

**STATEMENT BEFORE THE COMMITTEE  
ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION**

***“HOUSE OFFICER PRIORITIES FOR 2019  
AND BEYOND”***

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Chairperson Lofgren and Ranking Member Davis, Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify about the priorities and operations of the Office of the Clerk and for your guidance and support.

From the introduction of new bills on the House Floor to the delivery of enrolled bills to the White House for presentment to the President, our office is integral to the legislative process. 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.

## **GOALS FOR THE 116TH CONGRESS**

For the 116th Congress, the Office of the Clerk's goals include continuing to ensure the integrity and modernization of the legislative process and improve public access to House Floor and Committee proceedings; supporting the work of House Committees; and ensuring that we support our outstanding staff, and where necessary recruit new staff, in a way that our employees can continue to flourish in their jobs and fully support this institution.

## **KEY PRIORITIES FOR THE 116TH CONGRESS**

### **Legislative Information Management System Modernization and Redevelopment**

One key priority within our goals for the 116th Congress is the ongoing Legislative Information Management System (LIMS) modernization and redevelopment project. LIMS is a critical part of the flow of legislative information. It brings in bill information, Floor activity, Member and Committee information, and Executive Communications from the House and Senate and distributes that information to the Government Publishing Office (GPO), the Library of Congress, Members, Committees, House Officers, and the public.

However, the LIMS system was built more than 30 years ago and operates with an outdated programming language on a legacy platform from the mainframe era. The platform has undergone multiple migrations and currently runs in the Linux environment. However, the legacy codebase has not been upgraded and poses significant challenges moving forward. The cost and technological risk of continuing on this legacy platform are very high as finding skilled developers who can work on legacy platforms is difficult and maintenance and changes to the current system demand significant resources.

The migration of LIMS to a new modern technology will allow the application to be more flexible, extensible, robust and secure, and ultimately enable it to better meet the House's needs. This phase of the modernization project will comprise LIMS data modeling, backend

development, Floor Action Reporting System (FARS), Committee Action Reporting System (CARS), Executive Action Reporting System (EARS), Reports Due to Congress, Senate Action Reporting System (SARS), and Quality Assurance Testing.

## **Support for House Committees**

Our second key priority is support for House Committees. That is why as part of the Office of the Clerk's ongoing efforts to improve communications and strengthen relationships with the House staff we serve, our staff collaborated with the Parliamentarian's Office, the Congressional Research Service, and the Congressional Staff Academy to host a briefing in January for majority and minority Committee clerks. The briefing provided new and veteran clerks with the tools and information they need to do their jobs in the 116th Congress and included sessions on the legislative process, administrative services and resources, and technical training. Session topics included

- Filing Committee reports
- Completing the new Truth in Testimony Form
- Submitting remarks for the *Congressional Record*
- Archiving Committee records
- Reporting Committee actions to appear on Congress.gov
- Updating the Committee Repository

We plan to continue our training offerings throughout the year.

In addition, the official reporters provide reporting services for all Committee markups, hearings, and depositions as well as for investigative interviews. These services remain subject to the potential for increased demand as a result of expanded deposition authority and oversight needs. In fact, so far this Congress, our Office of Official Reporters has supported more than 460 hearings and markups.

The Clerk's Office, following a directive in the Committee report accompanying our fiscal year 2019 appropriation, researched language for a standardized electronic Truth in Testimony Form. With the help of this Committee, our office held information sessions with other Committees' staff to solicit ideas and incorporate feedback. The Office finalized the form, received approval for its use in the 116th Congress, and made it available on HouseNet.

The Clerk's Office also develops and maintains the Committee Repository website at <https://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.

## **Comparative Print Project**

The Comparative Print project is a third key priority. After the successful completion of Phase 1 of the Comparative Print project at the end of 2017, the Clerk's Office has continued to work with the Office of the Legislative Counsel and the Law Revision Counsel on the planning and development of subsequent phases.

