
**STATEMENT BEFORE THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH
ON THE OFFICE OF THE CLERK FY2022 BUDGET REQUEST**

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Chairperson Ryan and Ranking Member Herrera Beutler, Members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for your ongoing support for the Office of the Clerk and for the opportunity to testify about our office's operations and FY2022 budget request.

Since our previous Appropriations hearing on March 3, 2020, we have witnessed an unprecedented challenge to the continuity of business in the U.S. House of Representatives. The Office of the Clerk has been deeply immersed in efforts to ensure that the critical functions of the House continue uninterrupted throughout a rapidly unfolding global pandemic. Because of the high level of professionalism in the Clerk's Office and the longstanding culture of preparedness and nimbleness, we have been able to seamlessly adjust to these disruptions.

With regard to the pandemic, in just a few weeks, the Clerk's Office developed new processes and systems to permit the electronic submission of legislation, additional cosponsors, and *Congressional Record* inserts. Since the Speaker announced a new policy on April 7, 2020, Clerk staff, risking falling ill with the coronavirus, have worked daily to process more than 4,500 bills in the last year.

Under the new eHopper system, there has been a 157-percent increase in bills introduced during pro forma sessions. As a result, staff spend hours processing bills long after the House concludes its daily business. For example, this year's January 28 pro forma session yielded 155 bills, of which 151 were introduced through the eHopper. Several Clerk staff collectively worked more than 12 hours to process these 155 bills.

In addition, we have processed 7,909 proxy votes, made all proxy letters available on the Office of the Clerk website, and provided a quick guide to ensure compliance with H. Res. 965 (116th Congress), which authorized remote voting by proxy. We have continued to receive and process financial disclosure documents, lobbying disclosure documents, travel authorization forms, stationery orders, and franked envelope requests. We partnered with the House Historian to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the election of Joseph H. Rainey, the first

African-American Member of the U.S. House of Representatives. The Clerk's Office also supported the House Historian's work to publish *Women in Congress, 1917–2020*, a nearly 1,200-page volume.

Working closely with our institutional partners from—quite literally—living rooms and dining room tables, Clerk staff have successfully supported the House during a remarkable time in history. And, they have done so while shouldering the personal impact of this pandemic by serving unexpectedly as schoolteachers and family caretakers.

HOUSE OPERATIONS

On January 3, 2021, as the House Clerk, I led Opening Day activities in the Chamber through the election of the Speaker. To prepare for the new Congress, Clerk staff updated the Electronic Voting System (EVS) and all other systems as well as 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. During 2020 the Office of Legislative Operations processed 4,108 introduced measures (with 62,693 cosponsors) and supported 565 hours of Floor activity.

In addition to its myriad of responsibilities in support of legislative operations, the Clerk's Office has nearly 200 duties related to the biennial transition from one Congress to the next. Those duties—which range from publishing a new Members Directory to collecting Certificates of Election for every Member, Delegate, and Resident Commissioner—were a critical focus of the Office of the Clerk during the second half of 2020.

The ongoing pandemic made this year's preparations especially challenging. But, in the end, the Office of the Clerk, as it has for 232 years, ensured that on Opening Day a new Congress could begin carrying out its constitutional mandate. And, on January 6, 2021, the Clerk's Office and the Parliamentarian worked with Senate officials on the official counting of electoral votes,

which was completed despite the terrible challenges of that day, thanks to heroic work by our staff and many others.

During the past year we upgraded all workstations and printers in the EVS network. We have also implemented centralized logging and monitoring within the EVS network to enable rapid response to outages on network devices. At present, we are continuing to work with our vendor to upgrade the display server for the EVS.

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 for many investigative interviews. Also, our Legislative Computer Systems (LCS) division maintains the Committee Repository, which is publicly available at docs.house.gov. As part of our change of Congress activities, Clerk and Parliamentarian staff offered to all Committee staff two training sessions about the services our offices provide to the Committees. More than 150 committee staff attended the sessions, during which CAO and CRS staff also discussed services they provide to Committees.

Operation of Vacant Offices

Per federal law and House Rules, the Clerk becomes the employing and certifying authority when a Member vacancy occurs, and we work with the vacant office's remaining staff to continue operations and provide constituent services until a successor is elected. The Clerk's Office is managing three vacant offices presently. We also managed the office for the 22nd Congressional District of New York until the election was certified.

Website Redesign

On July 7, 2020, we went live with the redesigned Office of the Clerk website clerk.house.gov, along with live.house.gov, which makes available live video streaming of the House Floor and real-time information on legislative activity. The mobile-friendly website incorporates modern responsive front-end design that automatically adjusts to end-user devices. We thoroughly revamped the data backend with services-based architecture that facilitates future enhancements and ease of integration with other applications. We continually update and improve the website to meet demands.

BUDGET REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022

We appreciate the Subcommittee's ongoing support for the operations of the Office of the Clerk. For Fiscal Year 2022, we respectfully request \$35,857,000, of which 90 percent would support salaries and training, and technology, to carry out our existing and new responsibilities to the House. The request is a net increase of \$3,882,000 (12.14 percent) above the FY2021 enacted funding level. A major component of that increase is for special projects, including required maintenance of the EVS, the Comparative Print Project, continuing development of the eHopper, and ongoing modernization of the Legislative Information Management System (LIMS), all of which are critical to the flow of legislative operations.

Seventy-four percent or \$26,552,000 of the overall request is salary-related expenses, including personnel compensation, cost of living adjustments, overtime for existing positions, and the establishment of six requested new positions. Eleven percent or \$4,073,000 would fund technology contractor support. Three percent or \$1,016,000 is for IT systems and processes maintenance and warranties, and two percent or \$567,000 is for equipment, including software, computer hardware, and furniture.

The remaining ten percent or \$3,649,000 of the FY2022 request is for nonpersonnel expenses associated with business continuity/disaster-recovery activities (\$251,000), staff

development and training (\$287,000), closed captioning services (\$482,000), stenographic reporting (\$800,000), and other miscellaneous expenses such as nontechnology contractor support (such as curation and exhibitions), telecommunications, supplies, subscriptions, transportation of things, travel, and printing/reproduction (\$1,829,000).

During our internal budget formulation process for FY2022, we reviewed all programs and thoroughly scrubbed each one to exclude all nonrecurring costs. Our FY2022 request would also support our many ongoing initiatives, including the following key priorities:

- Hiring of additional official reporters and technology staff
- Lifecycle replacement of the EVS
- Continued development of the Comparative Print Project
- Continued modernization of LIMS
- Contractor support for information dissemination and legislative operations, such as the Office of the Clerk website, Financial Disclosure System, Lobbying Disclosure System, and the eHopper
- Maintenance of the House Collection and scheduled rotations of exhibitions