

LISA P. GRANT
DEPUTY CLERK

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

April 15, 2024

The Honorable Bryan Steil
Chairman
Committee on House Administration
1309 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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

Dear Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle,

Pursuant to Section 501 of House Resolution 756 from the 116th Congress, I am submitting this report on adopting standardized formats for legislative documents.

As reported previously, legislative branch staff are working on the next phase of the “More Documents in USLM” roadmap (included below), entitled “Remaining bill/resolution versions.” The Government Publishing Office (GPO) leads this effort with representatives from the Office of the Clerk, the Secretary of the Senate, and the Library of Congress, along with the contractor who performs the modeling activities.

Beginning late in the 117th Congress, the project team has met regularly to create USLM data standards for the remaining bill and resolution versions, and numerous sets of USLM samples have been made available to the public on GPO’s USLM GitHub repository.¹ To date, the contractor has completed the modeling for all major bill versions. The team is now working to create a more robust set of sample USLM files that reflect the final modeling, which will be made available to the public on the repository soon. We anticipate that the final modeling of the remaining bill versions will be completed this fiscal year.

¹ <https://github.com/usgpo/uslm/tree/proposed/bill-version-samples>.

As part of a separate project, GPO will be making volumes 1 (1789) to 116 (2002) of the digitized Statutes at Large on GovInfo available in the USLM XML format—to join the currently available volumes back to 117 (2003). Development is scheduled to take place in an upcoming GovInfo release cycle, and GPO plans to release volumes incrementally.

Roadmap for Publishing Legislative Documents in USLM XML Format²

Completed	U.S. Code
Completed	Enrolled bills, public laws, and the Statutes at Large
Completed	HOLC/SOLC statute compilations
IN PROGRESS	Remaining bill/resolution versions (introduced, reported, engrossed, all amendments, et. al.)
C	Committee Reports
D	House portions of the <i>Congressional Record</i> , including the <i>Daily Digest</i>
E	Hearing Records
F	House Calendar
G	<i>Precedents of the U.S. House of Representatives</i>
H	<i>House Journal</i>

One central goal of this stage of the roadmap is to ensure that the modeled USLM XML is conducive to interoperability within the legislative ecosystem and considers the editing and publishing needs of all legislative organizations.

As mentioned in previous reports, there is a cross-organizational set of systems that utilizes the USLM schema. Each project builds upon the tools and successes of previous projects. The Legislative Branch XML Working Group, in consultation with the Congressional Data Task Force, continues to analyze and recommend next steps that build on the work that has already been accomplished. As with any data standardization efforts, interoperability is a key goal, and project work must address any potential impacts on documents and systems used within the legislative branch. The XML Working Group continues to discuss how to best expand the roadmap to include additional activities. We expect to complete a more extensive roadmap soon.

Below I have provided brief updates on some of the current projects using the USLM schema.

² For more information about this roadmap, please see page four of the initial report at <https://cha.house.gov/modernization-reports>.

- **GPO’s XPub Program and Related Items:** GPO’s XPub Program is replacing its aging and proprietary MicroComp composition system and associated applications—a major initiative in furthering GPO’s transformation to an all-digital, all-XML workflow. GPO is nearing completion of a production release to bring bills, resolutions, amendments, and public laws into XPub production later this year and working closely with House and Senate users and stakeholders, including the Office of the Clerk, the Secretary of the Senate, and Legislative Counsels and Committees in both chambers. Key to this production release is ensuring that XPub is fully and seamlessly integrated with the XML editors the House and Senate use to draft legislation, commonly called XMetaL and LEXA. Since the last report, GPO has delivered iterative releases for additional testing of typographical improvements and performance enhancements and is close to entering formal User Acceptance Testing for a production release. As part of this release, GPO will begin providing a responsive HTML format for bills and public laws, which will replace the plain text file GPO currently provides. Optimized for any device, including mobile devices, tablets, and desktop and laptop computers, the format uses a modern, easy-to-read layout. It also contains metadata for re-use by data providers. GPO has highlighted this format at Congressional Data Task Force meetings and provided samples of these files for download via its XPub GitHub repository.³

Moreover, in alignment with recommendations from the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress that GPO create and offer a standardized process for automating Committee hearing records, our shared vision with GPO is to enable Committees to compile hearing documents and reports using Microsoft Word and to simultaneously publish hearings and reports in print-ready PDF, HTML responsive web design, and USLM XML formats. This step would allow Committees to customize the design of hearings and reports to take full advantage of color, graphics, and typography for print and online publications.

- **Office of Law Revision Counsel’s Modernization Projects:** The Office of Law Revision Counsel (OLRC) is engaged in maintenance and enhancement work to improve the Hammurabi system for bill drafting, the ClassAct system for new law classification, and the Coda system for editing the U.S. Code. OLRC is striving to eliminate performance issues and develop new features to ensure tools for editing and improving the U.S. Code using the latest version of USLM. Additional details about these projects and our collaborative work are available in Law Revision Counsel Ralph Seep’s fiscal year 2025 statement before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch.⁴ Additionally, the Working Group is collaborating with OLRC as OLRC prepares to publish the U.S. Code in USLM 2.0.12 later this year. House Digital Services has completed initial work with OLRC to move the ClassAct system from the vendor-supplied environment to the House’s IT infrastructure.

