along with their more visible duties of announcing pending business on the Floor, the reading clerks deliver bills and messages to the Senate. Our staff is hard at work whenever the House is in session—day or night—supporting the work of the House of Representatives.

In addition to supporting the House's Floor operations, the Clerk's Office is responsible for making the proceedings of the House easily accessible to the public and Members alike. The Clerk's Office hosts the publicly available website, *Bills to be Considered*, at <http://docs.house.gov>. This site is the central source for all legislation scheduled to be considered on the Floor each week.

Our staff maintains and updates the online summary of Floor proceedings, including information on pending legislation and votes taken, on our website at <http://clerk.house.gov>. The Clerk's Office also maintains live and archived video of all House Floor proceedings at <http://HouseLive.gov> and provides closed-captioning services to ensure that House proceedings are accessible to all. Our official reporters transcribe Floor debate from gavel to gavel. We provide these transcripts along with other legislative data to

the Government Publishing Office, which makes them available the next day online and in print in the *Congressional Record*. The Clerk's Office also makes daily updates to the bill summary information at Congress.gov.

Electronic Voting Station Upgrade

The Clerk's Office is actively testing the next generation of electronic voting stations this year and plans to install the updated system in the House Chamber by the end of the August recess.

The new EVS vote stations include all new internal components, a new LED display, a new card reader, and braille lettering under the Yea (Y), Nay (N), and Present (P) buttons to accommodate Members who are visually impaired. We have conducted extensive testing of the new units in preparation for installation and final checks. The Chief Administrative Officer Cabinet Shop is also putting the finishing touches on new wooden enclosures made for these stations. Switching to the new vote stations will require issuing new voting cards to all Members upon their return from August recess.

Support for Committee Operations

In addition to supporting the legislative work of the House on the Floor, the Clerk's Office supports the work of House Committees. The official reporters provide reporting services for all Committee markups, hearings, and depositions as well as for many investigative interviews. These services remain subject to the potential for increased demand as a result of expanded deposition authority or oversight needs.

Over the past three years, the Clerk's Office has made significant improvements to *Reports to be Made to Congress*, a document required to be published at the beginning of each session of Congress. This document lists all of the reports that any government agency is required by law to submit to Congress. Most recently, we collaborated with the Library of Congress to make the Executive Communications and Requirements data sets available on Congress.gov. This addition is a further enhancement to the interface and search capabilities of the system and follows earlier work to link reports received to their corresponding statutory requirements.

The Clerk's Office develops and maintains the Committee Repository website at <http://docs.house.gov>. This online portal enables the public to track hearing and markup schedules, meeting notices, testimony, truth-in-testimony disclosures, opening statements, legislative text and amendments, and recorded votes. The House has made great progress in increasing the transparency of Committee proceedings, and the Clerk's Office is proud to support that effort.

Support for Members

The Capitol Service Groups maintain the Lindy Claiborne Boggs Congressional Women's Reading Room, the Members and Family Committee Room, and the Congressional Prayer Room, which are near the House Chamber and provide spaces for rest and reflection.

The House Library provides research services for legislative staff of Members and Committees. The Library offers an online portal with comprehensive guides to legislative research topics and regular training through our House Learning Center partners.

The Office of House Employment Counsel provides House employing offices with legal counsel and training on employment matters, including family and medical leave, disabilities law, labor standards, workplace safety, and other matters arising under the Congressional Accountability Act.

Operation of Vacant Offices

Under the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Clerk becomes the employing and certifying authority when a vacancy occurs, and we work with the remaining staff to continue the Office's operations and provide constituent services until a successor is elected. The Clerk's Office has managed twelve vacant offices to date this Congress.

Website Redesign

The Clerk's Office has made several Alpha releases of our new redesigned website, available at <https://clerkpreview.house.gov>. The new homepage highlights House Floor activity and provides easy access to vital legislative information in a user friendly, responsive, and modern design. We have added new features, such as a public vote search page, and updated nine other pages, including those with Member and Committee Profiles. We anticipate other updates, including a new search page, through the end of 2018.

