Testimony before the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress

United States House of Representatives

Mike Rohrbach

IT Director / Chief Information Officer, Washington State Legislature

"Technology as an Enabler of Citizen Engagement and Legislative Processes"

July 24, 2019

Chairman Kilmer, Vice-Chairman Graves, and Members of the Select Committee: thank you for the opportunity to testify before this committee.

I am here today to talk about some of the ways we in the Washington Legislature use technology to support citizen engagement in the legislative process and how technology facilitates and improves the operations of our Legislature. In the Washington Legislature, we believe that technology should improve and add value to how the Legislature operates, not hinder it.

Transparency and Citizen Engagement

Consumer Experience

Transparency, access, and information availability are keys to a modernized Legislature and an engaged citizenry. Increasingly, citizens want a 'consumer quality' experience when interacting with their government. Signing up to testify before a committee should be as convenient as booking a hotel room. Tracking a bill that they care about should be as easy as tracking the status of a package. All from their phones and tablets.

Public Website

Engagement and transparency begin with our public website. Our website provides a wealth of information. You can learn about the Legislature and legislative processes; how to communicate with legislators; obtain all relevant information on a bill; track bills, committee hearings, and floor activity; and make public records requests. Our website won an online democracy award from NCSL for outstanding achievement in educating the public about its Legislature. We were also recognized as one of the top three state legislature websites by Congress.org.

Mobility

We have made significant investments in updating our public website to ensure that citizens have a user-friendly, consumable experience when accessing our website from phones and tablets. We continue to update our website so that the user experience (UX) is optimized to render content and images based on whatever size and type device you are accessing our website from. Some general design principles to ensure an optimized UX include:

- Dynamic content that changes based on the size of the device
- Condensed navigation
- Optimized images
- Correct padding and spacing

<u>Accessibility</u>

We are also investing in accessibility compliance so that people with disabilities obtain the same information and have the same experience as those without disabilities. Affected people include those with visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive, and neurological disabilities, including older people with changing abilities due to age.

<u>Information on the Legislature and Legislative Process</u>

Our website provides the following information about the Legislature and legislative processes.

1. Overviews of the Legislative Process
2. Resources for Students and Teachers
3. Finding Your District & Legislator(s)
4. Contact Your Legislator(s)
5. Finding Laws & Rules
6. Finding Bills
7. Comment on a Bill
8. Member Information & Rosters
9. Committee Meetings Schedules & Agendas
10. Audio & Video Archives on TVW
11. Visiting the Legislature
12. Legislative Agencies
13. Legislative Committees

<u>Contacting & Communicating with Your Legislator(s)</u>

There are several ways in which citizens can contact their legislators to allow their voices to be heard:

1. **District Finder.** Citizens can visit our District Finder and enter their address to find their legislative or congressional representatives.
2. **Member Directory.** Our Members Rosters and Directory provides rosters of members by chamber, party, district, position, and committee membership. Including links to individual member voting records.
3. **Member Email Form.** Our Member Email Form allows you to contact a legislator via a simple web form. You can also choose to comment on a bill.
4. **Public Bill Comments.** From our Bill Information Page you can choose to comment on a bill.
5. **Legislative Hotline.** Our Legislative Information Center operates a hotline you can call to leave comments on a bill or for your legislator(s), ask questions about the legislative process, or order legislative documents or publications.
6. **Direct Email.** You can email legislators directly.
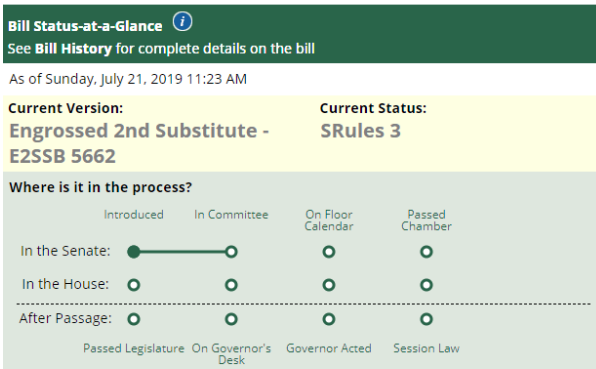7. **Member Newsletter Subscriptions.** You can sign up to subscribe and receive specific legislator newsletters.

