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H-154 THE CAPITOL

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

July 15, 2021

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,

As required by Section 504 of House Resolution 756 from the 116th Congress, agreed to by the House on March 10, 2020, I am submitting this quarterly report about establishing and maintaining a database of votes taken in Committees.

While staff have continued their discussions about this subject matter, the status of our work has not changed significantly since we submitted our initial report to the Committee on July 8, 2020.¹

Additionally, my staff have read Section 3(k) of House Resolution 8 from the 117th Congress, which calls for improvements to the existing Committee Repository to increase the public availability and identification of legislative information, including votes and other material, that

¹ Office of the Clerk. *Votes Taken in Committees*, July 8, 2020.

https://cha.house.gov/sites/democrats.cha.house.gov/files/InitialReport_HRes756_Section%20504_VotesTakenInCommittee.pdf

House Committees produce. We are aware of other requests about Committee information that involve

- Making continued improvements with regards to accessing Committee information on Congress.gov to include transcripts, videos, votes, and legislative text, and
- Creating functionality in the Committee Repository that will allow staff to avoid double-booking Members in Committee meetings held at the same time.

My Legislative Computer Systems (LCS) staff work closely with the Congress.gov team to ensure that material posted on the Committee Repository is available on Congress.gov. The Congress.gov team also posts Committee video alongside the material House Committees have posted on docs.house.gov. Examples of this hearing information and video pairing are available at congress.gov/event/116th-congress/house-event/110591 and congress.gov/event/116th-congress/house-event/110928.

I would also like to note that during Committee Repository training workshops, LCS staff train Committee staff on House rules and the standards this Committee has set about what is required and recommended to be posted on the Committee Repository.² They inform Committee staff about the data exchange with Congress.gov.³

LCS staff have these items on our backlog of modernization projects. As we stated in the initial report, we want to build solutions that are based on human-centered design (HCD) principles and that have input and buy-in from staff across Committees. My staff and I are aware of the need to improve the systems and procedures used by Committee clerks and to streamline the dissemination of Committee information to the public.

As part of the LIMS modernization project, we are making improvements to applications Clerk staff use to record Committee activities for inclusion, where applicable, in the *Congressional Record*, in the House and Committee Calendars, and on Congress.gov. Building on this work, we would like to take a comprehensive approach to modernizing all Clerk systems related to Committee work, including the Committee Repository, but we are currently limited by staff workloads and prioritization of other projects, such as the current phase of the LIMS modernization and electronic submission of legislative documents (eHopper).

In our initial report about Committee votes as data, we included information about where House rules require Committee vote data to be published, and we noted that there are no published guidelines or standards on the collection or data exchange of Committee votes as data. Any system adopted to manage Committee votes must ensure interoperability between a number of systems across the legislative branch that process, manage, and publish Committee data. As noted above, I would prefer a comprehensive, holistic approach that addresses all systems used

² Standard for Electronically Posting House and Committee data on docs.house.gov, approved on December 16, 2011: https://housenet.house.gov/sites/housenet.house.gov/files/documents/electronic_posting_standards_0.pdf.

³ Integrating Committee Repository Data on Congress.gov: <https://housenet.house.gov/sites/housenet.house.gov/files/documents/committee-repository-congressgov-quick-guide.pdf>.

to manage Committee work and is considered in conjunction with other modernization efforts, such as LIMS. For example, storing Committee vote data in the new LIMS system would allow for efficient exchange with the Committee Calendar application, the Government Publishing Office (if needed for including in Committee reports), Congress.gov, and various House websites.

Should the Committee wish to discuss these matters in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Cheryl L. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Clerk of the House