

**Written Testimony before the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress
United States House of Representatives**

July 24, 2019

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Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman, and Members of the Select Committee. On behalf of the California Legislature, we thank you for inviting us to testify today.

The Office of Legislative Counsel has been in existence for over 100 years providing legal services to the California Legislature and the Governor of California. Over the years, the office has extended its services into information technology with the establishment of the Legislative Data Center, commonly known as LDC. Employees of the Office of Legislative Counsel, including its information technology staff, are nonpartisan and provide a level of confidentiality to their legislative clients.

We will specifically address the work of LDC. LDC provides information technology services to all 120 Members of the California Legislature and legislative staff through its partnership with the Assembly Committee on Rules and the Senate Committee on Rules. Its 350 plus employees deliver a spectrum of information technology services. LDC provides configuration for desktop computers and laptops, help desk assistance, in-house software development, cybersecurity services, and network services, among others. Given the location of the California State Capitol in Sacramento with its proximity to the Silicon Valley, LDC has contracts with many different technology vendors.

Today, we want to present the Member Portfolio, which is a web application. The Member Portfolio project started several years ago in the California State Assembly. It is part of an effort to become a paperless legislative body, while taking advantage of mobile technology allowing Members access to information from anywhere, at any time, securely. Much of the information used by legislators in their day-to-day activities previously was contained in binders and written reports. LDC has developed several legislative systems over the years that have been integrated into the Member Portfolio, to alleviate the need for staff to provide information to legislators using paper. The application has streamlined the preparation process used by legislative staff and eliminated the need for paper reports and committee binders. Each Member is provided with an iPad to access the Member Portfolio.

The Member Portfolio is designed to function in a responsive manner using Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) and Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) to automatically shrink, enlarge, or resize a website to adapt to all devices with different screen resolutions. Open source Bootstrap and jQuery technologies were used to build this responsive design.

The Member Portfolio provides legislators access to information that informs their work in committees and on the floor. We will describe a few of its features below; we have also brought an iPad with us today for a hands-on demonstration.

Reporting Features: The Member Portfolio provides the ability to dynamically generate various types of legislative reports that can be exported to Portable Document Format (PDF). The reports are implemented and customized using open-source technologies. For example, if during a floor session a legislator would like to know which bills are on call, the legislator can generate a report on the Member Portfolio.

Advocacy Letters: One of the most important features of the Member Portfolio is the ability to view support and opposition letters. These letters are summarized and securely displayed for the legislator. The letters are separately classified for committees, constituents, and organizations. Advocacy groups, as well as the general public, can utilize the Position Letter Portal to submit their position on a measure to a committee electronically. Upon submission, the letter is available to be viewed by committee staff. This is handled through a different application, also developed by LDC, known as the Committee Services application. Once a letter is accepted by a committee, legislators are able to view the letter.

Staff and Caucus Recommendations: Staff recommendations and notes, and caucus recommendations, can be provided to a legislator dynamically during the floor session. Legislators rely on this feature in order to have up-to-date information before voting.

Portable Document Format (PDF) Annotations: The Member Portfolio allows users to collaborate on documents. Legislators and staff may upload their own PDF documents and annotate those documents through the Member Portfolio. This enables the legislator and staff to provide comments and reply to those comments.

WEBSOCKET: The Member Portfolio supports messaging to legislators by implementing asynchronous two-way communication between the service and multiple clients using WEBSOCKET. WEBSOCKET is a communication protocol providing duplex communication channels through a single Transmission Control Protocol connection. This technology allows legislators to receive new messages and notifications on the Member Portfolio with no need to refresh the screen.

Today's Daily File Schedule: Each house of the California Legislature maintains a Daily File showing the agenda for various committees and for the floor session by item number. The Member Portfolio provides each legislator with user-friendly access to this vital daily session business information. The application provides the ability to list all the bills on the Daily File. The display allows for the bills to be sorted by item number, bill identification, author, or location. This feature provides an up-to-the-minute snapshot of which bills are scheduled to be heard during floor session, which bills are on call, and how many bills are remaining for that session.

Real-Time Vote Information: The Member Portfolio has the ability to display vote information dynamically the moment voting is recorded for an item on the Assembly Daily File. The system also provides the ability to refresh the screen for any updates. A user is able to export the unofficial vote tally information into a PDF document.

As Amends the Law: In the California Legislature, each bill is printed and posted on a public website (leginfo.legislature.ca.gov) and on an internal site used only by legislators and staff. Each time a set of amendments to a bill is adopted, the bill as amended is printed and posted on those same public and internal sites. From version to version, the changes are shown in ~~strikeout~~ and *italic* text. Previously, the changes were from version to version and did not show a user the changes the last amended form of a bill made to the underlying existing law. With the upgrading of the bill drafting system utilized by the Office of Legislative Counsel (also developed by LDC), LDC staff were able to enhance the user experience on the public website to allow functionality known as "As Amends the Law." This functionality also shows the changes in the last amended version of the bill to the underlying existing law. Legislators have access to that functionality through the Member Portfolio.

As you can see, the Member Portfolio provides legislators in the California State Assembly with access to information necessary to carry out their lawmaking responsibilities. The electronic information is often generated dynamically, providing those legislators with up-to-date reporting as they go about their daily work of hearing and voting on bills.

Legislative work is fast-paced, hours can be long at times, meetings and events occur in multiple locations, and there is a vast amount of information for legislators to digest from multiple sources. The Member Portfolio allows legislators flexibility in conducting business in this environment.