



READY STATE LABS

RENOVATING THE PEOPLE'S HOUSE

Rules Reforms for the 120th Congress

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INTRODUCTION

The Constitution gives each house of Congress the power to determine the rules of its proceedings. The House of Representatives exercises that authority at the beginning of each two-year Congress, when its members approve a resolution establishing the rules under which the chamber will operate.

In practice, the House does not write its rules from scratch every two years. It generally adopts the preceding Congress's rules while incorporating changes. Those changes may amend the House rules directly or take the form of separate orders – freestanding provisions that govern House procedure for the duration of a single Congress and then expire. Adopting a recommendation as a separate order allows the House to test a change without fully committing to it. Many lapse after one Congress. Others are renewed repeatedly, survive changes in party control, and remain in force for a decade or more. When they persist across multiple Congresses – and especially when they survive changes in party control – the House may ultimately incorporate them into its standing rules.

The recommendations in this report can be implemented in two ways. Some require changes to the House rules themselves, while others could be adopted through separate orders. The report also recommends incorporating several long-standing separate orders into the rules for continuation in the next Congress: the machine-readable documents order, in force in every Congress since the 114th; and the four workplace-rights orders, in force in every Congress since the 116th. Doing so would recognize their durability and signal that the House regards them as permanent features of its institutional framework, not temporary procedural arrangements. The House has recently shown how this is done: the procedures governing district work periods ran as a separate order in the 118th Congress and were codified as cl. 13 of Rule I in the 119th Congress.

The beginning of the 120th Congress is an opportunity for members to reconsider how the House rules can better support the institution and the people it serves. This report offers recommendations for making the House more transparent, effective, accountable, and secure. It builds on [our](#)

[recommendations](#) for the 119th Congress and continues a series of proposals developed over the past decade. The recommendations reflect extensive conversations with congressional practitioners and institutional experts about reforms that could strengthen the House’s capacity to perform its constitutional responsibilities.

This report is a joint publication of the American Governance Institute, the Foundation for American Innovation, and Ready State Labs.

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OPENING CONGRESS

These recommendations increase transparency by making it easier for the American people to understand the House and track how it conducts its business. The objective is to ensure the House is more open and accessible by improving public access to legislative information such as bill and amendment text, debate transcripts, and votes.

Mandatory Reports Due to Congress

RECOMMENDATION

Require the House to maintain a list of all statutory requirements for agencies to submit reports to the House, the Senate, its committees, and its subcommittees.

BACKGROUND

The Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act (Public Law 117-263) presently requires executive-branch agencies and departments to submit reports to the Government Publishing Office for publication. And Rule II, cl. 2(b) requires the Clerk to compile and deliver a comprehensive list of required reports from “officers and departments” to each member. The list includes only reports owed to Congress as a whole. This recommendation would expand the list to include reports owed to committees and subcommittees.

Congressional Budget Justifications

RECOMMENDATION

Require online publication of Congressional Budget Justifications submitted to the House by its support offices and legislative-branch agencies in a centralized location.

BACKGROUND

Congress imposed a comparable requirement on executive agencies in the Congressional Budget Justification Transparency Act of 2021 (Public Law 117-40), requiring budget justification materials be publicly available on government websites. The House should apply the same transparency principle to its own budget justifications.

Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group

RECOMMENDATION

Require the Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group (BLAG) to publish online its official positions, interventions, and court filings as structured data.

BACKGROUND

Rule II cl. 8(b) presently regulates BLAG. The House has repeatedly authorized BLAG-directed litigation by resolution and separate order.

National Archives Document Access

RECOMMENDATION

Allow the National Archives to release committee records without prior committee approval after 10 years, and require each committee to establish a process and designate a public point of contact for initiating document requests.

BACKGROUND

Rule VII, cl. 3(b)(4) allows the National Archives to release ordinary committee records without prior authorization after 30 years. Rule VII, cl. 3(b)(2) allows the Archives to release investigative records containing personal data and closed-hearing records after 50 years. Rule XI cl. 2(e)(3) also defines access standards for committees and requires that each panel vote to withhold records longer. This recommendation shortens that period and facilitates public access without removing committee ability to withhold records.

“Dear Colleague” Access

RECOMMENDATION

Require default publication of all “Dear Colleague” letters in a central online database and allow the originating member office to opt out.