<u>Tracking an Individual Bill</u>

1. **Bill Summary Page.** Bill Summary Page contains all relevant information about a bill as well as a simple graphical representation of where the bill is in the legislative process:

   SB 5662 - 2019-20
   Concerning cloud computing solutions.
   Sponsors: Palumbo, Carlyle, Rolfes, Mullet, Nguyen, Hobbs, Liias, Pedersen, Braun

   Bill Status-at-a-Glance ⓘ
   See **Bill History** for complete details on the bill

   As of Sunday, July 21, 2019 11:23 AM

   Current Version:
   Engrossed 2nd Substitute - E2SSB 5662

   Current Status:
   SRules 3

   Where is it in the process?

	Introduced	In Committee	On Floor Calendar	Passed Chamber
In the Senate:	●	○	○	○
In the House:	○	○	○	○
After Passage:	○	○	○	○
	Passed Legislature	On Governor's Desk	Governor Acted	Session Law

   Go to documents...
   Go to videos...

   From the Bill Summary Page, you can comment on the bill, sign up to get email notifications, or link to the RSS feed for the bill:

   💬 Comment on this bill

   📧 Get Email Notifications

   📶 RSS Notifications

2. **Email Notifications.** From the Bill Summary Page, you can choose to sign up to receive email notifications as the bill moves through the legislative process.
3. **RSS Notifications.** From the Bill Summary Page, you can link to an RSS feed that is updated as the bill moves through the legislative process.
4. **Selected Bill Tracking.** With our Selected Bill Tracking, you can create an account to have a customized experience for tracking bills.

Participating in the Legislative Process

Our website provides the following information about [Participating in the Legislative Process](#):

1. House Gallery Rules
2. Senate Gallery Rules
3. Code of Conduct
4. Find Your Legislator
5. Glossary of Legislative Terms
6. Citizen's Guide to Effective Legislative Participation
7. House and Senate Member Rosters
8. How a Bill Becomes a Law
9. How to Read a Bill
10. How to Testify in Committee
11. Legislators Back to School Program
12. Overview of the Legislative Process
13. Reports to the Legislature
14. Washington State Elected Officials
15. Washington State Government Agencies Index
16. Information About Lobbyists

Committees

1. **Electronic Committee Sign-in system.** When testifying in-person, all our committees utilize and electronic sign-in system. Testifiers can sign in using a kiosk located outside the hearing rooms or, if connected to our campus Wi-Fi network they can sign up using their phones, tablets or laptops. We offer the ability to create accounts for our electronic sign-in for convenience, so testifiers do not have to enter all their information repeatedly when testifying before multiple committees or on multiple issues.
2. **Remote Video Testimony.** Our committees utilize remote video testimony for both public and invited witness testimony. Our operators monitor and control the remote video connections for multiple, simultaneous hearings from a state-of-the-art control room. Our Senate has been utilizing remote video testimony for three years and our House currently has a workgroup whose purpose is to make recommendations for a remote testimony pilot program.
3. **Hearing Assistance.** We have begun to upgrade our committee hearing rooms with the infrastructure to boost audio for our hearing-impaired guests. We have installed an induction loop system in one of our hearing rooms that allows for a t-coil implant or hearing aid to pick up the audio anywhere in the room without any other device needed. Upon request, we also partner with third-party service providers using a CART system (Communication Access Real-Time Translation) for a closed-captioning service to provide real-time closed captioning services displayed on a laptop, projector or screen setup in the room.

Tracking the Legislative Process

1. **GovDelivery Subscriptions.** We use a third-party provider – GovDelivery – to manage email and notification communications for member newsletters, and bill and hearing notifications. You can [sign up](#) to receive updates to committees, schedules, bills and other information via email or text message. Our custom systems are integrated with GovDelivery subscriptions so that when committee hearings are published or bill history

changes, subscribers are automatically notified with no intervention required by legislative staff.

