

**STATEMENT BEFORE THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH  
ON THE OFFICE OF THE CLERK FY 2025 BUDGET REQUEST**

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

**April 17, 2024**

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espallat, and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am extremely proud to testify on behalf of the Office of the Clerk's 215 staff, whose more than 2,500 years of service to this institution are a testament to their dedication and true commitment to public service.

Thank you for your ongoing support for our Office and for the opportunity to testify about our operations and fiscal year 2025 budget request.

To put the bottom line up front, we respectfully request \$44,984,000 for fiscal year 2025, an 8.5 percent increase compared to our fiscal year 2024 enacted level. The reason for this increase is two-fold. First, this increase supports our most valuable asset: our staff. Our request includes longevities and cost-of-living adjustments. Second, the most significant increase is the line item for modernization projects, some of which received initial funding from the House's Modernization Initiatives Account. Our request enables us to continue these projects uninterrupted and meet required deadlines.

Absent the inclusion of these modernization projects, our budget request is 2.8 percent below our fiscal year 2024 enacted level. This reduction is the result of significant efforts to identify and increase efficiencies, including renegotiating contracts and locking in long-term pricing on scheduled projects, all without sacrificing mission readiness.

Critically, support for ongoing and mandated projects accounts for more than \$6,000,000 of our request. These projects include business continuity and disaster recovery activities, required maintenance of the Electronic Voting System (EVS), and modernization efforts. Specifically, our request funds ongoing development tasks concerning the Legislative Information Management System (LIMS), Comparative Print Suite ([compare.house.gov](http://compare.house.gov)), and the eHopper ([eHopper.house.gov](http://eHopper.house.gov)). This request also allows us to advance several House modernization initiatives, including the centralized Committee portal, collaborative legislative drafting tools, and the lobbying disclosure modernization project.

Seventy-nine percent of the requested amount supports nondiscretionary activities, including closed captioning and stenographic reporting contracts, salaries, and technology to carry out our existing and added responsibilities. Specifically, personnel expenses for 244 full-time equivalent positions account for \$32,521,861 of our fiscal year 2025 request.

The remaining twenty-one percent of the request addresses nonpersonnel expenses, including training, equipment, software maintenance and warranties, nontechnology contractor support, and contracts for activities such as curation and exhibition developments.

Your continued investment in our Office supports specialized, professional staff across nine divisions, the technology at the backbone of the legislative process, and the House's ongoing modernization efforts. It also enables us to provide information to the public about the legislative process, support the House's operations, assist Members in

fulfilling many of their statutory and constitutional responsibilities, and work to preserve this institution's history, art, and artifacts.

As you can see, our work is wide-ranging and interdivisional, but I would like to center my testimony on projects and personnel that support three main areas: (1) modernizing the legislative process; (2) providing transparency and public disclosure; and (3) supporting Members and the institution.

## **MODERNIZING THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS**

The Office plays a vital role in the House's daily legislative activities. We facilitate House proceedings; operate the EVS; 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 *Congressional 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.

I would like to highlight a few of our products and projects designed to improve the House's operations. These plans build upon our successes in 2023 and reinforce our commitment to engaging with users to refine our tools and deliver new features.

### **eHopper**

Implemented in 2020, the eHopper remains the primary submission method for legislative documents. Last year the eHopper accounted for 88 percent of bill submissions. We continue to release new features to increase efficiency for House staff making submissions and Clerk staff processing documents. In February we deployed updates that allow House staff to submit cosponsors with just a few clicks. This secure tool improves the quality of submissions. We worked with House Leadership and the Committee on House Administration to demonstrate these features in recent briefings to Member and Committee staff. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

## **Comparative Print Suite**

In the first quarter of 2024, we delivered new features to the Comparative Print Suite, a set of applications that displays legislative text changes in context, including how a bill changes law and how two versions of legislative text differ. These features allow advanced users to see how an amendment changes underlying bill text and to compare selected provisions in a measure to a standalone bill. We continue to partner with the Congressional Staff Academy to conduct on-demand training for House staff to learn how to use the tool and to gain access to additional features.

This year 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.