BACKGROUND

“Dear Colleague” letters are distributed through the e-Dear Colleague system, which the Chief Administrative Officer deployed in 2009 and administers as a service to member offices. No House rule governs their distribution, retention, or publication. There is no public archive. Commercial services collect and resell them, so the letters are in practice available to subscribers but not to the public. This recommendation would make publication the default and give the originating office an opportunity to opt out.

House Inspector General Reports

RECOMMENDATION

Require the House Inspector General (IG) to publish the title and summary of the subject matter of the reports it has completed or submitted for review online in a timely fashion, including any necessary redactions to protect national security or individual privacy.

BACKGROUND

The recommendation would align the rules with prior House practice. Rule II, cl. 6 authorizes the House IG and directs it to report to the Speaker, Majority and Minority leaders, and the Committee on House Administration. The rule does not presently require publication. However, IG reports were published in practice from 1995 to 2006.

Committee Transcripts

RECOMMENDATION

Direct committees to make unofficial searchable transcripts and audio and video recordings of their proceedings available online within 24 hours.

BACKGROUND

This recommendation extends existing requirements to cover searchable transcripts and sets a deadline. Rule XI cl. 2(e)(1)(A)(i) requires committees to keep a “substantially verbatim transcript” of all hearings. Rule XI cl. 2(e)(5) requires committees to provide audio and video coverage of their proceedings and to make the records publicly accessible afterward.

Public Participation Form

RECOMMENDATION

Require each hearing announcement to specify how the public may submit testimony and other information to the committee and encourage each committee to publish that information on its own website. Each form should carry a unique identifier – like an agency notice-and-comment process. The Clerk and the Chief Administrative Officer should provide the support necessary to automate the process.

BACKGROUND

Rule XI, cl. 2(g)(3) requires the chair of a committee to announce the date, place, and subject matter of a hearing or meeting, and requires that the announcement be published promptly in the Daily Digest and made publicly available in electronic form. Nothing in the rule addresses how a member of the public may submit material for the committee’s use. Committees accept written statements by their own practice, without a common format, a common identifier, or any assurance that the submission enters the record.

Committee Amendments

RECOMMENDATION

Require committees to make the text of amendments available online prior to their consideration except in cases when the chair determines that it is impracticable to do so.

BACKGROUND

This recommendation applies existing publication requirements in the House rules to committee amendments. Rule XI, cl. 2(e)(6) requires committees to make the text of adopted amendments “publicly available in electronic form” within 24 hours and within 48 hours for amendments disposed of or withdrawn. Rule XI, cl. 2(g)(4) requires committees to make the text of legislation “publicly available in electronic form” 24 hours before mark-ups.

Statistics on Congress

RECOMMENDATION

Direct the Chief Administrative Officer (or other relevant office) to publish statistics about the House online in a structured data format. The statistics should track members’ and staff tenure and compensation. They should also identify the number of congressional staff and operating expenses, and aggregate data on legislative activities such as hearings, votes, and session time. The data should also include historical reporting on spending by line items for the legislative branch and historical spending information on the 302(b) allocations for the legislative branch, as well as a breakdown of defense versus nondefense appropriations spending. Finally, it should track the volume and type of incoming communications to Congress.

BACKGROUND

The rules do not require the House to publish institutional statistics in machine-readable form. The closest precedent is the Statement of Disbursements, a quarterly report of House receipts and expenditures. The House began publishing the report online in 2009 and now makes the underlying information available in searchable, machine-readable CSV files.

The Statement of Disbursements therefore provides an established model for requiring the House to publish institutional data in a form the public can download and analyze.

Legislative Resource Center

RECOMMENDATION

Require all documents that are available for public access at the Legislative Resource Center (LRC) be published online contemporaneously when they become publicly available. In addition, the Legislative Resource Center should make electronic copies of records available at no cost.

BACKGROUND

The House already requires the Legislative Resource Center to make several categories of records available to the public. The Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, as amended by the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007 (Public Law 110-81), requires lobbying registrations, activity reports, and certain contribution reports to be available to the public online. The STOCK Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-105) requires online public access to financial disclosure reports filed by Members of Congress and congressional candidates. House rules and federal law also require Members, officers, and certain employees to file financial disclosure information with the Clerk, which the Legislative Resource Center and the Clerk's online disclosure system make available to the public.

Committee Votes as Structured Data

RECOMMENDATION

Require committee votes to be recorded in a structured data format and published in a central database available to the public upon the Clerk of the House of Representatives' completion of the relevant committee portal module. To the extent practicable, amendments should be made available to Members and the public demonstrating how the amendment would alter the underlying legislation or an amendment. Committees and subcommittees are encouraged to vote using automated means to facilitate implementation.

