

KEVIN F. MCCUMBER
DEPUTY CLERK

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Office of the Clerk
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-6601

December 30, 2022

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
Chairperson
Committee on House Administration
1309 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rodney Davis
Ranking Member
Committee on House Administration
1216 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairperson Lofgren and Ranking Member Davis,

Pursuant to Section 504 of House Resolution 756 from the 116th Congress, I am submitting this quarterly report about establishing and maintaining a database of votes taken in Committees. This report also discusses other Committee operations matters, including the creation of a tool that will assist with scheduling Committee meetings and activities to avoid conflicts and Member double-booking.

As the Committee is aware from my October 17, 2022, report, we published two requests for information (RFIs) in January 2022 and have made recommendations, based on vendor responses and our analysis of them, for improved technical solutions to Committee work that I believe will have a positive impact on Committee and Member staff supporting Committee work. We have continued our engagement with the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) on these efforts and look forward to making progress on Committee voting and scheduling in the new year.

Status of Committee Votes

As the Committee is aware, I proposed in my October 17, 2022, report an effort to improve the electronic collection and dissemination of Committee votes while largely maintaining current Committee processes and practices. My proposal is based on the recommendations of my staff following their analysis of vendor responses to the RFI on Committee voting systems. My team has not begun work on these efforts but remains ready to begin planning the effort and engaging with potential vendors when directed.

As the Committee is aware from my last report, I recommend the creation of a Committee portal system that would serve as a next generation platform to manage Committee work. In previous reports, we have discussed the need for a comprehensive, holistic approach that addresses all systems used to manage Committee work in conjunction with other modernization efforts, such as the Legislative Information Management System (LIMS). For example, storing Committee vote data in the new LIMS would allow for efficient data exchange with other systems and organizations, such as the Committee Repository, the Government Publishing Office (GPO), Congress.gov, and various House websites, as well as for making the data publicly available.¹

Clerk staff recommend an approach that begins with a new Committee voting module to help Committee staff collect votes electronically and publish votes with data attached as a first step toward a more comprehensive platform for electronic voting in Committees and improved public dissemination of Committee votes as data.

As noted in my last report, I propose that this initial effort be directed by Clerk staff working with a vendor partner. This effort should follow established Clerk software and systems engineering processes and leverage existing Clerk infrastructure to ensure that the resulting system can be supported and maintained by Clerk staff. This approach will lessen the impact of this effort to existing Clerk projects and ensure that all deliverables conform to House standards and our longer-term goals of building a modern platform for Committee work and streamlining Committee staff workload and processes.

Status of Committee Scheduling

As the Committee is aware, CAO Catherine Szpindor and her office have agreed to take the lead on this project. Since the last report, Clerk staff participated in meetings and information-sharing sessions. We have met with CAO staff to discuss how the potential new tool relates to the Committee Repository on docs.house.gov. And, we are aware of the December 12, 2022, letter sent to the Committee from Representatives Kevin McCarthy and Steve Scalise on this matter.

We look forward to continued engagement with the CAO and her staff, including the House Digital Service, on this effort and stand ready to support them in every way possible as they move forward with the design and implementation of a new scheduling system. The CAO and her staff will provide the Committee with project status updates.

Retirement of the Committee Calendar Application

As the Committee is aware, Clerk staff have been assisting with the CAO's retirement of the Committee Calendar application. This work continues to proceed positively. As with the Committee scheduling effort, we will continue to support the CAO and Committees in this work. For reference, we have included a letter sent to all Committees on November 4, 2022.

¹ https://cha.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/democrats-cha.house.gov/files/InitialReport_HRes756_Section%20504_VotesTakenInCommittee.pdf;
<https://cha.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/democrats-cha.house.gov/files/Clerk-QR2-VotesTakenInCommittee-RELEASED.pdf>;
<https://cha.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/democrats-cha.house.gov/files/documents/Clerk-Com-Vote-Tools.pdf>.

Finally, unless otherwise directed, the next report on Committee votes and related Committee functions will be sent on or before April 15, 2023. If you or others on the Committee have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Cheryl L. Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Cheryl L. Johnson
Clerk of the House

Attachment

Chief Administrative Officer Catherine L. Szpindor and Clerk of the House Cheryl L. Johnson to the Committee on House Administration, November 4, 2022.

Office of the
Chief Administrative Officer
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-6860

November 4, 2022

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
Committee on House Administration
U.S. House of Representatives
1401 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Lofgren:

At the end of the 117th Congress, on January 3, 2023, the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) will officially retire Committee Calendars, a custom application that receives and provides legislative data including bill numbers, dates, titles, sponsors and cosponsors, Executive Communications, Memorials, Petitions, and Presidential messages.

Usage of Committee Calendars has significantly decreased in recent years, and key personnel who managed the application have since retired. The resulting impact is substantial, as the application requires periodic updating to stay compatible with new versions of Microsoft software, on which Committee Calendars is wholly dependent. Furthermore, current versions of the software will no longer be supported by Microsoft in January 2023, and efforts to move to newer versions have been unsuccessful. Each new potential update released by Microsoft could increase the likelihood of incompatibility with the Committee Calendars, thereby destabilizing its integrity and original purpose.

When Committee Calendars went live in 2010, eighteen Committees were using the application, and to-date, only three Committees are still actively using the application. Additionally, some committees continue to create and publish a Legislative Calendar without the use the Committee Calendars application.

In preparation for this change, the CAO and the Office of the Clerk will host informational sessions with key Committee staff to share best practices and identify opportunities to provide tools and data to assist Committees with replacing functions previously provided by Committee Calendars. Additionally, the CAO will assist Committees with completing existing work and archiving their Calendars if they so choose.

We appreciate your understanding and patience as the CAO continues its work to retire Committee Calendars. Attached to this letter is a draft communications plan to alert Committee

Calendars users of this change. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Once again, thank you for your continued support of our efforts to serve the People's House.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Catherine L. Szpindor".

Catherine L. Szpindor

Chief Administrative Officer

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Cheryl L. Johnson".

Cheryl L. Johnson

Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives