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**Prepared Statement before the
Committee on House Administration
U.S. House of Representatives**

On Oversight of the Government Publishing Office

March 3, 2020
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Thank you, Madam Chairperson, Ranking Member Davis, and Members of the Committee. I am happy to be here today in my first appearance before the Committee on House Administration as Director of the Government Publishing Office.

Today's hearing on oversight of GPO is a welcome opportunity to give you my sense of GPO's condition after about 3 months on the job and my vision for its future. This is particularly appropriate as the anniversary of GPO opening its doors is 159 years ago tomorrow.

GPO IS ON SOUND FOOTING

Today, I am pleased to be able to say that GPO is on very sound footing.

Financially, I am pleased to report that GPO completed fiscal year 2019 with \$36.2 million in net positive income after all adjustments. This is the 10th straight year where GPO has finished the fiscal year in the black. In addition, for the 23rd consecutive year, GPO's independent outside auditor issued a clean, or unmodified, opinion on our annual financial statement.

We continue to see growth in many of our product lines, particularly our secure identification and passport products. Last year, we produced more than 15 million passports for the Department of State and 4 million other secure credentials. We are working closely with the State Department to develop the machine tools and production processes necessary to ensure that the next generation U.S. passport continues to be the most secure identification document in the world.

During FY 2019, our **govinfo** online repository had more than 377 million retrievals and added over 121 thousand documents, allowing people all over the world easy access to U.S. Government documents.

GPO's positive financial results have allowed us to make investments over the past several years, modernizing equipment and building the tools we will need for the future. For instance, we have acquired six new digital inkjet presses and are working to incorporate them into our workflow. When fully online, they will vastly enhance our flexibility to meet our customers' needs for both large and small jobs.

We have also continued our development of our XPub next-generation composition engine, which will replace our current system which has been in service since the early 1980s. Working with the Office of the Law Revision Counsel, we were able to leverage XPub to produce the most recent edition of the United States Code seven months faster than the last cycle. Within a year's time, we expect to have deployed XPub to our partners in the House and Senate for the production of bills, resolutions, and amendments.

And we have done all of this while still delivering the best value for our customers each and every day.

I can't personally take credit for any of these achievements. They are all due to the hard work and perseverance of my predecessors, along with the dedicated members of our GPO leadership team and more than 1,600 craftspeople and professionals who kept the agency running until my confirmation.



THE FUTURE OF CONGRESSIONAL DOCUMENTS

While my colleague Laurie Hall, the Superintendent of Documents, will talk about our important work with our Federal Depository Library partners and Mike Leary will talk about his important work as Inspector General, I want to take a moment to discuss the future of GPO's work for Congress.

While Congress is not GPO's biggest customer, it is our most important. Your work is critical to the daily functioning of our democracy. It is also among the most labor-intensive work done at GPO.

After seeing how the United Kingdom Parliament formatted their documents years ago when I was a Rules Committee staffer, I worked with this committee and GPO to ask about changing the format of committee hearings. The most charitable way I can describe the results of that meeting is that GPO was not ready to talk about changing, even if some in Congress were.

Today is different.

With the advent of XPub, our new composition system, and the installation of our new digital printing presses, GPO is finally ready to move beyond the constraints of mere printing to a model that focuses on content and is agnostic when it comes to media. My hope is that Congress has reached a point where it is ready to partner with GPO to create documents worthy of the 21st century.



Personally, I believe change is critical. During my time working in the Capitol, I saw first-hand committees short-changing their efforts to produce legislative documents, placing their efforts into white papers, web pages, and other unofficial media.

The reasons for this shift away from documents like formal committee reports are largely two-fold: they are (1) hard to create and (2) the resulting media are dense and inflexible. That creates problems for both the author and reader alike. The author doesn't want to create the document because it's time-intensive to prepare and may not communicate his intent as well he might like; and the reader doesn't want to read the document because it's dense, hard to access, and doesn't transmit information all that well.