2. **Committee Meeting Documents.** Our Committee Meeting Documents page provides information about committee meeting schedules, agendas and documents.

3. **Floor Activity Reports.** Our Floor Activity Reports provide real-time information about the activities occurring in our chambers, including: House and Senate display board content, current bill activity, order of consideration and other floor calendars which contain all the relevant information about each bill on the calendar.

4. **Voting Results.** Voting results for all bills and member votes are available from a variety of locations on our website:

Roll Call

SSB 5627
Healthy energy work group
House vote on Final Passage
4/1/2019

Yeas: 92 Nays: 2 Absent: 0 Excused: 4

Voting Yea: Representative Appleton, Barkis, Bergquist, Blake, Boehnke, Caldier, Callan, Chambers, Chapman, Cody, Davis, Dent, Doglio, Dolan, Dufault, Dye, Entenman, Eslick, Fey, Fitzgibbon, Frame, Gildon, Goehner, Goodman, Graham, Gregerson, Griffey, Hansen, Harris, Hoff, Hudgins, Irwin, Jenkin, Jinkins, Kilduff, Kirby, Klippert, Kloba, Kraft, Kretz, Leavitt, Lekanoff, Lovick, MacEwen, Macri, McCaslin, Mead, Morgan, Morris, Mosbrucker, Orcutt, Ormsby, Ortiz-Self, Orwall, Paul, Pellicciotti, Pettigrew, Pollet, Ramos, Reeves, Riccelli, Robinson, Rude, Ryu, Santos, Schmick, Sells, Senn, Shea, Shewmake, Slatter, Smith, Springer, Stanford, Steele, Stokesbary, Stonier, Sullivan, Sutherland, Tarleton, Thai, Tharinger, Valdez, Van Werven, Volz, Walen, Walsh, Wilcox, Wylie, Ybarra, Young, Chopp

Voting Nay: Representative Chandler, Corry

Absent:

Excused: Representative DeBolt, Maycumber, Peterson, Vick

5. **Web Services.** We provide a suite of Legislative Web Services free of charge to anyone wishing to consume them. Our web services are update with real-time data and cover the breadth of the legislative process. The consumers of our web services are generally other state and federal agencies and non-profits who write their own custom systems and websites and want to track up-to-date legislative information that suites the requirements of their systems. This real-time integration using our web services replaced thousands of terabytes of large data dumps and thousands of hours of redundant data entry as well as improving the accuracy and timeliness of legislative data used by our partners.

6. **RSS Feeds.** We offer RSS Feeds for every bill introduced to the Legislature. Feeds are available for individual bills or you may subscribe to a bill topic feed that has updates for every bill in a certain topic. RSS feeds are used by creators of systems and websites to aggregate information on selected topics.

7. **TVW.** We partner with TVW. TVW is Washington State's version of C-SPAN. TVW covers all House and Senate committee hearings and floor debates at the State Capitol. We provide real-time integration services with TVW that includes information about bills and testifiers in committee hearing and bills and speakers during floor debates. Our technical integration with TVW has saved thousands of manual man-hours of redundant data entry and reduced errors.

8. **Public Records Requests.** Public records requests can be made right from our website home page for the House and Senate.

9. **Reports to the Legislature.** All Reports to the Legislature are posted on our website.

<u>In-Person Experience</u>

We provide the following information about [Coming to the Capitol](#):

1. Capitol Campus Map
2. Intercity Transit "Dash" Shuttle
3. State Capitol Campus Parking Information
4. Capitol Campus Visitor Information
5. General Public Tours
6. Virtual Tour of the Capitol
7. Capitol Photo Gallery
8. Veterans Memorials on the Capitol Campus
9. Legislative Gift Center
10. Americans with Disabilities Act Information
11. Agendas, Legislative Meeting Schedules, and Calendars
12. Washington State Visitor Information

<u>Capitol Campus Infrastructure Investments</u>

For those visiting or working on the legislative campus, we have made significant infrastructural investments to ensure an enjoyable and contemporary experience.