BACKGROUND

This recommendation expands existing publication requirements in the House rules. Rule XI, cl. clause 2(e)(1)(B)(i) requires the results of committee record votes to be made publicly available electronically within 48 hours, including the name of each member voting for and against the proposition and the names of members present but not voting. Additionally, the House Modernization Committee final report recommended the creation of such a database (H. Rept. 116-562), a recommendation adopted by the House in H. Res. 756 § 504 (2020).

Machine-Readable Legislation

RECOMMENDATION

Incorporate the existing separate order requiring publication of legislative documents in machine-readable formats into the House rules or retain it in its current form in the 120th Congress.

BACKGROUND

The continuation of the machine-readable legislation separate order under both parties provides an established basis for incorporating it into the House rules. Rule X, cl. 4(d)(1)(E) directs the Administration Committee to establish and maintain standards for making House documents publicly available in electronic form. The House has approved a separate order concerning machine-readable legislative documents every two years since the 114th Congress.

Structured Data for Appropriations Bills

RECOMMENDATION

Draft legislative language and favorably reported appropriations subcommittee and full committee text should be accompanied by an electronic spreadsheet that shows in tabular form each spending line item to be considered. For each item, the spreadsheet should reflect not only currently proposed spending but also spending on that line item on an annual basis over

at least the last two decades, adjusted and unadjusted for inflation. The spreadsheet should be made publicly available prior to a markup at least 24 hours in advance, and within 24 hours of the completion of a proceeding.

BACKGROUND

This recommendation would establish a new disclosure requirement for appropriations bills. The rules do not presently require a spending-line-item spreadsheet to accompany reported appropriations legislation. Rule XI, cl. 2(g) (7) also exempts Appropriations Committee hearings conducted under Rule X, cl. 4(a)(1) from the general hearing requirements.

Open Source Policy

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee on House Administration and House Ethics Committee, in consultation with the Chief Administrative Officer and the Clerk, should issue an open source code policy that is published online and regularly updated. In addition, the House should use open source software whenever practicable.

BACKGROUND

The Clerk publishes bill XML data and the CAO has released some code, both administratively.

Legislative Vehicle Metadata

RECOMMENDATION

It is often difficult to identify when one bill becomes the legislative vehicle for another. This will make it possible to use an automated means to make that determination. The House Clerk (or CRS) should identify in all bill metadata starting in the 120th Congress which Rules Committee resolutions are connected to which bills.

Mapping Legislation

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the Clerk to make publicly available the natural language processes it uses to execute plain-language legislative instructions in legislative text to mark up legislation and the U.S. Code and create a portal to allow the public to use the tool.

BACKGROUND

This recommendation would expand the House’s comparative prints process to the public. Rule XIII, cl. 3(e) requires committee reports to show changes in existing law. The House required publication of the full text of provisions proposed to be repealed or amended in 2015 and consolidated those requirements into a single comparative print in 2017.

Expand the House Digital Service

RECOMMENDATION

Codify the House Digital Service (HDS) – a specialized group of technologists, designers, and mission specialists focused on improving congressional operations – with its own charter, hiring authority, and appropriations line item. In this process, the mission, structure, and authorities of the House Digital Service should be clarified in order to maximize its effectiveness.

EMPOWERING COMMITTEES & ENHANCING OVERSIGHT

These recommendations empower House committees and strengthen oversight. They provide committees with the staff, information, technology, and institutional resources needed to develop legislation, conduct rigorous oversight, and hold the executive branch accountable.

Markup Notice

RECOMMENDATION

Require public notice of a committee markup at least 72 hours before the meeting or by 9 a.m. on the preceding Monday, whichever occurs sooner. Permit the notice requirement to be waived under the same circumstances and procedures provided by current House rules.

BACKGROUND

This recommendation revises the existing notice framework by setting a Monday deadline for committee meetings scheduled later that week. Committee notice requirements originated in the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 and were incorporated into the House rules in the 92nd Congress. The initial requirement was one week's notice for hearings. In the 104th Congress, the House permitted shorter notice upon a finding of good cause. The House adopted its current three-day notice requirement for committee meetings in the 112th Congress. And it excluded weekends and legal holidays from the calculation in the 116th Congress.

Increase Capacity for Committee Policy Staff

RECOMMENDATION

Increase the number of professional staff available to standing committees to strengthen their capacity to conduct oversight, develop legislation, and evaluate executive-branch agencies and programs.

