

**STATEMENT BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE  
ADMINISTRATION**

**The Honorable Kevin F. McCumber, Acting Clerk of the U.S. House of  
Representatives**

**May 8, 2024**

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify about the operations of the Office of the Clerk. It is a true privilege to represent our team and highlight our many areas of service to this institution. I appreciate our close working relationship with you and your staff and the opportunity to update the Committee on our organization.

As I'm sure we can all agree, staff are our most valuable asset. To that end, I would like to center my testimony on both the work Clerk staff do to support the House, and what we as the Clerk's organization do to support our staff.

## **CLERK OPERATIONS**

The Office of the Clerk was established in 1789; the House's second official act, after electing the first Speaker, was electing the first Clerk. Since then, we have been enmeshed in the history and traditions of the House.

Today, our Office comprises 215 staff in 9 divisions. In addition to the Official Reporter supporting this Committee today, we support the House's legislative business, Members and the institution, and transparency and public disclosure.

### **Supporting the House's Legislative Business**

The Office plays a vital role in the House's daily legislative activities. We facilitate House proceedings; operate the Electronic Voting System; produce the constitutionally mandated *House Journal*; transcribe Floor proceedings for the *Congressional Record* and hearings and depositions for Committees; process submissions of legislative documents; oversee the recording of Roll Call Votes; maintain Chamber technology and provide streaming video; prepare messages to the Senate about legislation that has passed the House; read bills, resolutions, amendments, motions, and presidential messages on the Floor; and make legislative activity updates publicly available via the Office of the Clerk website ([clerk.house.gov](http://clerk.house.gov)).

During the First Session of the 118th Congress, we processed 8,036 bills for introduction—a 10 percent increase over the First Session of the 117th Congress. We hand-keyed the names of 103,231 cosponsors. We recorded 724 Roll Call Votes, supported 685 hours of legislative activity, and transcribed, proofread, and edited 7,021 pages of Floor proceedings for inclusion in the *Record*. Further, we assisted Committee staff in publishing 1,211 Committee meetings on the U.S. House of Representatives Committee Repository ([docs.house.gov/Committee](http://docs.house.gov/Committee)) and transcribed 147,121 pages of Committee activity.

Beyond those numbers are the countless hours our team spends supporting the House well after its time in session. It is not uncommon to find the lights on in many of our divisions late into the night to complete our work after the House has adjourned. For example, our Bill Clerks routinely work two or more hours after adjournment, processing the day's introduced measures; our team in the Office of Official Reporters

spend an equal amount of time putting the finishing touches on items for the *Record*, which they send to the Government Publishing Office (GPO) for publication. Our commitment to getting the details right, day in and day out, is a hallmark of our service to this institution.

Our capacity to nimbly meet various legislative demands is intrinsically related to the pace of legislative activity on the Floor. The House has not adjourned for more than three days since October 2016. While pro forma sessions are short in duration, the generated workload routinely matches that of a full legislative day, requiring us to re-prioritize our resources away from other projects.

In addition to supporting the day-to-day operations of the House, our forward-thinking staff are actively engaged with you and your teams to support the House's modernization efforts. This includes developing the Comparative Print Suite ([compare.house.gov](http://compare.house.gov)), working with the House Office of Legislative Counsel (HOLC) to facilitate collaborative legislative drafting, and improving the electronic submission of legislative documents, primarily through the eHopper ([eHopper.house.gov](http://eHopper.house.gov)). I am extremely proud of our team for remaining on task and on target to complete these projects, especially in light of growing legislative demands.

The Comparative Print Suite is an internationally recognized set of applications that allows House staff and others to create on-demand, point-in-time comparative prints between legislative texts and between legislative text and the law. All House staff have access to the Basic Edition and can take on-demand training to access the Advanced Edition. We recently released two new features for the Advanced Edition. First, the How an Amendment Changes a Bill tool allows staff to upload amendments drafted by HOLC and view a track changes-like outline of how the amendment would change the underlying bill or resolution if the amendment is adopted. Second, the Bill to Bill Differences Provision Select feature, part of the Bill to Bill Differences tool, allows staff to select a provision to compare across two bills, for example, a Title or Division in a large bill, to a stand-alone, smaller bill. This allows for isolated comparisons of larger texts. We are also working on adding an upload feature to Bill to Bill Differences in the Basic Edition, which will enable all staff to compare different versions of drafts provided by HOLC. We expect to continue hosting open houses on campus to showcase the tool and answer staff questions. Additionally, we will extend access to the Senate through a pilot program and develop plans to expand staff access in the Congressional Budget Office, with the goal of reducing the time necessary to produce cost estimates for bills.