1. **Wi-Fi.** Visitors to our campus and staff who work on our campus receive a first-class, free Wi-Fi experience with solid coverage across our capitol campus.
2. **Cell Phone Coverage.** We have invested in upgrading our Distributed Antenna System (DAS) to provide comprehensive cell phone coverage across campus for the four major cell phone carriers. Our upgraded infrastructure has the capacity and ability to support the latest in cell phone technologies (including 5G and 6G technologies) from the four major cell phone providers.
3. **Audio & Video Systems.** State of the art audio and video systems ensure a high-quality, inclusive experience in our committee hearing rooms, caucus rooms and chambers.
    a. **Committee Hearing Rooms.** Multiple video displays in our hearing rooms. Agendas and schedules posted and updated electronically in the halls outside our committee hearing rooms. Overflow rooms for committee hearings that include real-time audio and video feeds. Live HD video feeds of all committee hearing rooms included in our capitol campus TV channel lineup.
    b. **Chambers.** Real-time video display boards in our chambers. Monitors displaying live video feeds outside each chamber. Live HD video feed of all chamber activities included in our capitol campus TV channel lineup.

<u>Public Records Retention & Disclosure</u>

We have made significant advancements using technology for public records retention and disclosure.

1. **Legislative Cell Phone Program.** We offer a legislative-issued and managed cell phone program for members and selected staff. For those who consider it an inconvenience to carry a second phone for legislative business, we offer a 'soft phone' application with runs on your personal cell phone and acts as a second phone number complete with phone and text messaging capabilities as well as contacts. In either option, all incoming phone call metadata (number, date/time, incoming/outgoing, duration) and all text messages (number, date/time, incoming/outgoing, content, attachments) are automatically

archived to a third-part cloud repository for retention and disclosure. We work with the cell phone carriers on this integration to ensure it occurs automatically. The advantage this provides is that there are no special applications required on the phone and physical access to a phone is not required for archiving or disclosure purposes.

2. **Public Records Retention and Disclosure.** We have partnered with a third-party, cloud solution on a public records management system. This platform allows our public records officers to manage the internal workflow of a request, offers redaction and editing capabilities as part of the disclosure review process, stores both source and disclosed documents, and allows for the publishing of disclosure request responses for future reference. Additionally, all our email is automatically archived in the cloud via archiving and retention policies that we manage using our cloud services provider (Office 365 from Microsoft).

Legislative Operations

Breadth of Systems and Services

In terms of legislative operations, we provide hundreds of systems and technology infrastructure services and integration to support the entire lifecycle of legislative processes. We have a suite of nearly 300 custom developed applications, systems and services, divided up into five major portfolios:

1. **Lawmaking and Chamber Systems.** We provide 68 applications, systems and services to support our lawmaking, workroom and rostrum staff.
2. **Committee and Caucus Systems.** We provide 42 applications, systems and services to support our committee and caucus staff and members.
3. **Public Website and Systems.** We provide 36 applications, systems, and services and thousands of web pages to support transparency and availability of information and to promote citizen engagement.
4. **Administrative and Personnel Systems.** We provide 29 applications, systems, and services to ensure that administrative staff can efficiently and effectively administer their agencies.
5. **Legislative Sub-Agency Systems.** We provide several mission critical systems to our State Actuary and Legislative Auditor.

Bill Drafting

We provide custom written desktop applications that allow our bill drafters to draft legislation and legislative documents using the tools and formats that enable them to be most efficient.

Committees and Caucuses

Our committees and caucuses have a variety of custom-developed systems for managing committee and caucus operations while providing legislators access to all the documents and reports they need. We utilize web-based and cloud tools to ensure that members and staff have access to documents and reports whether they are on or off campus so they can deliberate and make decisions about legislation.

Electronic Voting and Floor Activity Management Systems

In our chambers our members use state-of-the-art touch panel electronic voting and request-so-speak systems. Our rostrum staff can control the voting systems, chamber display boards and audio and microphone systems; publish floor calendars; process amendments; and track voting all in real time.

One of the achievements we are most proud of is the Braille integration of our Senate Voting System. It allows our blind Lieutenant Governor to seamlessly preside over our Senate and navigate the chamber without the assistance of a sighted person.