BACKGROUND

This recommendation empowers the House by continuing the established practice of increasing committee capacity through its rules. For example, major changes accompanied the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 and its incorporation into the House rules in 1953, the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 and the rules adopted for the 92nd Congress, and the rule changes adopted by the House in the 104th Congress.

Inherent Contempt Power Guidance

RECOMMENDATION

Require the Committee on Rules to review the House's inherent contempt authority and promulgate guidance governing its use.

BACKGROUND

Congress has historically exercised an inherent contempt power. Its last use of the traditional arrest-and-detention procedure arose from the Senate's 1934 arrest of William P. MacCracken Jr. during the 73rd Congress – an action upheld the following year by the Supreme Court in *Jurney v. MacCracken*. The House has not directed the Committee on Rules to issue guidance specifically governing inherent contempt. However, it has directed the committee to issue procedural regulations. Those precedents provide a model for the proposed guidance.

Select Committee on House Modernization and Procedure

RECOMMENDATION

Establish a 15-member Select Committee on House Modernization and Procedure to advance institutional modernization and oversee specific matters of chamber-wide governance. The House would elect its members at large by single transferable vote from among candidates who meet specified nomination requirements.

BACKGROUND

The Select Committee on the House Modernization of Congress was established in the 116th Congress and reauthorized in the 117th Congress. It expired at the end of the 117th Congress, and the House Administration Committee presently has a Subcommittee on Modernization and Innovation. This recommendation would create a select committee with authority to report qualifying measures directly to the House and members elected at large by single transferable vote.

Congressional Budget Act Commission

RECOMMENDATION

Establish a commission to recommend improvements to the congressional budget and appropriations process, with a final report due by April 15, 2028.

BACKGROUND

Congress has repeatedly used temporary panels to review the budget process, including the joint study committee whose work preceded the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 and the Joint Select Committee on Budget and Appropriations Process Reform established in 2018. Both were created by statute because both were bicameral. A commission established by the House alone would be created by resolution, and the House ordinarily gives such a body the form of a select committee. The April 15 reporting date corresponds to the date by which the concurrent resolution on the budget is to be adopted under section 300 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

Proportional Representation Commission

RECOMMENDATION

Establish a commission to study the use of proportional representation in elections to the House of Representatives and to report its recommendations to the Select Committee on Modernization and Procedure by April 1, 2028.

BACKGROUND

Statute, rather than rule, sets the size of the House and how its Members are elected. The membership has been apportioned based on “the then existing number of Representatives” since the Permanent Apportionment Act of 1929 (Public Law 71-13), and the requirement that Representatives be elected from single-member districts is codified (2 U.S.C. § 2c). A commission established by the House could study the question and recommend, but any change to the method of election would require legislation.

Reestablish the House Committee on Elections

RECOMMENDATION

Re-establish a standing Committee on Elections and transfer elections-related jurisdiction from the Committee on House Administration to the new committee. The Committee on House Administration should retain jurisdiction over the internal administration and operations of the House.

BACKGROUND

The House established the Committee on Elections as one of its first committees in 1789. The panel’s growing workload led the House to divide it into three Committees on Elections before abolishing elections-focused committees and transferring that jurisdiction to the House Administration Committee.

Strengthen the House Administration Committee

RECOMMENDATION

Increase the number of professional staff authorized for the Committee on House Administration to reflect its expanded jurisdiction, regulatory responsibilities, and oversight obligations.

BACKGROUND

Rule X, cl. 9 allocates each standing committee not more than 30 professional staff, a figure the House has set by rule four times: four under the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (Public Law 79-601), six under the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 (Public Law 91-510), 18 in the 93rd Congress, and 30 in the 104th Congress. The Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 created the House Administration Committee. Its jurisdiction has expanded substantially since then, most recently through the regulatory and implementation duties assigned to it by separate order in the 118th and 119th Congresses.

Subpoena Power Working Group

RECOMMENDATION

Establish a House working group to develop legislation strengthening enforcement of congressional subpoenas and contempt citations. The working group should consider authorizing an independent special counsel to determine whether to prosecute contempt findings and establishing an expedited judicial review and enforcement process that narrows the issues presented where appropriate.

BACKGROUND

The House's statutory criminal-contempt provisions (codified at 2 U.S.C. §§ 192-194) date to 1857 and have not been substantially revised. House rules have not previously created a working group devoted to contempt enforcement, although the House frequently establishes temporary study bodies by resolution. The recommendation would use that familiar institutional form to review the issue.