## **Legislative Information Management System**

We will continue streamlining internal processes through the ongoing modernization of LIMS. This is a mission-critical system that 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 fiscal year 2025 request includes funding for the next phase of the LIMS project, which entails updating several modules, notably the Floor Action Reporting System, and integrating the Member Information System (MIS) into LIMS. As the Subcommittee is aware, we have completed several phases. We continue to take an iterative approach. We develop and release software in short sprint cycles, which allow us to address critical feedback, resolve issues, make refinements, and respond to users' needs in real time.

We are also redesigning the MIS application and incorporating it into the new LIMS architecture. We use MIS to manage data and publish official lists of Members and Committees. To reduce duplication, improve workflows for our staff, and continue to maintain authority records in the LIMS environment, we are working to build a LIMS MIS module that will combine and improve data management from current systems.

Finally, through similar strategic planning and development, we will use the eHopper's new cosponsor feature as a foothold for importing data into Bill Briefs, a LIMS module that we redesigned last year. This feature will eliminate the need to hand-key hundreds of thousands of cosponsors and will dramatically increase accuracy and efficiency.

## **Centralized Committee Portal**

This funding also supports the creation of a centralized Committee portal. Initially, the portal will provide the infrastructure to track Committee votes and legislative histories of bills referred to a Committee. Long term, the portal will feature several modules, including a replacement for the application that Committees use to publish meetings on the Committee Repository as well as draft meetings on the Deconflict Committee Scheduler.

## **Collaborative Legislative Drafting**

Our request builds upon efforts to improve legislative drafting tools and facilitate collaborative drafting among Leadership, Members, Committees, and the House Office of Legislative Counsel. The funding supports our response to the recommendations of the ongoing study on legislative drafting and its ecosystem, which includes an exhaustive market review of available tools and will culminate in recommendations and a roadmap for improving and modernizing drafting tools and systems.

## **PROVIDING TRANSPARENCY AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE**

In addition to supporting the legislative process, we provide information to the public and process, publish, and produce numerous required disclosures. For example, during 2023, Legislative Resource Center 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.

Other transparency efforts include those required by law, such as the public disclosure of gift travel (1,594 documents published in 2023) and official foreign travel (104 documents published); financial disclosures (3,847 processed and published online) and periodic transaction reports (1,913 processed and published online); and lobbying disclosures (116,771 forms processed and published online), new lobbyist registrations (4,047), and registration amendments (556).

As the Subcommittee is aware, we are actively working with the Senate to modernize and harmonize the chambers' lobbying disclosure systems. Together, we created 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 and to meet the request of assigning unique identifiers to lobbyists, which we shared in last year's testimony, we will build out protections for personally identifiable information.

## **SUPPORTING MEMBERS AND THE INSTITUTION**

We support Members and the institution in myriad ways. For example, during the First Session of the 118th Congress, we conducted 78 required Workplace Rights and Responsibilities training sessions for Members, provided support for 12 Speaker-led ceremonial events, transferred more than 29 terabytes of electronic records and 700,000 pages of physical records to the National Archives, and processed thousands of stationery orders, franked envelope requests, and related requisitions.

In just a few weeks, we will launch our biannual efforts to prepare for the next Congress, which requires the efforts of dozens of our staff and coordination with our institutional

partners as we plan for New Member Orientation and Opening Day. We work with state election officials to provide guidance on, receive, and verify certificates of election that we use to prepare the official roll of Members. While the 119th Congress may seem a long way away, our team's early planning and experience allow us to best serve Members and Members-elect immediately following the election.

In addition to preparing for the future, many of our staff support efforts to preserve the House's history, art, and artifacts. Last year, we answered more than 1,000 reference questions, moved or installed 765 pieces of art, and updated the histories of more than 500 rooms on the Capitol campus. And as you may have seen in the Rayburn Subway, we recently installed a new exhibition, *The Capitol and the Golden Age of Postcards*, that showcases twentieth-century postcards from the House Collection.

To that end, I brought several items of historical significance with me today. Each item represents the many hours of staff work necessary to find, catalog, and preserve the House's history.

I want to take a moment to thank the Clerk team, whose work, day in and day out, exemplifies our mission to provide the procedural support necessary for the orderly conduct of the House's official business.

Chairman Valadao, Ranking Member Espallat, and Subcommittee Members, the Office of the Clerk is committed to ensuring faithful stewardship of taxpayer dollars as we serve this great institution. Thank you again for your continued support and for the opportunity to testify. I welcome your questions.