This presents critical problems for all involved. It means that Congress isn't effectively explaining the operation of its laws or the reasoning behind them; it means that our libraries and digital repositories are filled with documents of limited use; and it means that the public can't easily digest the information it needs to make important decisions about the future of its government.

To get a sense of how this plays out in real life, let's look at the first page of three committee reports from various points in history.

Figure 1 is a committee report from 1861 created with hand-set type a few months after GPO began its life.

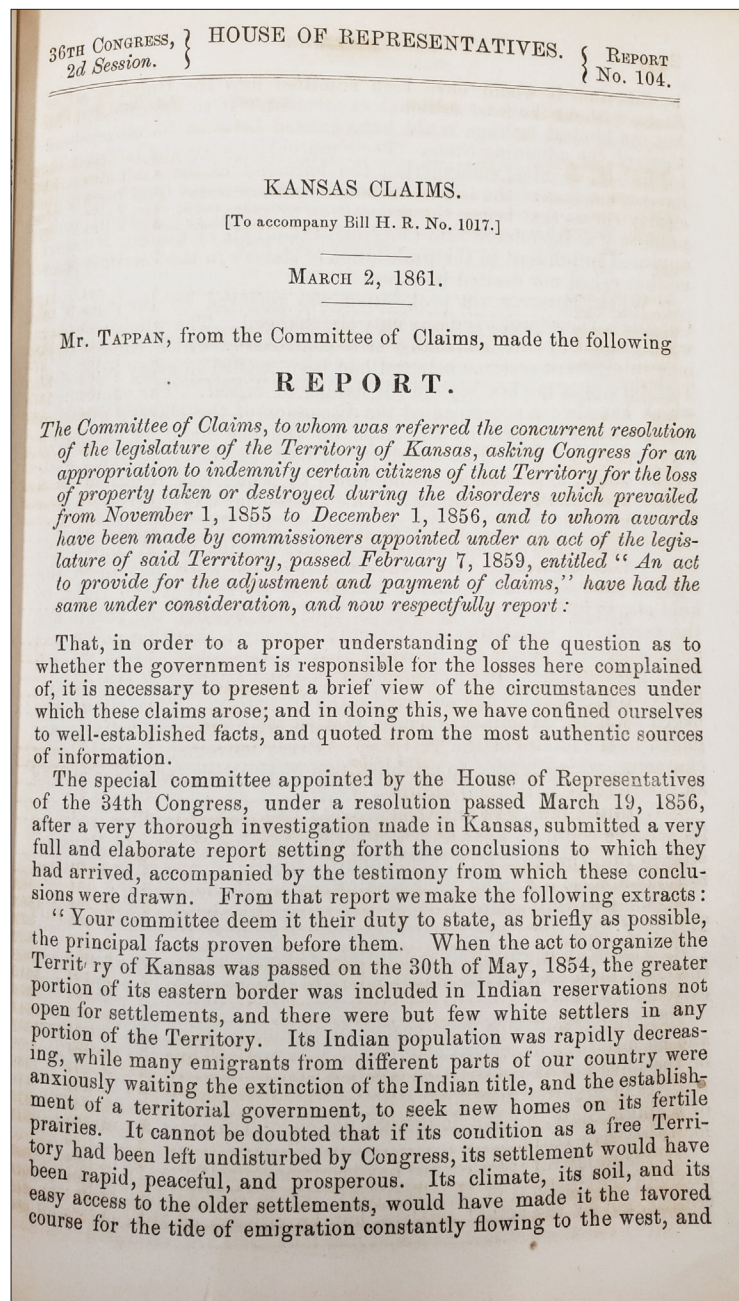


Figure 1. House committee report from 1861.

Figure 2 is a report from 1936 and is set with hot lead type. And the report depicted in figure 3 was reported from this committee in November and represents the output from GPO's current digital typesetting system.

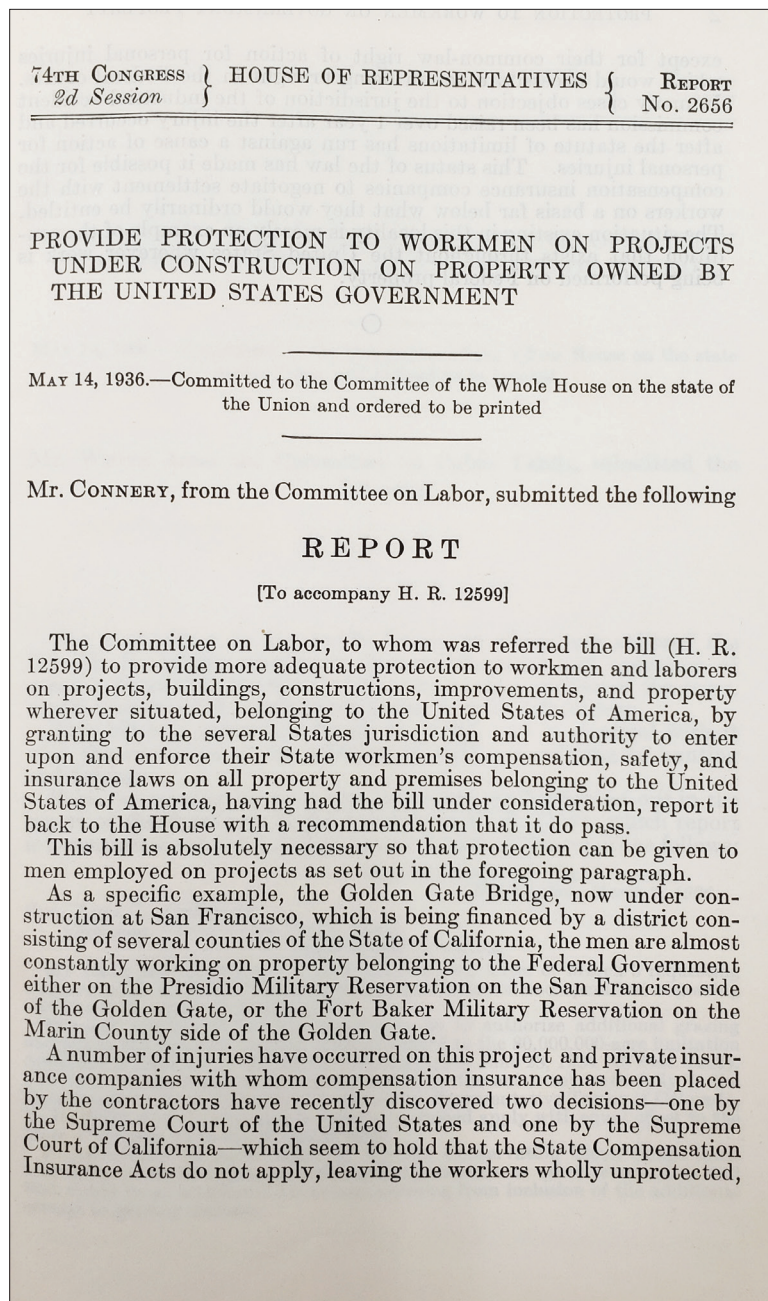


Figure 2. House committee report from 1936.

All 3 look pretty similar: (1) They use small type sizes and tight line spacing; (2) they are devoid of all but the most basic graphics; and (3) they are designed for economy of printing, not for readability or accessibility.



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SMITHSONIAN WOMEN'S HISTORY MUSEUM ACT

NOVEMBER 13, 2019.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the
State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Ms. LOFGREN, from the Committee on House Administration,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

together with

ADDITIONAL VIEWS

[To accompany H.R. 1980]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on House Administration, to whom was referred
the bill (H.R. 1980) to establish in the Smithsonian Institution a
comprehensive women's history museum, and for other purposes,
having considered the same, report favorably thereon with an
amendment and recommend that the bill as amended do pass.