Cloud

We are increasingly leveraging cloud services. All our email is in the cloud. We also utilize the cloud for a variety of staff, committee and legislative workgroup needs, including documents and secure collaboration sites. This has provided numerous cost, security, mobility and feature advantages for all our members and staff.

Cybersecurity

We model our cybersecurity program on NIST Cybersecurity standards and regularly assess our maturity against those standards. We recently implemented our first-ever Legislature-wide cybersecurity policies and standards. In addition to significantly increasing our cybersecurity defenses and posture by leveraging policies and infrastructure, we provide a variety of cybersecurity training and consulting services tailored to the unique needs of various legislative staff and members. We have also implemented Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) to prevent unauthorized access to legislative email for our entire legislature.

2018 assessment

Average scores across category	Gov	Data	Infra	Access	Appsec
IDENTIFY (ID)	1.3	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.1
PROTECT (PR)	1.9	2.2	2.2	2.4	2.0
DETECT (DE)	1.8	2.0	2.0	2.1	1.6
RESPOND (RS)	1.5	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.5
RECOVER (RC)	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0

2019 assessment

Average scores across category	Gov	Data	Infra	Access	Appsec
IDENTIFY (ID)	1.7	1.5	1.8	1.9	1.4
PROTECT (PR)	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.2	2.1
DETECT (DE)	2.2	2.3	2.6	2.3	2.0
RESPOND (RS)	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.4	2.8
RECOVER (RC)	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.3	1.0

Scale:

1. Partial (Done sometimes, not documented)
2. Risk Informed (Risk are known response can be demonstrated.)
3. Repeatable (Process and Risks are documented)
4. Adaptive (Processes and Risks are fully mature)

Training

In order to better position our members and staff for success, we offer customized and tailored training on all our systems, technology and cybersecurity for all our new members and legislative staff. In the form of classroom and 1:1 training.

Customer Support

In addition to a professional help desk team dedicated to the Legislature, we have customer support staff embedded with our legislative workgroups. These team members provide white glove customer support service and expert consultation to specific legislative workgroups. They also act as liaisons between our customers and our more advanced tier technical support staff.

Success Measures and Continuous Improvement

Success for us is focused on consistently meeting or exceeding both customer and team member satisfaction expectations. We interview our customers and team members regularly, in-person to determine the degree to which we are meeting or exceeding their expectations. Where we are meeting or exceeding, we focus on the behaviors we want to continue. The gaps in satisfaction expectations drive all our operational process improvements. In addition to our high-level customer and team satisfaction measures, we strive for mature product and service delivery ownership across our domains and areas of responsibility. We measure and assess on a regular basis. The gaps drive our agency, team and individual performance goals.

LEG TECH — SUPPORTING A CONNECTED LEGISLATURE

	Does Not Meet	Sometimes Meets	Meets	Sometimes Exceeds	Always Exceeds
Effective & Vigilant Approach to Cybersecurity – Legislative IT assets are protected with a proactive approach to cybersecurity. The approach includes developing processes, making recommendations on best practices and policy, advising on specific security needs, utilizing the latest technologies, communicating emerging cybersecurity threats, and providing cybersecurity training to customers.	●	●	●	○	○
Expert & Collaborative Consultation – Expert technology advice is given with the knowledge of legislative processes and awareness of emerging tools and technologies. Customers are actively listened to and involved in decision-making. Solutions are presented in plain, non-technical language. All relevant information is presented for decision-making.	●	●	●	○	○
Proactive & Clear Communication – Information on staff and process changes and relevant status updates for systems upgrades, prolonged outages, or service degradations is communicated proactively. The most important points are in non- technical language and exclude unnecessary details. Customers know what is needed from them.	●	●	●	○	○
Relevant Technology & Application Training & Consulting – Instructor-led training; customized training; consulting on custom-developed legislative applications; and recommendations on other tools and technologies are available. Training is provided in a consistent and professional manner.	●	●	●	○	○
Reliable, Dependable & Intuitive Systems – Systems and applications are reliable and dependable; are seamlessly integrated; provide a consistent, modern, intuitive end user experience with minimal performance issues; and facilitate customer processes and business needs.	●	●	●	○	○
Responsive & Personalized Service – Issues are responded to quickly. The customers' sense of urgency is understood and respected. Emails and phone calls are acknowledged and returned in a timely manner. Meaningful status updates and confirmations that issues have been resolved to the customers' satisfaction are provided.	●	●	●	●	○
Timely & Transparent Project Prioritization, Plans & Delivery – Project plans and schedules are clear, achievable, and realistic. The process for project prioritization and selection, as well as order, timelines, dependencies and status of projects and portfolios, are transparent and communicated in a consistent and timely manner. Priorities are clear and communicated. Committed projects are delivered on time, within scope and within budget.	●	●	●	○	○