³ <https://www.govinfo.gov/features/bdtf-meeting-march-2022>.

⁴ <https://docs.house.gov/Committee/Calendar/ByEvent.aspx?EventID=117121>.

- **Editing in XML:** As described in previous reports, the House and Senate use XML editors with a generation one schema that was implemented 25 years ago to draft legislation in a common data format. As you know, Clerk, House Office of the Legislative Counsel (HOLC), and GPO staff met with the Members of the Subcommittee on Modernization on September 13, 2023, to discuss needs and challenges for bill drafting, processing, and publishing. More recently, appropriate stakeholders, including this Committee, approved our request to use funds from the fiscal year 2023 Modernization Initiatives Account to work with vendor partners to develop a project vision, which will include user discovery, a market review, and a feasibility study of available tools and approaches for improving legislative drafting and the collaborative work required. Outsourcing this work will engage industry experts, reduce the impact on existing Clerk projects, and ensure that all deliverables conform to House standards and meet long-term sustainment needs for legislative systems. We are in the planning phases of procurement-related tasks and expect to release an RFI soon, followed by an RFQ.

Status of the USLM Schema

Below is an update on work related to the USLM schema:

- As of April 2024, the current version of the USLM schema is 2.0.12. Version 2.1 will be released in the coming months.
- USLM XML files created as a result of transformations from legacy file formats will continue to carry the Beta label.

The XML Working Group manages the schema under the guidelines outlined on the USLM GitHub page.⁵

Availability of Senate and House XML Formatted Files

As the Committee knows, bills and resolutions formatted in XML are important to the legislative process in both chambers. The XML format is rooted in section 314 of Public Law 104-197 (2 U.S.C. 181), as well as in a 1996 directive from the chairs of this Committee and the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration. For years, the House has made XML files publicly available on the U.S. House of Representatives Document Repository (docs.house.gov) and some Committees sites, such as Rules (rules.house.gov), particularly when the House has not sent proposed legislative text (of bills, resolutions, and amendments) to GPO for publishing and posting on GovInfo.

While the set of bills, resolutions, and amendments not published by GPO is narrow, House staff, particularly Committee staff who draft using the House's drafting tool, occasionally need the Senate-created XML file to prepare a bill's next iteration. In previous reports, I explained that the Senate does not make its XML files available on Senate websites. This lack of Senate XML

⁵ <https://github.com/usgpo/uslm/tree/main?tab=readme-ov-file#xml-working-group-schema-management-guidelines>.

documents adds overhead for drafters who need to rekey Senate-drafted text and prevents House staff from being able to use the Comparative Print Suite with these files. Clerk staff have raised this matter with our Senate counterparts. It is our understanding that the offices of the Secretary of the Senate and the Senate Legislative Counsel are working on these matters, and, since the last report, the Senate Legislative Counsel's office has begun including the XML file as an attachment to the PDF, similar to what the House has done for several years. We will continue to update the Committee on these developments.

As you know, in February of this year, we worked with this Committee and HOLC to make two updates to the PDF drafts that are generated by HOLC and some Committees that use the House's drafting tools: embedding a Microsoft Word version with the PDF draft and securing PDF files against text editing. The embedded Word file can be used to share the draft with other parties or for entering changes to send back to HOLC. To ensure that the PDF and XML files match, the PDF files produced by the House's drafting tools are now secured against text editing, but printing and comment functions are still available. These changes were put into production on a rolling basis in March.

Artificial Intelligence

We continue to participate in discussions around the use of AI technology and the need for carefully thought-out use cases and guardrails specifically related to topics mentioned in this report. While the institution can benefit greatly from AI, we need to exercise caution when it comes to use cases related to legislative drafting and management of the House's legal datasets, particularly enrolled measures, public laws, the U.S. Code, and the Statute Compilations.

Finally, unless otherwise directed, we will submit our next report about this work on or before September 15, 2024. If you or others on the Committee have questions about the contents of this report, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Kevin F. McCumber
Acting Clerk of the House

cc: The Honorable David Valadao, Chairman, Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee
The Honorable Adriano Espaillat, Ranking Member, Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee

Use the Comparative Print Suite to Compare Legislation



Sending Office: Office of the Clerk

Sent By: cheryl.johnson@mail.house.gov



Dear Members and staff:

You can use the **Comparative Print Suite** (compare.house.gov) to display legislative changes in context, including how a bill changes law and how two versions of a legislative proposal differ.

All House staff have immediate access to the Basic Edition of the Comparative Print Suite, which includes the **Bill to Bill Differences** and **Bill Viewer** tools.

