

**STATEMENT BEFORE THE COMMITTEE
ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION**

**EXPLORING THE FEASIBILITY
AND SECURITY OF TECHNOLOGY
TO CONDUCT REMOTE VOTING
IN THE HOUSE**

THE HONORABLE CHERYL L. JOHNSON

JULY 17, 2020

Chairperson Lofgren, Ranking Member Davis, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for inviting me to participate in this hearing on such a critical topic.

Since 1789 the Office of the Clerk has supported the legislative functions of the U.S. House of Representatives. The Clerk maintains the House Journal, carries bills to the Senate, delivers enrolled bills to the White House, maintains the official records of the House, and certifies the passage of legislation. The Clerk is responsible for verifying the accuracy of each vote, tallying the vote, recording the vote, and transmitting the results to the public.

After 181 years of manual voting, the House passed the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 authorizing electronic voting. And while the bill was passed in 1970, it was another three years before the system was developed and put into use. That system, the Electronic Voting System, or EVS, is a real-time, computerized information system. The EVS resides on its own private air-gapped network, separated from the House network, which affords it a very high level of security.

The voting procedures are as follows:

- Voting stations are distributed throughout the House Chamber and each is equipped with a voting card slot, voting buttons, and a system-readiness indicator.
- Each Member who chooses to vote electronically does so by inserting a personalized voting card into a voting station and selecting a voting button to cast his or her vote.
- Voting results are displayed on screens in the Chamber.

In 2018 we upgraded all the voting stations with the latest proximity card reader technology and new assistive technology for members with visual impairments. We added an LED display to provide additional vote confirmation to members directly on the voting station. We also implemented a new network architecture for greater security and flexibility for future expansions.

I am confident that we will rise to the occasion, as we always have, as the House looks to our Office to inform and implement the critical decisions it will make in the coming months and years to preserve and protect the legislative process.

Recently, many of our staff worked around the clock to develop a new electronic system for filing legislative measures and extensions of remarks, the eHopper. Since the Speaker's April 6 announcement of this new policy, there have been 1,213 measures filed electronically and 51 filed traditionally. There have also been 869 submissions for the Congressional Record.

Similarly, on May 27 of this year, pursuant to House Resolution 965, the House allowed its first proxy vote. On our website, we post the letters that designate who holds the proxy for each Member voting by proxy. As with the eHopper, our staff worked long and hard to ensure a successful implementation. To date, we have conducted 29 votes with proxies without incident.

The topic you are discussing today and moving forward is of great importance. However the House decides to proceed on how it conducts voting, our Office will be prepared to advise on the associated costs, benefits, and challenges, and we will be prepared to implement whatever decisions it makes to ensure the continuity of this irreplaceable institution.

If the House chooses to pursue remote voting, we will need to perform an exhaustive review of the requirements, available technology, and design options. After it is developed, we will need to conduct very thorough testing to ensure its highest level of security and reliability.

It is critical that we ensure complete confidence—both contemporaneously and historically—of the Members and the public in the way House votes are recorded. As with the initial development of the EVS and with each upgrade, we must take the necessary time to implement any remote voting system correctly and securely.

The mission of the Clerk’s Office is to support the House in carrying out its legislative responsibilities, and I am committed to these duties with maximum integrity and reliability.

Thank you.