



**OFFICE OF THE CLERK
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**THE HONORABLE KAREN L. HAAS
CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**STATEMENT BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
ON THE FY 2018 PRIORITIES OF THE OFFICE OF THE CLERK**

FEBRUARY 7, 2017

Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady, Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Committee on House Administration about the operations and priorities of the Office of the Clerk. My staff and I meet regularly with your committee staff, and we appreciate the support and feedback this committee provides to the Clerk's Office.

HOUSE LEGISLATIVE OPERATIONS

The Clerk's Office supports the core legislative operations of the House of Representatives and its committees. Our office touches virtually every step of the legislative process, from committee hearings to the presentment of enrolled bills to the President. We work to ensure the integrity of the legislative process while we continually seek to improve public access to House and committee proceedings.

Support for Floor Operations

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 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.

Availability and Transparency of Legislative Proceedings

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 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 House Floor proceedings, including information on pending legislation and votes taken, on our website at clerk.house.gov. The Clerk's Office also maintains live and archived video of all Floor proceedings at 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 and other legislative data to the Government Publishing Office, which publishes them the next day online and in print in the *Congressional Record*. The Clerk's Office also makes daily updates to the bill summary information hosted by the Library of Congress at Congress.gov.



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 many investigative interviews. Whereas in the 113th Congress only one standing committee was authorized to take depositions, all standing committees are authorized to take depositions in the 115th. This expanded deposition authority may create additional demand for reporting services.

The House Library provides research services for committee and Member legislative staff. Last year, the Library launched an online portal providing comprehensive guides to legislative research topics. The portal offers a chat feature that allows D.C. and district staff to communicate with the House librarians during business hours. Our librarians also offer regular training through our partners in the House Learning Center.

Over the past two years, the Clerk's Office has made significant improvements to *Reports Due to Congress*, a document required to be published at the beginning of each session of Congress that lists all of the reports that any government agency is required by law to make to Congress. We have added a new section that lists reports with sunset provisions. The improved report will help committees and Members comply with the Majority Leader's Floor protocols on reporting requirements. Reports received and the statutory requirements they satisfy are now linked, which greatly enhances the Executive Communication search function on LIS.gov. We are working with our partners at the Library of Congress to move this search function from LIS.gov to Congress.gov.

Availability and Transparency of Committee Proceedings

The Clerk's Office maintains the Committee Repository website at docs.house.gov. This centralized online portal enables the public to track committee hearing and markup schedules along with 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.

ARCHIVES, ART, AND HISTORY OF THE HOUSE

The Office of the Clerk preserves the history of the House and meets its archival, historical, and curatorial needs.

Archives

The Clerk's Office is responsible for preserving the House's archived records. Our professional archivists assist committees as they comply with their archival obligations and help them research and retrieve records in their archives. During the 114th Congress, more than 2 million



new print records and a terabyte (1,144.5 gigabytes) of electronic records were archived. Our archives staff retrieved 385,500 records from the legislative archives for committees.

Last year, the Clerk’s Office launched a new Records Search feature on our History, Art & Archives website at history.house.gov. The feature showcases a selection of official House records that illustrate the institution’s work, its responses to issues of the day, and its relationship with the public and other branches of government. We 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. Each record is accompanied by a brief description that provides context and links to related material. As with the rest of the website this new feature is a tremendous resource for the general public and educators.

Art and History

The curatorial staff of the Clerk’s Office are responsible for preserving the historical art and artifacts in the House Collection and making the collection accessible to the public. With sections on the Institution, People, Exhibitions, Collections, Oral History, Education, and Research, our History, Art & Archives website offers a wealth of information about the House.

In the spring of this year, we will open an exhibition on the first floor of the Capitol to commemorate the centennial of Jeannette Rankin’s arrival as the first woman in Congress. The History, Art & Archives website also includes extensive and compelling content on the history of women in Congress to mark this milestone.

The Cannon renovations have required our curatorial staff to relocate many works of art from the Cannon building, including the largest painting in the House Collection and several busts that have not been moved in half a century. Our partners with the Architect of the Capitol and the Chief Administrative Office have supported our efforts to preserve, relocate, and store the artwork by providing staff, equipment, and funds in a timely manner.

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE AND INFORMATION SERVICES

By statute 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.