To use the Advanced Edition, staff need to take the required Comparative Print Suite course available through the CAO's [Congressional Staff Academy website](#).

Advanced users can

- View how a bill changes law,
- Upload files to generate comparative print reports, and
- Store comparative prints.

After completing the on-demand course, staff will be granted advanced access, which may take up to 48 hours to process, excluding weekends and holidays.

For questions about legislative drafting, contact the Office of the Legislative Counsel at (202) 225-6060 or legcoun@mail.house.gov.

For assistance using the Comparative Print Suite, contact Legislative Computer Systems at Clerk-Support-ComparativePrint@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



Cheryl L. Johnson, Clerk of the
House



E. Wade Ballou Jr., Legislative
Counsel

New Comparative Print Suite Advanced Features and Log-in Requirements



Sending Office: Office of the Clerk

Sent By: Kevin.McCumber@mail.house.gov



Dear Members and Staff:

The offices of the Clerk and the Legislative Counsel are pleased to announce two new features for the Advanced Edition of the **Comparative Print Suite** (compare.house.gov):

- **How an Amendment Changes a Bill** allows staff to upload amendments drafted by the Office of Legislative Counsel and view a track changes-like outline of how the amendment would change the underlying bill or resolution if the amendment were to be adopted.
- **Bill to Bill Differences Provision Select** is a part of the **Bill to Bill Differences** tool and allows staff to select a provision to compare across two bills, for example a Title or Division in a large bill to a stand-alone, smaller bill.

To view a demonstration of the Comparative Print Suite, ask questions, or meet the product support team, please stop by the following open houses at the Congressional Staff Academy in B249 Longworth House Office Building:

Tuesday, February 13, 2024
1:00-2:00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 19, 2024
10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

All House staff have immediate access to the Basic Edition of the Comparative Print Suite, which includes the **Bill to Bill Differences** and **Bill Viewer** tools.

To use the Advanced Edition, staff must take an on-demand Comparative Print Suite course through the [Congressional Staff Academy website](https://congressionalstaffacademy.house.gov). Advanced access will be granted approximately two business days after course completion.

In addition to the tools that are available in the Basic Edition and the two new features detailed above, advanced users have access to two versions of the **How a Bill Changes Current Law** tool as well as the ability to upload files to generate comparative print reports. Advanced users also have a **My Reports** feature that stores

comparative prints generated from uploaded documents.

Starting today, February 2, all users will be required to sign in with their House credentials using the blue login box.

For questions about legislative drafting, contact the Office of the Legislative Counsel at (202) 225-6060 or legcoun@mail.house.gov.

For assistance using the Comparative Print Suite, contact Legislative Computer Systems at Clerk-Support-ComparativePrint@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



Kevin F. McCumber, Acting Clerk of
the House



E. Wade Ballou Jr., Legislative
Counsel

Tomorrow: See the Comparative Print Suite in the Longworth Cafeteria



Sending Office: Office of the Clerk

Sent By: Catherine.Cooke@mail.house.gov



March 18, 2024

Dear Members and Staff:

Stop by the Longworth Cafeteria **tomorrow, March 19, 10:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m.**, to learn more about the **Comparative Print Suite** (compare.house.gov). See a demonstration, ask questions, and meet the product support team and Office of Legislative Counsel staff.

The Comparative Print Suite is a set of applications that display legislative changes in context, including how a bill might change current law and how two versions of a legislative proposal are different.

For questions about legislative drafting, contact the Office of the Legislative Counsel at (202) 225-6060 or legcoun@mail.house.gov.

For assistance using the Comparative Print Suite, contact the Clerk's product support team at Clerk-Support-ComparativePrint@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Kevin F. McCumber in black ink.

Kevin F. McCumber, Acting Clerk of
the House

Handwritten signature of E. Wade Ballou Jr. in black ink.

E. Wade Ballou Jr., Legislative
Counsel

Today: See the Comparative Print Suite in the Longworth Cafeteria



Sending Office: Office of the Clerk

Sent By: Catherine.Cooke@mail.house.gov



March 19, 2024

Dear Members and Staff:

Stop by the Longworth Cafeteria **today, March 19, 10:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m.**, to learn more about the **Comparative Print Suite** (compare.house.gov). See a demonstration, ask questions, and meet the product support team and Office of Legislative Counsel staff.

The Comparative Print Suite is a set of applications that display legislative changes in context, including how a bill might change current law and how two versions of a legislative proposal are different.

For questions about legislative drafting, contact the Office of the Legislative Counsel at (202) 225-6060 or legcoun@mail.house.gov.

For assistance using the Comparative Print Suite, contact the Clerk's product support team at Clerk-Support-ComparativePrint@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Kevin F. McCumber in black ink.

Kevin F. McCumber, Acting Clerk of
the House

Handwritten signature of E. Wade Ballou Jr. in black ink.

E. Wade Ballou Jr., Legislative
Counsel