House Regulatory Review Office

RECOMMENDATION

Establish a House Regulatory Review Office to provide Congress with independent analysis of major proposed rules and regulations, expiring and expired authorizations, and other regulatory matters. The office should support committee oversight, track agency compliance with changes in authorizing law, and provide regulatory expertise to members and committees. It should also examine how Congress can strengthen oversight of and engagement with the regulatory process in light of changes in judicial deference to agency interpretations of federal law.

House Office of Science and Technology and Chief Scientist

RECOMMENDATION

Establish a nonpartisan House Office of Science and Technology, led by a director (“Chief Scientist”), to help members and committees identify and access expert resources relevant to policy formation. The office should coordinate access to internal resources, including CRS and GAO, as well as expertise in the executive branch and private sector, and should improve coordination among government entities to reduce duplication. The office should have a small professional staff and provide services to committees based on their needs in consultation with committee chairs. It should organize substantive bipartisan briefings for members and staff on emerging scientific and technological issues and work with the Chief Administrative Officer to create a HouseNet portal for accessing expert resources.

House Chief Data Officer

RECOMMENDATION

The House should create a Chief Data Officer. The CDO should have the responsibilities of supporting efforts to coordinate the Congressional Data Task Force; supporting the adoption of artificial intelligence tools throughout

the House; tracking datasets released by the legislative branch; providing advice, guidance, and encouragement to offices regarding the publication of legislative-branch information as data; supporting the annual Legislative Data and Transparency Conference; and supporting and providing assistance to the public with finding and obtaining legislative data. The CDO should serve as a forum for convening relevant internal stakeholders to coordinate strategies, procurement, and knowledge-sharing; consult with internal and external experts; and serve as a clearinghouse for routing technical inquiries, issues, and ideas.

BACKGROUND

The House has established institutional officers and support offices through its rules and organizing resolutions, including the Chief Administrative Officer, the Inspector General, and the Office of the Whistleblower Ombudsman. Those precedents provide a model for creating a Chief Data Officer with responsibility for House-wide data coordination and institutional capacity.

House Data Strategy and Implementation Plan

RECOMMENDATION

The House should direct the new Chief Data Officer, in consultation with the Clerk, Chief Administrative Officer, committees, and member offices, and the Congressional Data Task Force, to develop a data strategy and implementation plan for review by the Committee on House Administration. The plan should establish priorities for organizing, maintaining, and improving House data to support staff workflows, public access, and secure, effective use by AI tools and agents.

The plan should identify priority datasets, standards for data quality and documentation, access and security requirements, responsible offices, resource needs, and measurable implementation milestones. The first plan should be published by the end of 2027, with biennial updates reporting progress and setting priorities every two years.

BACKGROUND

The Federal Data Strategy's 2020 Action Plan provides a precedent for coordinating data governance, inventories, quality improvements, and implementation responsibilities across institutions. A comparable House

strategy would help staff find and use information, guide investment in shared infrastructure, and help outside developers build tools using public congressional data.

The strategy should support a regularly maintained public data catalog and secure access to internal information, consistent with office permissions and confidentiality requirements. It should evaluate approaches such as common identifiers, knowledge graphs, APIs, and Model Context Protocol (MCP) integrations where they address identified needs.

Staff Designees for HPSCI

RECOMMENDATION

Provide each member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence with one designated staff position, funded through additional committee resources, to work for that member on matters within the committee's jurisdiction. Current House rules separately govern HPSCI staffing and access to classified information.

BACKGROUND

Member-designated committee staff has precedent in the House rules. Beginning in 1975, the rules entitled subcommittee chairs and ranking minority members to designated staff positions. The House eliminated that entitlement as part of broader changes to subcommittee staffing in the 104th Congress. Providing a staff designee for each Member of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence would expand the original arrangement.

Release of Classified Information

RECOMMENDATION

Permit any committee with jurisdiction over classified information to recommend that the House disclose that information using a procedure modeled on the process available to the House Permanent Select Committee

on Intelligence (HPSCI). Under the existing HPSCI procedure, the committee may vote to disclose classified information, notify the president, and, following a presidential objection, refer the question of disclosure to the House.

BACKGROUND

Rule X, cl. 11(g) defines the procedure for disclosing classified information. It requires a committee vote, notice to the president, and, in specified circumstances, permits the question of disclosure to be presented to the House. The recommendation would extend this existing model to other committees with jurisdiction over classified information.