Greater Accessibility and Inclusion

During the last August recess, the Clerk's Office assisted the Architect of the Capitol with the installation of permanent platforms for wheelchair access to the two Leadership table microphones on each side of the Chamber. In October, the Clerk and the Committee on House Administration awarded a new, three-year, closed-captioning contract for televised House Floor proceedings. For July to December, the vendor provided captioning with an accuracy rate of 99.73%.

ARCHIVES, ART, AND HISTORY OF THE HOUSE

The Office of Art and Archives within the Clerk's Office curates the House Collection of fine art and artifacts, processes House and Committee records and oversees their eventual safe transfer to the National Archives, advises Members on their congressional papers, and provides informational services concerning House's records, art, and history.

Archives

The Clerk's Office is responsible for preserving the House's archived records. Our professional archivists help Committees to comply with their archival obligations and to research and retrieve records in their archives.

Since 2016, the Clerk's Office has showcased a searchable selection of official House records at <http://history.house.gov/Collection/Search/>. The Records Search collection illustrates the institution's work, its responses to issues of the day, and its relationship with the public and other branches of government. Highlighted records include documents from all 50 states as well as the District of Columbia and the territories, petitions and memorials, correspondence with Members, certificates of election, hearing transcripts, and maps and charts. We pair each record with a brief description that provides context and links to related material. Most recently, we added materials from all standing Committees as well as material from some special and select Committees.

Art and History

The curatorial staff of the Clerk's Office is responsible for preserving the historical art and artifacts in the House collection and for making it accessible to the public. Our History, Art & Archives website at <http://history.house.gov> continues to enhance our ability to bring the history of the House to the American people even if they are unable to visit the Capitol in person. The website offers a broad selection of material about the history and collections of the House. With sections on the Institution, People, Exhibitions and Publications, Collections, Oral History, Education, and Records and Research, the website is a tremendous resource for the public and educators.

In addition to its public outreach efforts and its ongoing work with the permanent collections, the curatorial staff also manages several exhibitions throughout the House. We look forward to the opening of two new exhibitions in the near future. The first is a special exhibition of artifacts about the Congressional Baseball Game, from its beginnings as a casual game among colleagues in 1909 to the substantial charitable event of today. Ahead of

the 2018 game, we will display some of these artifacts and historical photographs in the Capitol for the first time.

The second will be a significant new exhibition in the Cannon basement rotunda, which is a major hub of the House campus. We are preparing to enrich the space with permanent displays of objects of interest to Members, staff, and constituents. Development is underway on “The House at Work/Work in the House,” with images and artifacts—from 1800s Chamber desks to first-generation BlackBerrys—that tell the story of the work that has gone on here for more than 200 years.

The Office has also taken several initiatives to highlight the historic contributions of Members. In October, we opened an exhibition on the third floor of the Capitol exploring the history of women Members through the gallery passes they issued to constituents. The exhibition coincides with the significant milestone the House marked recently when Representative Marcy Kaptur became the longest-serving woman in Congress. We were pleased to support the observation of this accomplishment. The Historian is also producing a book on Asian and Pacific Islanders in Congress to complete the series that already includes *Women in Congress*, *Black Americans in Congress*, and *Hispanic Americans in Congress*.

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE SERVICES

By law and the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Clerk’s Office is charged with providing public disclosure information that helps preserve the integrity and increase the transparency of the legislative process. Our Legislative Resource Center manages the filing and retention of this information and responds to public inquiries regarding the legislative activities of the current Congress.

Financial Disclosure

The Clerk’s Office administers the filing of and public access to all financial disclosure forms and periodic transaction reports submitted by House Members, Officers, candidates, and senior House staff as well as disclosures filed by employees of the Capitol Police, Library of Congress, Government Publishing Office, Botanic Gardens, and Congressional Budget Office. We maintain the online filing system for these reports and work closely with the Ethics Committee to continue to improve both the filing system and public access to the records on our website. We have seen a steady increase in electronic filings since the system was implemented—from 68% in 2013 to 85% in 2017.