LEG TECH — SUPPORTING A CONNECTED LEGISLATURE

	Does Not Meet	Sometimes Meets	Meets	Sometimes Exceeds	Always Exceeds
Ample Coverage – to promote work-life balance. Reasonable workload to accommodate training, vacations, and special projects. Skills and job duties can be competently covered by more than one person.	●	●	●	○	○
Clear & Realistic Expectations – are set collaboratively with each team member. Success is clear. Each team member understands agency priorities and goals and their individual expectations are aligned with those priorities and goals.	●	●	●	○	○
Excellent Tools, Training, & Development Opportunities – including powerful computers, and multiple monitors; technical training and dedicated time to train; access to the latest technology and dedicated time to innovate; and cross-training. Advancement opportunities and career pathways into other work groups are clear.	●	●	●	○	○
Fair & Appropriate Compensation – that is competitive, including flexible work schedules, good benefits, vacation time, comp time, and expense reimbursement. Merit increases and salaries are tied to performance and productivity, not tenure.	●	●	●	○	○
Personal Accountability – for doing your job and contributing to the agency's goals. Team members do what they say they will do. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and transparent throughout the agency. Feedback on performance is given regularly by leads and peers. Performance reviews are completed on time.	●	●	●	○	○
Pleasant & Healthy Work Environment – with customizable work stations, suitable ergonomics (sit/stand desks, mice, keyboards, chairs), safety, drinking water, and high-quality natural lighting.	●	●	●	○	○
Positive Team Culture – with supportive, collaborative, and engaged team members. Co-workers volunteer to help with heavy workloads. Team members are responsive across work groups and demonstrate good humor, cooperative spirit, and strong work ethic. Team members approach each problem with an attitude of "how can we get to yes?" that objectively considers positive and negative impacts. Team leads support staff by being accessible, available, approachable, knowledgeable, transparent, and empowering team members.	●	●	●	○	○
Proactive & Effective Planning – for projects and session preparation. Systems are not released before they are adequately tested. Project plans account for testing, training and roll-out time, not just development time. Project managers and team leads work with project team members when establishing timelines, creating resource plans and planning Sprints.	●	●	○	○	○
Timely & Consistent Communication – at all levels of the work group, agency and Legislature. Staffing changes, major decisions, updates, and agency priorities are communicated transparently.	●	●	○	○	○
Trustful & Respectful Treatment – in all interactions within teams and across the agency. Team members are empowered to act with autonomy and without micromanagement. All team members trust and respect the work of other groups. Team members are responsible for contributing to solutions, providing logical and compelling recommendations, and listening to others' ideas.	●	●	●	○	○

The Key to Successful Implementation

In closing, I would like to talk about the key to making this all work. As our relatively small team of technology professionals has proven, staffing size is no barometer for success. Although I have been talking today about technology and systems, technology is not the key to success. Neither is technology a barrier to success. People are the secret sauce to making everything work. The right people. The right technical staff who are competent, committed to and proud to be working for our Legislature – who demonstrate a "get to yes" attitude in everything we endeavor. The right governance and oversight. We are lucky to have great advocates in our governance structure. Our Chief Clerk in the House, Secretary of the Senate, customer advisory group, and an engaged and knowledgeable oversight committee of legislators. We partner together to strike the right balance of high expectations for advances in technology with reasonableness and understanding. Overlooking the importance of the people, and solely focusing on technology, is certain to doom any technology or data endeavor before it even begins.