Memorials from the States Calling for an Article V Convention

Pursuant to a House rule adopted last Congress, the Clerk’s Office developed a page on its website to host state applications (and rescissions of prior applications) calling for a constitutional convention, as designated by the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee. So far, 127 such Memorials from 1960 to the present have been identified and posted. With the passage of H. Res. 5 this Congress, the House further changed the rule, which required us to make an unplanned



update to the page last month. We will continue to work with the Committee on the Judiciary to post these Memorials online.

Financial Disclosure

The Clerk’s Office administers the filing and public publishing of 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.

Lobbying Disclosure

The Clerk’s Office continues to enhance 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, the Office sends reminders to approximately 14,000 registrants before the deadlines and follow-up notices after due dates. The Office sends additional notifications throughout the filing period to keep users informed of filing requirements.

Online Telephone Directory

Last year, we released a beta version of the online telephone directory and made it available to the House community and the public at directory.house.gov. This mobile-friendly and searchable directory improves public access to House offices and allows us to reduce the printing of House phonebooks. With the support of the congressional community, we may eventually discontinue the print version entirely.

PRIORITIES

The following priorities are our most significant ongoing and upcoming projects. Many of these priorities will carry over from the 2017 calendar year and into fiscal year 2018.

Website Redesign

In 2017, the Clerk’s Office will launch a redesigned website, which will focus on legislative activities and bring key legislative information and updates together in one place. We will also launch a new HouseLive, our streaming internet video service, which will feature video rewind and closed captioning search functions and integrate floor summaries into the live broadcast. Although the look and feel of the website will be updated, the expanded functionality and application program interfaces (API) supporting the website are the major enhancements. The APIs allow us to improve efficiencies and provide more modern access to data for internal House



customers, other legislative branch customers, and the public and fulfill our transparency and accessibility requirements.

Electronic Voting Station Upgrade

The Clerk's Office will test and deploy next-generation voting stations this year. We anticipate that prototype stations will be delivered early in the year. Our team will conduct comprehensive testing to confirm the dependability of the new stations before we make any changes. If the testing goes well, we may be able to deploy the new stations this year.

Comparative Print Implementation

The Clerk's Office is working with House partners, including the Office of Legislative Counsel and the Government Publishing Office, to determine the work necessary to comply with the new House rule requiring comparative prints showing proposed changes from current law before legislation will be considered in the House. The new rule will go into effect on December 31 of this year. As this is an unplanned project, we are unsure of its impact on our other projects, staffing, and budget.

Turner Redstone Data Center

The Clerk's Office plans to add data center operations in the new Turner Redstone data center later this year. We are currently working on a detailed implementation plan and coordinating our efforts with the Chief Administrator's Office.

Congressional Biographical Directory

The Congressional Biographical Directory (BioGuide) at bioguide.congress.gov is a searchable biographical directory of Members of Congress from 1774 to the present. It launched in 1996 and is now the oldest website still hosted at Congress.gov. Along with the Office of the Historian and in consultation with our Senate partners, we are exploring a complete overhaul of the look, feel, and functionality of the BioGuide website.

Increased Storage for Congressional Records

The Center for Legislative Archives, part of the National Archives, maintains, preserves, and provides public access to archived House records pursuant to House Rules. However, the National Archives is running out of space for congressional records. Last year we secured suitable additional storage space at a Government Publishing Office facility and obtained funding for the initial phase of construction. We expect to occupy the new space in 2018.



Lobby Disclosure

We need to begin the process of enhancing our web-based lobby disclosure system to provide the lobbying community with a better means to file individual and bulk reports. We aim to improve the administrative functions of the system to ensure robust filing statistics, search capabilities, and means to approve 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 remains on our priority list but continues to be pushed back due to the addition of unforeseen and other higher-priority projects.

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. Our production printers are nearing the end of their lifecycle. New printers will be faster, have improved binding and finishing capabilities, and allow us to reduce our reliance on overstocking materials. Through this year and next year, we will focus our efforts on shifting from a warehousing system to an on-demand print and delivery operation. With appropriate funding, we will implement this change in steps and anticipate completion by fiscal year 2020.

In closing, I appreciate this chance to share our priorities for the next fiscal year. All the divisions within the Office of the Clerk diligently work together every day to provide support for the legislative process and the House of Representatives. We strive to do more with less, identify efficiencies, and improve transparency while we continue to provide top-quality service, products, and information to Members, staff, and the public. We enjoy our longstanding collaboration with the other House Officers and look forward to continuing to work with their organizations and staff to provide support to the House Community.