We are also looking forward to the results of the market review of available collaborative drafting tools, funded by the Modernization Initiatives Account. Through our partnership with HOLC, we are excited to get started on addressing recommendations as part of the House's overall modernization effort. We requested funding in our fiscal year 2025 budget to allow us to move forward with the results from the study and begin building and implementing solutions.

We continue streamlining internal processes through the ongoing modernization of the Legislative Information Management System (LIMS). This is a mission-critical system

we use to manage House legislative operations, record legislative activities, and exchange data with our legislative branch partners. Nearly all House legislative activities are recorded in LIMS. Our efforts include updating several modules, including the Floor Action Reporting System, and redesigning and integrating the Member Information System (MIS) into LIMS. To give a recent example of how our efforts harmonize with our support for Housewide modernization efforts, earlier this year we rolled out an upgrade to the eHopper's cosponsor system. Member staff can now add cosponsors with a few clicks. Internally, a soon-to-be-released feature in LIMS will recognize those cosponsors as data, eliminating the need to hand-key hundreds of thousands of entries, dramatically increasing accuracy and efficiency.

In addition to ongoing projects, we anticipate tackling new modernization efforts in fiscal year 2025. This includes creating a centralized Committee portal. Initially, the portal will provide the infrastructure to track legislative histories of bills referred to a Committee. We submitted a procurement abstract to begin that work at the end of April. Long term, the portal will feature several additional modules, including a replacement for the applications that Committees use to publish meeting information on the Committee Repository and add draft meetings to the Deconflict Committee Scheduler. We look forward to working with the Committee as we develop these products.

Our modernization efforts are not limited to technology. We are actively engaged with this Committee and Leadership, the Senate, and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) to sunset the thirty-year-old Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress (ACRC). The ACRC was established to advise Congress and NARA on the management and preservation of congressional records before the House and Senate had professional archival staff. It has outlived its purpose and sunsetting it will save taxpayer dollars and valuable staff time. Draft legislation calls for replacing the ACRC with an annual reporting requirement for NARA and mandatory meetings for current stakeholders.

### **Supporting Members and the Institution**

In addition to supporting the House's primary legislative functions, Clerk staff support Members and this institution in myriad ways.

For example, support staff in the Cloakrooms prepare and serve food and drinks, field questions from Members, track Floor proceedings, and collect Members' remarks for the *Record*. We also welcome Members to the Congressional Prayer Room, the Members and Family Committee Room, and the Lindy Boggs Congressional Women's Reading Room. Clerk staff provide administrative, communications, and technical support to the Chaplain, including the coordination of guest chaplains.

We support Member offices in the event of a Member's resignation, death, or expulsion. During the 118th Congress, we have supported ten vacant offices, including six at present. When a Member office becomes vacant, the Office of the Clerk is both the certifying and employing authority, stewarding the vacant office until a successor is elected. These responsibilities are derived from statute, House Rules, and longstanding

practice. To fulfill these duties, the Clerk's Office—with the cooperation of the remaining Member office staff—acts to preserve the integrity of the vacant office's operations. We assist staff with nonpartisan functions of the vacant office, such as administering new and existing casework, responding to constituent inquiries and concerns, and responding to tour, flag, and other requests. Our staff also coordinate with the departing Member and their staff on the proper disposition of the office's records and work with staff to prepare for the transition to the successor by communicating with state election officials, preparing the DC and district offices for new occupancy, coordinating with the district offices' property managers about leases, and reviewing and updating the office supply inventory. Our staff ensure all computers are reimaged and work with the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to verify that equipment meets technological standards. In addition to technology and equipment support, we work closely with the CAO and her team on administrative and finance matters, and to ensure staff in both the DC and district offices are aware of the many resources available to them. We greatly appreciate the CAO's commitment to supporting us in our management of these offices.