Lobbying Disclosure

The Clerk's Office continues to support the lobbying disclosure filing system in coordination with the Secretary of the Senate, who shares responsibility for administering the filing requirements of the Lobbying Disclosure Act. We make these filings available online in a searchable, sortable, and downloadable format. To ensure compliance with the act by filers, the Office periodically emails general reminders to approximately 14,000 registrants before deadlines and sends tailored follow-up notices after due dates. The general updates include informational and explanatory material for filers and other interested parties. As an example, the April 2018 update reviewed the meaning and requirements of "covered positions" during prior government service which must be disclosed under the law. To assist filers, the Office also regularly reviews its Guidance to filers and updates it as warranted. The Guidance is available online at <https://lobbyingdisclosure.house.gov>.

BUDGET REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019

We appreciate the Subcommittee's ongoing support for the operations of the Office of the Clerk. For the upcoming fiscal year, we respectfully request \$28,305,000 to carry out our existing and new responsibilities to the House. The request is \$360,000, or 1.29%, above the FY18 enacted funding level provided in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018.

During our internal budget formulation process for FY19, we reviewed all programs and thoroughly scrubbed each one to exclude all nonrecurring costs. Throughout the Clerk's organization, we identified and mapped future services support and projects based on operational needs and stakeholder feedback. We reallocated the "nonrecurring costs" funding for anticipated costs and planned services, support, and projects. The request also includes additional personnel funding for projected cost-of-living adjustments, anticipated longevities, and the filling of crucial vacant positions and new requirements. These amounts would fund the diverse ongoing activities of the Office of the Clerk I have described as well as the following special priorities and points of emphasis in the year ahead.

Comparative Print Implementation

The Clerk's Office is continuing to work with the Office of the Legislative Counsel and the Law Revision Counsel to improve and develop the systems necessary to comply with the new House rule on comparative prints. Revised House Rule XXI now requires comparative prints showing proposed changes from current law, as well as changes to the text reported by Committees to be made available before Floor consideration.

The goal of the Comparative Print Project is to provide comparative prints in PDF format for posting online to meet the requirements of the new House rule. We worked with two contractors to complete the initial work. The first contractor augmented the existing Ramseyer toolset to create a stand-alone document consistent with the provisions of clause 12(a) of House Rule XXI, which requires a comparison to current law. We released the tool into production before the December 31, 2017, deadline date and completed updates on February 9, 2018.

The second vendor created a new web solution that generates a comparative print document in HTML and PDF consistent with the provisions of clause 12(b) of House Rule XXI, which requires a comparison to certain Committee reported text. We also put this program in use before the December 31 deadline, but we continue to adjust it as new use cases arise. This web-based solution will become the foundation for the enterprise-wide, longer-term goal to provide comparative print capability for all House users. This set of tools will allow users to create on-demand static comparative prints that illustrate the changes between

- Two versions of bill text (document to document);
- Bill text and current law (Ramseyer and Ramseyer-like output); and
- Page and line number amendments and bill text (Amendment Impact).

Currently, we are gathering requirements for subsequent phases to meet the longer-term goals stated above.

Congressional Biographical Directory

We continue to work on a series of upgrades to the Congressional Biographical Directory (BioGuide). Recent improvements include a new platform for Senate Historians to enter enhanced data into the electronic system and preparation for the new BioGuide website that we will begin to develop later this year. Our development work includes the final stages of content management system to support the BioGuide website as well as a review of the user stories that will be the basis of the website. The goals for the BioGuide upgrade are to

- Compile and disseminate a richer set of biographical data;
- Provide users with a modern interface and better search features; and
- Create a more effective back-end tool for managing biographical data.

Legislative Information Management System Rewrite

As the House has modernized discrete systems and websites, it has also become apparent that the time has come for a more comprehensive modernization of the broader Legislative Information Management System (LIMS). LIMS centralizes and maintains data and

information for the entire legislative process to benefit both House users and the public. Our office is conducting initial planning and evaluation for this initiative in concert with other modernization efforts.

Lifecycle Equipment and Furniture Replacement

Our office's requested nonpersonnel increase includes funding to replace equipment and furniture nearing the end of their lifecycles, including specialized stenographic equipment used to record House Floor and Committee proceedings.