In August 2018, the Clerk's Office awarded the contract for Phases 2 and 3 of the Comparative Print project. Phase 2 is anticipated to last from August 2018 to August 2019 with the following deliverables:

- Develop and build the backend framework to include security, user management, document repository, and document transformation—in progress, second quarter 2019
- Build natural language processor (NLP) to interpret amendatory language —initial design complete (fourth quarter 2018), in progress, first/second quarter 2019
- Implement base set of amendatory language and automated execution to create a stand-alone document that meets the provisions of clause 12(a) of House Rule XXI—second quarter 2019
- Implement an editor for those cases in which user intervention is needed—second/third quarter 2019
- Continuously improve the comparison document in HTML and PDF that meets the provisions of clause 12(b) of House Rule XXI—second/third quarter 2019
- Improve [billcompare.house.gov](http://billcompare.house.gov) user interface—second/third quarter 2019
- Develop outputs in HTML, PDF, and XML—second/third quarter 2019.

Phase 2 of the project is on track and we are holding weekly status meetings with the vendor. We expect Phase 3 of the project to begin later this year and anticipate it will last from August 2019 to August 2020. Below are the deliverables for Phase 3:

- Continue to build and refine NLP engine and implement an extended set of amendatory language—first/second quarter 2019
- Refine Phase 2 functionality: automation, editor, transformations, and user interface—third quarter 2020
- Migrate the current Amendment Impact Program (AIP) to the Posey Technology—fourth quarter 2019
- Deploy to larger user base—second quarter 2020
- Develop outputs in HTML, PDF, and XML—third quarter 2020.

## **Personnel Development**

The fourth of our key priorities is personnel development. The Clerk's Office continues to evaluate 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.

Our aim is to keep exceptional employees motivated by strengthening their current skills and helping them acquire new ones. We have established a thorough training plan to further develop our workforce talent and expand our institutional memory, to be able to promote from within, and to ensure personnel transitions do not disrupt our operations.

We have also begun to implement a cloud-based performance review system that will allow us to standardize evaluation criteria, goal-setting, and feedback across the Clerk's organization. We are currently testing the system and plan to provide user training during the second quarter of 2019.

Finally, we will continue to recruit highly qualified new employees and will reach out to a diverse pool of applicants. As we plan for the future, we want to fill four new positions essential to supporting legislative proceedings: three for Legislative Computer Systems, which are needed to meet increasing transparency, efficiency, LIMS, and cybersecurity project requests, and a fourth in the Office of House Employment Counsel (OHEC) to support compliance with recent amendments to the Congressional Accountability Act (CAA) and related workplace rights reform measures.

## **ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT ONGOING RESPONSIBILITIES AND POINTS OF EMPHASIS**

We also look forward to continuing to carry out our many other important ongoing responsibilities and points of emphasis this Congress, which include the following:

### **Support for Legislative Proceedings**

In recent 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 officer or Department is required to make 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 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, including whenever the House is in session—day or night—supporting the work of the House of Representatives.

In addition to supporting House 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 on the House Floor*, at <https://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 GPO, 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](http://Congress.gov).

### ***Electronic Voting System***

The EVS has three main components: the EVS Server, vote stations, and the display subsystems, which include the summary displays (updated in 2009) and the main displays (updated in 2010). We completed the vote station upgrade in August 2018. We are planning to upgrade the Venus Display Servers (part of the display system) and replace all the work stations on the House Floor during the August 2019 District Work Period. We will continue to perform routine maintenance as needed.

We have also begun discussions with our vendor to develop a plan for ongoing support of the House Floor displays. When the summary displays (2009) and main displays (2010) were installed we anticipated a 100,000-hours or 10-year lifespan. We are not close to the 100,000 hours, but we are approaching the 10 years, so we want to plan for potential power supply and fan replacements.

### ***Consensus Calendar***

Section 102, Subsection (r), of H.Res. 6 provides for a Consensus Calendar in the 116th Congress House Rules and mandates that the Speaker must designate, and the House must consider, at least one measure on the Consensus Calendar during any week in which the House convenes (except before March 1 at the beginning of a Congress and after September 30 at the end of a Congress). This subsection also provides that to be eligible for placement on the Consensus Calendar a measure must accumulate 290 cosponsors and must not have been reported by its primary Committee of jurisdiction. When this cosponsorship threshold is reached the sponsor of the measure may, while the House is in session, submit to the Clerk a written motion to place the measure on the Consensus Calendar. If these conditions have been met, the Clerk will note the motion's submission in the *Congressional Record* of that day and enter the motion on a comprehensive list of Consensus Calendar Motions, which will be available on the Clerk's website. After a measure has maintained at least 290 cosponsors for a cumulative period of 25 legislative days after the presentation of the motion, the measure will be placed on the Consensus Calendar, where it will remain until it is considered in the House or reported by the primary Committee. The Clerk's Office has developed a process that will ensure it meets the Consensus Calendar requirements.