Office of House Employment Counsel (OHEC) attorneys advise clients about employment and labor issues under the Congressional Accountability Act. For example, during the First Session of the 118th Congress, we conducted 78 required Workplace Rights and Responsibilities training sessions for Members. OHEC's practice also includes investigating claims and interviewing witnesses, responding to demand letters and motions at the trial and appellate stages of litigation, resolving claims, engaging in discovery, and participating in Office of Congressional Workplace Rights hearings and conferences.

Our Office of Communications supports Clerk initiatives and provides services to Members and the institution. We work closely with the Speaker's event staff and GPO to produce invitations, programs, tickets, and other items for ceremonial events—12 in 2023. Additionally, we provide Housewide presentations, including the *Staffer's Guide to the Clerk's Office* and Committee Clerk training, in partnership with the Congressional Staff Academy, and print Member constituent correspondence in braille on behalf of the Office of Congressional Accessibility Services. The Office of Communications converts Word documents to braille, prints messages on heavy cardstock, and compares copies to written transcripts to ensure accuracy. Just this year we upgraded to a printer with features designed to present content with complex formatting, improving accessibility of information to the public.

Staff in our Legislative Resource Center (LRC) process thousands of stationery orders, franked envelope requests, and related requisitions. Established in 1792—eight years before the Library of Congress—the LRC's House Library is professionally staffed with librarians and researchers who use specialized research databases to answer reference questions for Members, staff, and the public. In 2023, staff answered 9,014 reference requests and disseminated 13,147 documents to Members, Committees, staff, federal agencies, and the public. Staff in the Library also archive, catalogue, and digitize congressional records and Clerk publications, adding materials to the publicly available online catalog ([ushr.on.worldcat.org](https://ushr.on.worldcat.org)).

Curatorial staff in the Office of Art and Archives (OAA) are responsible for preserving the art and artifacts in the House Collection and making the collection accessible to the public. To that end, we have created a Downloadable Images Portal ([bit.ly/ushouseart](https://bit.ly/ushouseart)), where Members, staff, and the public can access high-resolution images and reproductions of artwork. Our History, Art & Archives website ([history.house.gov](https://history.house.gov)), with content organized by Institution, People, Exhibitions, Collections, Oral History, Education, and Research, offers the public a wealth of information about the House. Curatorial staff also provide educational materials to teachers across the country. In addition to expanding access to the House Collection, OAA staff ensure that the historic objects and records are preserved for decades to come.

Our professional archivists also advise Members and assist Committees as they comply with their records retention obligations and help them research and retrieve archived records from previous congresses. During the First Session of the 118th Congress, we transferred more than 29 terabytes of electronic records and 700,000 pages of physical records to NARA.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of our Oral History program. In addition to researching the institution's history and working with OAA to curate content for the website, staff with the Office of the House Historian conduct interviews to document the House's history through firsthand accounts of the people who lived it, including former House pages, staff, Officers, and Members. One interviewee I'd like to highlight is the late Pat Kelly. She was a dedicated staffer whose storied career spanned 54 years, including time spent as a legislative aide to her mother, Representative Edna Kelly, as well as Representatives Martha Griffiths and Matthew McHugh and the Rules Committee before joining the Clerk's Office. I had the privilege to work with her in our Legislative Operations division, where she served for 32 years as the editor of the House Daily Digest and was responsible for compiling information on Committee subject matter, witnesses, meetings, and legislative actions.

To prepare for an interview, the oral historians spend weeks researching the career of the interviewee. After they conduct the interview—an individual session can last up to two hours—the audio file is transcribed for publication on the History, Art & Archives website ([history.house.gov/oral-history/](https://history.house.gov/oral-history/)). The finished oral history products available online, including 10 digital oral history exhibits, more than 90 transcripts, and nearly 1,000 media clips, represent a team effort: OAA provides objects, records, and photographs to accompany the oral history, and the Office of Communications edits each transcript, creates video clips with closed-captioning files for accessibility, and assists with other audiovisual material production.

