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

October 15, 2020

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 505 of House Resolution 756, agreed to by the House on March 10, 2020, I am attaching this quarterly report about the assignment of unique identifiers for reports filed by registered lobbyists.

If you or others on the committee have questions about this report, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Clerk of the House

Enclosure

Assignment of Unique Identifiers for Reports Filed by Registered Lobbyists

As required by Section 505 of House Resolution 756, agreed to by the House on March 10, 2020, the Clerk of the House submits this quarterly report about the assignment of unique identifiers for reports filed by registered lobbyists.

As described in the initial report, the Office of the Clerk maintains a set of applications and services that compose the Lobbying Disclosures and Contributions Systems built between 2006 and 2012.¹ In the initial report, we identified two potential solutions with different costs and benefits:

- 1) Clean up the current database to reduce duplicate lobbyist entries and incrementally improve the validation process within the current system.
- 2) Overhaul the lobbying disclosure system and the lobbyist validation process by integrating Personally Identifiable Information (PII) as part of the registration procedure.

We have reviewed what would be involved to complete the two potential solutions and have prepared a list of questions regarding scope and desired project outcomes to discuss with the Committee and the Senate.

A high-level outline below describes what is involved in each solution.

Solution 1: Incrementally improve the current database and validation/disclosure process

Since the initial report, we have reviewed the current lobbyist and lobbying report data, and we have identified what is necessary to improve the existing system.

- Review roughly 20,000 unique lobbyist accounts manually, combine duplicate accounts, and deactivate accounts created in error.
- Enhance the backend applications that are used internally to manage lobbyist accounts, which will help us link and deactivate duplicate accounts and minimize the creation of duplicate accounts.
- Build a new administrative component that will allow for programmatic and manual review of lobbyist names found on Lobbying Disclosure registration and reporting forms.
- Improve the Lobbying Disclosure Electronic Filing Web Application to assist Registrants in selecting lobbyists from a list to add to the Lobbying Disclosure registrations and reporting forms instead of the current free text method.
- Upgrade the existing Public Search Application and its supporting components to index and display the Lobbyist ID on filings.

Solution 2: Overhaul the lobbying disclosure system with PII data

Since the initial report, we have researched how we can institute PII data as part of lobbyist registration and account verification. We have identified two options that we are continuing to explore.

¹ <https://cha.house.gov/sites/democrats.cha.house.gov/files/documents/Assignment%20of%20Unique%20Identifiers%20for%20Reports%20Filed%20by%20Registered%20Lobbyists.pdf>

- **Integrate PII into the existing system:** This option would include all steps listed for Solution 1 and add an industry-standard PII verification process. Using PII would confirm that lobbyists have only one account and would prevent duplicate accounts from being created in the future.
- **Integrate PII in a redesigned and modernized system:** The current system consists of many 8- to 15-year-old components. Redesigning and modernizing the entire system would allow for us to bring more integrity, transparency, and accountability to the lobbyist account management data.

Our next step is to discuss these options and our remaining questions with the Committee and the Senate. Following these discussions, we will identify and agree to a solution. At that point, my office will document agreed-upon high-level project goals and resume our research on resources needed to achieve the desired outcomes.