### **Support for the 116th Congress**

On November 14, 2018, the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, and Senior Advisor to the Clerk welcomed Members-elect to the Capitol during New Member Orientation in the House Chamber. During the session, they provided an introduction to Office of the Clerk services, the EVS, and rostrum staff. On January 3, 2019, the Clerk led the Opening Day activities in the Chamber through the election of the new Speaker. In preparation for the new Congress, Clerk staff updated the EVS and all other systems as well as House Floor materials, including Roll Call books, *House Journal* files, and manual tally sheets. The Office also worked with Secretaries of State and other state election officials to review all Certificates of Election.

### ***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 Clerk's Office worked with the Architect of the Capitol to design, produce, and install a permanent display of current women Member photographs in the Lindy Boggs Room. The Office also created a digital photographic display of all former women Members. These installations replaced 20 individual frames and several print posters, which hung in the

space for more than 15 years, and allow for quick updates in the future to accommodate the growing number of women Members.

The House Library provides research services for legislative staff of Members and Committees. The Library offers an online portal at <https://library.house.gov/site> with comprehensive guides to legislative research topics and regular training with our Congressional Staff Academy partners.

OHEC provides House employing offices with legal counsel and training on employment matters, including anti-discrimination/anti-harassment laws, family and medical leave, disabilities law, fair labor standards requirements, workplace safety, and other issues arising under the CAA and recent amendments to the statute and related reform measures.

### ***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 three vacant offices to date this Congress.

### ***Website Redesign***

The Clerk's Office will soon release the Beta version of our new redesigned website 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 several features, including a public vote search page, updated Member and Committee profiles, and a new video streaming site (<https://live.house.gov>) that includes the ability to rewind the live feed and search closed-captioned text. The Clerk's Office also released an Alpha version of a new internal video clipping tool (<http://floorclips.house.gov>). The last major piece of the Clerk website redesign is a new site search tool, which is expected to be ready in June 2019.

### **Public Disclosure Services**

By law and under 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, GPO, Botanic Gardens, and the 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 percent of filings in 2013 to 87 percent in 2018.

### ***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 (LDA). We make these filings available online in a searchable, sortable, and downloadable format. 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>.

### ***Justice Against Corruption on K Street Act of 2018***

The Clerk’s Office is implementing the Justice Against Corruption on K Street Act of 2018 passed on December 20, 2018, and signed into law by the President. The “JACK” Act became effective on January 3, 2019, and amends the LDA by requiring all registrations (form LD-1) and quarterly reports (form LD-2) filed on or after January 3, 2019, to include

“for any listed lobbyist who was convicted in a Federal or State court of an offense involving bribery, extortion, embezzlement, an illegal kickback, tax evasion, fraud, a conflict of interest, making a false statement, perjury, or money laundering, the date of the conviction and a description of the offense.”

The Clerk and the Secretary of the Senate notified registrants in January that our offices were developing the technical changes necessary on the two relevant forms to meet this reporting requirement. We made those changes and posted additional guidance, on March 29, 2019, and notified filers that the updates are available in the system. If the statutory timelines required them to file a registration or quarterly report before the amended forms were available, we advised them to do so, and, if necessary, amend the filing to include the relevant information when it became possible to do so. Below are the project deliverables and estimated timeframes:

- February 8, 2019: Define additional fields, schema, and modified XML (complete)
- March 8, 2019: Complete updates to LD-1/LD-2 and data import modules and begin testing (complete)
- March 31, 2019: Complete updated forms and move to production (complete)
- May 2019: Complete new search/download site

### ***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 has been pushed back because of the addition of unforeseen projects.

### ***Franking***

The Clerk's Office worked with the Franking Commission and the House Information Resources group from the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer to install a dedicated computer kiosk in the Legislative Resource Center to make franking filings available to the public electronically.

