

Opening Statement [After Brady's Remarks]

I would like to thank Chairman Brady for calling today's hearing. Just last week, this Committee heard from officials at the Library of Congress about the technological infrastructure requirements needed to meet the Library's 21st Century mission of preserving the world's largest, universal collection of historical documents for future generations.

Similar to the Librarian's mission, the Architect of the Capitol is charged with the sizable task of preserving the historical buildings throughout the Capitol grounds, and ensuring the structural integrity and safety for the millions of visitors who travel here each year to experience first-hand the rich history of this nation's government.

Today, we are here to discuss the Architect's proposed plans for renovations that are necessary to preserve our oldest Congressional office building along with two underground parking facilities.

The Cannon House Office Building, completed and first occupied by the 60th Congress, celebrated its 100 year anniversary in 2008. The Cannon building is rich in history. Some of the critical infrastructure systems within the building have been there throughout much of that history, and are now in a steady state of decline. The Architect's facility assessment for the Cannon building identified major deficiencies including the HVAC systems, plumbing, mechanical equipment, life-safety and fire protection systems, electrical equipment, and the exterior stonework.

According to the Architect's assessments, the two House Underground Parking Garages, built in 1968, are an even more urgent matter. The garages are deteriorating to the point where there is significant structural damage, including crumbling concrete and corroding steel reinforcements.

The Architect's facility assessment was reviewed and validated by the Government Accountability Office, which

concluded with the Architect's analysis that the House Underground Garages require renovation within 2-4 years, and that the Cannon building needs to be renovated within 5-7 years.

I would like to first applaud the Architect. Under the leadership of Stephen Ayers, the AOC has aggressively and proactively tackled difficult facility planning efforts. These efforts allow us to get beyond the tunnel vision of daily maintenance and gain an understanding of the long-term requirements for the Capitol Campus. Although it is obvious that renovations are necessary in the Cannon building, I want to be clear that the Congress needs to exercise caution in determining the most appropriate way forward. Before we can be comfortable with the kind of commitment required of a renovation to the Cannon building, we need better cost estimates, better project requirements, and detailed operational plans for how to accommodate impacted Members.

I would also like to ensure that energy and water conservation measures are incorporated into the designs for all of these proposed renovations, and that they are incorporated in a manner that ensures long term cost and efficiency gains.

With that, I would like to thank each of our witnesses for joining us today to discuss these important matters and I look forward to your testimony.