Beyond supporting efforts to preserve the House's history and records of its past, we also support incoming Members-elect during the transition from one Congress to the next. In close collaboration with other House Officers, Leadership, Committees, and institutional partners, our Office has already started preparing for the 119th Congress. We work closely with states and territories to ensure the timely and accurate transmittal of their election certificates to the House. With those certificates, we finalize the official roll of the House, determine Members' official names and pronunciations, produce tally sheets,

update legislative IT systems, and create and distribute voting cards. Our organization also prepares and disseminates House directories and supports Committees in archiving official records.

## **Supporting Transparency and Public Disclosure**

In addition to supporting the legislative process, Members, and the institution, we provide information to the public and process numerous required disclosures.

We administer the filing and public publishing of all financial disclosures and periodic transaction reports. In 2023 alone, we processed more than 5,700 disclosures and reports. 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 ([disclosures-clerk.house.gov](https://disclosures-clerk.house.gov)).

Additionally, we administer lobbyists' disclosures and contribution forms pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995. In 2023, we processed and published 116,771 lobbying disclosures, supported 4,047 new lobbyist registrations, and facilitated 556 registration amendments. We make these filings available online in a searchable, sortable, and downloadable format ([disclosures.house.gov](https://disclosures.house.gov)).

In addition to other modernization efforts supporting the House's legislative business, we are actively working with the Senate to modernize and harmonize the chambers' lobbying disclosure systems. Together, we established the Lobbying Disclosure Act Executive Decision Board, which reviewed proposals and decided on the next steps. The Senate is leading development and will build the modernized lobbying disclosure system on top of the Senate's existing framework, which was completed last year. We will ensure all tasks and outcomes align with House needs and requirements. These upgrades will improve the user experience, provide more efficient processing and automation, integrate the two chambers' systems, and allow for greater transparency. To solve the issue of duplicate accounts, we are working with the Senate to develop a system to assign unique identifiers to lobbyists and will build out protections for personally identifiable information as part of that effort.

Other transparency efforts include those required by law, such as the public disclosure of gift travel (1,594 documents published online in 2023) and official foreign travel (104 documents published). We also directly engage with the public and provide information to constituents, academics, researchers, and students. During 2023, LRC staff assisted nearly 7,000 people by phone, and the House Library disseminated more than 13,000 documents and answered more than 9,000 in-person, phone, and email reference questions.

## **SUPPORTING CLERK STAFF**

None of this work would be possible without the diligent and dedicated professionals who make up the Clerk's organization. We prioritize recruiting and retaining the best and brightest public service-minded individuals to join our organization. Our mission-

oriented and collegial work environment attracts talented professionals and maintaining our workplace culture is a top priority for our Office.

### **Staff Recruiting and Retention**

Our senior leadership team is laser-focused on recruiting and retaining staff. We think about these priorities holistically, with long- and short-term planning across divisions.

First, we prioritize recruiting mission-driven, public service-oriented staff. Through attendance at conferences and meetings with delegations from state legislatures, we foster relationships with nonpartisan professionals across the country whose skills match those we look for in many of our positions. Additionally, staff like the Official Reporter here today serve as ambassadors for our organization, participating in national competitions and showcasing the skills they have honed here. And finally, while we cannot offer private sector-level compensation, our emphasis on public service and on our mission helps us recruit many staff, especially in software development and technology.

We recognize that institutional knowledge is paramount: we prioritize helping Clerk staff pursue long-term careers within our Office and ensuring the next generation of institutional staff are prepared to carry out our mission. To facilitate this, we work with staff to identify cross-training and professional development opportunities. I am a product of our Office's strong investment in our staff from the moment they walk in the door. And my journey through this organization is not unique; many of us started out as House Pages or in entry level positions within the Office and have been able to pursue opportunities for advancement in each of our divisions.

In addition to working with staff on long-term career planning, we are equally focused on the everyday staff experience. As an organization with more than 200 staff with diverse roles and responsibilities, we host cross-divisional and Clerk-wide events to ensure Clerk staff get to know their coworkers and learn about the range of opportunities in our Office. Additionally, we are continually assessing our ability to offer staff improved work-life balance without sacrificing the quality of service and the standard we hold ourselves to in supporting this institution.

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 this Committee to support the House community. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I welcome your questions.