## **House Operations**

### ***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 team provides staff and equipment to preserve, relocate, and store historical artwork located in construction areas. As the Cannon Renewal Project progressed from Phase 1 to Phase 2, the Office of the Clerk continued to move operations, personnel, and materials to new locations while maintaining continuity of services. In December 2018, the Legislative Resource Center's Public Information, Requisitions and Document Production, and Executive Communications subdivisions and several House Library staffers moved to their new office locations in the Cannon building. The House Library is now open in its new location.

### ***Increased Storage for Congressional Records***

The Center for Legislative Archives, part of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), maintains, preserves, and provides public access to archived House records pursuant to House Rules. In 2017 we secured storage space in two GPO buildings near the Capitol and obtained funding for the conversion of the first building, which we expect to occupy early in 2019. In 2018 we obtained funding for the conversion of the second building. With this additional space, the Center will have sufficient capacity to store House and Senate documents for decades to come.

### ***High-Speed 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. In December we completed the purchase and installation of a new high-production black and white printer, which increases printing speeds by 22 percent over the previous printer and includes a booklet maker. The new printer ensures that the Legislative Resource Center can continue to quickly and reliably support legislative activities that require daily high-volume print jobs, such as House Committee hearings, bills, and reports. The Clerk's Office has also initiated a project to replace its older color printer this year to improve our production quality and speed.

### ***Turner Redstone Data Center***

The Clerk's Office postponed our initial plans to migrate to the new Turner Redstone Data Center in December 2018 because of changing legislative priorities and problems at the current Alternate Computing Facility backup site. We have rescheduled our migration for April 2019.

### **Archives, Art, and History of the House**

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

#### ***Archives***

The Clerk's Office preserves 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 <https://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 special and select Committees.

During 2018 the Clerk chaired two meetings of the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress. The Office of Art and Archives and the Office of Communications worked with the

Senate and NARA to publish the *Sixth Report* of the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress. The mandated report details many Committee efforts from January 2013 through December 2018, including new storage spaces for congressional records at GPO buildings; preservation of Committee hearing videos, social media, and Member office correspondence management systems data; progress on the project to refine descriptions of congressional records; and advances in digital curation.

### ***Art and History***

The curatorial staff of the Clerk’s Office preserves the historical art and artifacts in the House collection and makes them accessible to the public. Our History, Art & Archives website at <https://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. With sections on the Institution, People, Exhibitions and Publications, Collections, Oral History, Education, and Records and Research, the website offers a broad selection of material about the history and collections of the House and is a tremendous resource for the public and educators. In addition to its public outreach efforts and ongoing work with the permanent collections, the curatorial staff also manages several exhibitions throughout the House. We look forward to the opening of a significant new exhibition, with permanent displays of objects of interest to Members, staff, and constituents, in the Cannon basement rotunda, which is a major hub of the House campus. 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 of Art and Archives and the Historian also participated in meetings and working groups with congressional partners to develop content for the upcoming redesign of exhibits in the Capitol Visitor Center’s galleries. We anticipate our involvement in the redesign efforts to continue through 2020.

The Historian published a book and an e-book edition of *Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Congress, 1900–2017*, which adds to the series of books about Congress that already included *Women in Congress*, *Black Americans in Congress*, and *Hispanic Americans in Congress*. The Office of the Historian collaborated with the Office of the Clerk to write, edit, and produce the 50-page booklet *The People’s House: A Guide to Its History, Spaces, and Traditions*. The publication introduces readers to Opening Day ceremonies; Floor proceedings; Capitol rooms and House Office Buildings; art and artifacts in the House Chamber; and Leadership offices, political parties, and Officers. The Historian plans to make the content publically available on the History, Art & Archives website.

***Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress***

We have continued to redevelop the *Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress* (BioGuide) website (<http://bioguide.congress.gov>). Upgrades include a robust search engine, responsive user interfaces, and a content management system that will enable House and Senate Historians to enter more extensive profile data and collaborate seamlessly. The Clerk's Office expects to launch the Alpha version of the website during the first half of 2019.

Thank you again for your continued guidance and support and for the opportunity to testify.