Increased Storage for Congressional Records

The Center for Legislative Archives, part of the National Archives (NARA), maintains, preserves, and provides public access to archived House records pursuant to House Rules. As I mentioned last year, the National Archives is running out of space for congressional records. In 2016, with the support of this Subcommittee, we secured suitable additional storage space at the Government Publishing Office (GPO) facility and funding for the initial phase of construction. In March 2017, NARA and GPO signed the interagency agreements to govern the construction phase of the project, and funds were transferred to move forward. GPO issued the bid package in April 2017, and in June plans were proposed to include a restricted area to process and store all textual and electronic classified House and Senate records. The notice to proceed was given in August 2017 and construction commenced in September 2017. We expect the space to be completed and ready to receive House and Senate records this year.

The recent support of the Committee in the Consolidated Appropriations Act will further enable Phase Two of this project, which will secure and adapt additional space at GPO to improve storage for House and Senate records for the next 50 years. We expect NARA and GPO to begin work on Phase Two in the coming fiscal year.

On-Demand Printing

The Clerk's Office provides printed legislative materials for use on the House Floor and in Committee hearings and for distribution to congressional staff and the public. As our large production printers have neared the end of their lifecycles, we are seeking to acquire new printers that are faster, have improved binding and finishing capabilities, and allow us to reduce our reliance on overstocking materials. As an example of the concept: Our efforts to increase on-demand printing of the House Telephone Directory will reduce the number of printed books by 35% in 2018. With adequate funding, we will begin work to more broadly implement this change and would anticipate completion of the acquisition by FY20.

The goal of increasing on-demand printing for House Floor and Committee Hearings is to reduce the number of copies printed by GPO while retaining the ability to scale up if certain documents exceed the initial ability to meet the demand. As one potential performance measurement, we will seek to reduce by 40% the initial stocks of documents that could be reprinted in a short time.

Lobbying Disclosure Enhancements

We continue to consider an enhanced web-based lobbying disclosure system to improve submission of individual and bulk reports. We aim to improve the administrative functions of the system to ensure robust filing statistics and search capabilities and to enable direct approval of pending reports. By creating a unique lobbyist identifier, we will be able to synchronize House and Senate notification, approval, reporting, and referral efforts. The enhanced disclosure system is an item that remains on our priority list but continues to be pushed back due to the addition of unforeseen and higher-priority projects.

Personnel

The Clerk's Office is evaluating training opportunities for our staff to ensure they align with our mission and goals and to enhance cross-training as employees with specialized skills retire. This initiative gives current employees hands-on experience in highly specialized areas and opens the door for career growth within the organization. We are also requesting additional funds to fill positions essential to supporting legislative proceedings. The requested personnel funding also includes four newly created positions for Legislative Computer Systems. The new positions are needed to meet increasing transparency, efficiency, and cybersecurity project requests.

Our goal is to keep exceptional employees motivated by strengthening current skills and helping them acquire new skills. We have established a thorough training plan to further develop our workforce talent, to be able to promote from within, and to ensure personnel transitions do not disrupt our operations. We also recently reached a significant modernization milestone with the successful deployment of a fully electronic leave, time, and attendance system across the Clerk's Office.

Cannon Renovation and Relocation

Our office supports the ongoing renovation of the Cannon House Office Building, both directly and as a building occupant. The curatorial staff is continuing its efforts to preserve, relocate, and store historical artwork located in affected construction areas by providing staff and equipment. We also continue to prepare for the permanent relocation of several

divisions of the Office of the Clerk as planned following their temporary relocation. While we currently project this work will fall within anticipated budgets, its complexity means that we will need to continue to carefully monitor the progress of the renovation.

Turner Redstone Data Center

The Clerk's Office continued work on migrating backup operations to the new Turner Redstone Data Center. We completed the initial installation and configuration of the new FlexPod hardware and software infrastructure purchased at the end of FY17. Migration and configuration are ongoing, and we expect to be fully operational by the end of the August recess.

Preparation for the 116th Congress

Fiscal Year 2019 will also see the end of the 115th Congress and the beginning of the 116th Congress. The Clerk's Office is already engaged in customary preparations for the new Congress, including outreach to state election officials and other work needed to ensure its orderly opening and organization.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.