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Figure 3. House committee report from 2019.

Compare that with a similar kind of document from the U.K. House of Commons (figure 4): It prints on standard-size paper, uses commercially available typefaces and even color, and is equally readable on paper, on a screen, or on a phone.

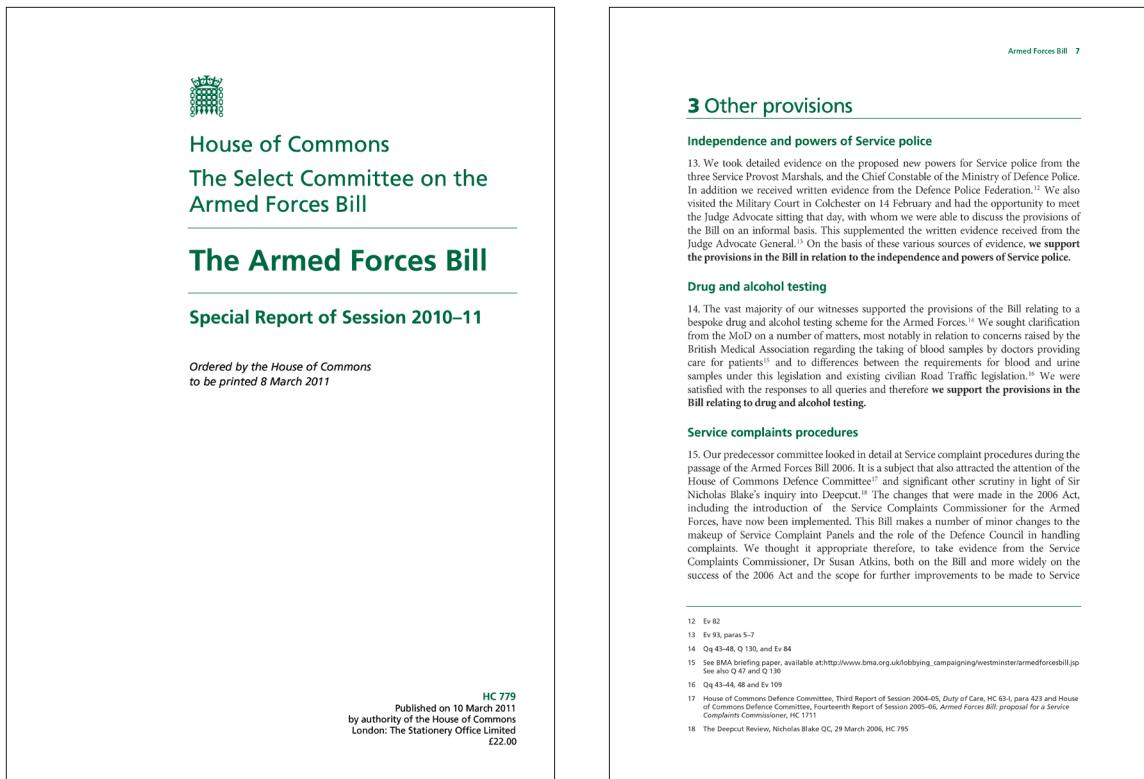


Figure 4. U.K. House of Commons report.

I believe that reexamining the look and feel of Congress' documents makes sense now that we have the technology to make differences that matter. We can make those documents readable and accessible whether on a computer screen, a phone, or on paper.

We also need to make those documents easier to produce so that a committee counsel can put her effort into preparing the content and not the formatting.

If Congress is willing to partner with us to make these important changes, the end result will be documents that are easier to author, to produce, and to consume. That accrues to everyone's benefit: Congress, GPO, and the public.

GPO

I stand ready to work with all of you should Congress want to explore how we might enhance the readability and accessibility of important congressional documents.

I am also committed to ensuring that GPO delivers for all of its customers and continues its record of positive financial performance.

Madam Chairperson, Mr. Davis, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.