



# STANDARDS FOR THE ELECTRONIC POSTING OF HOUSE AND COMMITTEE DOCUMENTS & DATA

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION  
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Approved by  
The Committee on House Administration  
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**In accordance with the Speaker’s initiative to increase transparency of House and committee operations, the Committee on House Administration, as directed by House Rules<sup>1</sup>, has established the following standards for posting House and committee documents and data electronically. These standards will be phased in and subject to periodic review and reissuance. The standards are intended to ensure that Members and the public have easy, advance access to legislation considered by the House and its committees.**

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## **Documents and Data Covered by Standards**

The following House and committee documents and data files are covered under these standards:

### **House Documents:**

- » Bills to be considered by the House
- » Resolutions to be considered by the House
- » Amendments to be considered by the House
- » Conference Reports to be considered by the House

### **Committee Documents:**

- » Committee rules
- » Bills to be considered by committees
- » Resolutions to be considered by committees
- » Prints or other legislative text intended to serve as the base text for further amendment
- » Meeting Notices
- » Witness Lists
- » Witness testimony
- » Truth in Testimony disclosure forms<sup>2</sup>
- » Public notices
- » Amendments adopted by committees
- » Committee record votes

Although not required by House rules, committees are encouraged to post additional committee documents online, including oversight plans, committee transcripts, committee prints, and committee activity reports.

## **House Documents**

The Committee on House Administration directs the Clerk of the House to establish a centralized website where Members and the public can access all House documents in a downloadable, open format<sup>3</sup> within the time frames established by House Rules. This centralized location shall be established for House Documents no later than January 1, 2012.

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<sup>1</sup> Rule X, clause 4 (d)(1), states that the Committee on House Administration shall establish and maintain standards for making documents publicly available in electronic form by the House and its committees.

<sup>2</sup> Due to signature requirements Truth in Testimony forms will be scanned with an original signature. Forms will be OCR'd to maximize searchability.

<sup>3</sup> For this purpose, open formats are defined as formats that are widely available and permit data indexing. The House uses XML for most legislative documents. The documents are drafted using standards documented at <http://xml.house.gov/>.

## **XML Standards**

Committees are encouraged to post documents in XML when possible and should expect XML formats to become mandatory in the future. The Office of the Clerk will update XML standards as required to support these documents. The XML standards will be publically available at <http://xml.house.gov>.

## **File Naming Standards**

The Office of the Clerk will publish and maintain naming standards for each document to be posted. These standards will facilitate automated searching and uploading of such documents. Files will be posted using permanent URL links. These links will facilitate outside and committee usage of these files. In addition, permanent URL links will allow each archived committee website to maintain functionality.

## **Committee Documents**

The Committee on House Administration further directs that the Clerk provide additional functionality on the centralized website for House documents to support committee documents; until the completion of such functionality, House committees are responsible for posting committee documents in a searchable PDF format in an appropriate location on the committee majority's website. XML versions of documents, when available, should be posted at the same location.

## **Video Requirements**

Committee video of hearings and markups will be stored by the House to meet requirements for archiving, access, searchability, and authenticity.

## **Additional Review and Reissuance**

To ensure documents are made available in user-friendly formats that preserve their integrity, these standards will be subject to periodic review and reissuance by the Committee on House Administration. It is the intent of the Committee to implement standards that require documents to be electronically published in open data formats that are machine readable to enable transparency and public review.