Investing in Congressional Oversight

RECOMMENDATION

Permit up to one-tenth of the financial benefits attributable to implemented Government Accountability Office recommendations to be counted as deficit reduction available to offset discretionary spending in the legislative branch appropriations bill above current levels. GAO reported \$67.5 billion in financial benefits in fiscal year 2024 and a six-year average return of \$123 for every dollar invested.

BACKGROUND

The House has adopted bespoke scoring rules by separate order (*e.g.*, the treatment of conveyances of federal land - sec. 3(c)(2) of H. Res. 5 and the spending reduction account provisions). The instrument is therefore familiar, even though this application would be new.

Restore the Statutory “Rule of Seven”

RECOMMENDATION

Allow the requirement that the chair of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform be among the seven Members requesting information under 5 U.S.C. § 2954 to expire at the end of the 119th Congress. Section 2954

authorizes any seven members of the House oversight committee to request information from an executive agency concerning matters within the committee's jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND

The authority commonly known as the Rule of Seven originated in the Act of May 29, 1928, and is now codified at 5 U.S.C. § 2954. The House first adopted the requirement that the chair of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Accountability be among the seven requesting members in the 118th Congress. The House retained that requirement in the 119th Congress. The House can restore the earlier long-standing practice by allowing the chair requirement to lapse for in the 120th Congress.

Recruit Technology Talent to the House of Representatives

RECOMMENDATION

The Chief Administrative Office is directed to establish a Congressional Technology Fellowship program and oversee the recruitment and placement of 20 technologists in personal, committee, leadership, and support offices for a one-year fellowship. These computer scientists, engineers, and other technologists are to serve as technology policy advisors, with funds provided by the appropriate CAO account.

BACKGROUND

The House of Representatives has a long history funding fellowships to support its work. The Green and Gold Congressional Aide Program, created in 2008, provides two-year employment opportunities for Veterans, Gold Star Family Members, and Active-Duty Spouses to work for the House of Representatives, with fellows paid by the CAO, with 160 authorized positions in 2024 and a \$4.1 million budget in FY 2026. Fellows are exempt from Member staffing caps and the House Administration Committee promulgates regulations. The House of Representatives also ran the Lyndon Baines Johnson Congressional Intern Program from 1973-1994 and authorized a special category of intern with dedicated compensation beyond ordinary staffing

allowances. The organization TechCongress has placed technology fellows in scores of offices and this would bring aspects of that program in-house and provide direct funding.

Artificial Intelligence and Chamber Operations

RECOMMENDATION

Retain the Artificial Intelligence separate order (sec. 3(j), H. Res. 5) in the 120th Congress.

BACKGROUND

The House first adopted this separate order in the 119th Congress. It directs the House Administration Committee to work with the Clerk, the Chief Administrative Officer, and other officers to continue integrating artificial intelligence into the chamber's operations with House Information Technology Policy 8.

Artificial Intelligence Training

RECOMMENDATION

The House Chief Administrative Officer currently provides artificial intelligence training for Members and congressional staff through the Congressional Staff Academy and House AI Center, ranging from Copilot training, AI awareness and responsible use, and an AI innovators pipeline. The House encourages the CAO to continue to develop professional development tools for staff, including the use of more sophisticated technologies as they become available. It further encourages the CAO to provide support for peer-to-peer learning on use of AI technologies to further the work of the House of Representatives.

Open Source Collaboration

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee on House Administration is authorized and directed to promulgate regulations to facilitate and expressly authorize the participation of Members, committees, House offices, and others in the development, publication, maintenance, and improvement of open-source software in collaboration with outside individuals and organizations. Notwithstanding otherwise applicable restrictions or regulations on gifts and voluntary services, such regulations shall establish the circumstances under which official resources may be used as well as appropriate safeguards against misuse of official resources and improper private benefits.

BACKGROUND

For more than a decade, there has been a lack of clarity concerning the permissibility of open-source software in the House of Representatives, including when House offices may use open-source software, when Members and staff may contribute to open-source projects, and when congressional offices may collaborate with outside developers. In 2015, following engagement with the Ethics and House Administration Committees, the House clarified some of these questions, but significant uncertainties remained.

The bipartisan Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress subsequently adopted Recommendation 183, calling for House-developed software to be open source by default, and Recommendation 187, calling for clearer policies governing collaboration with outside civic technology organizations. These recommendations have not been fully implemented. The absence of comprehensive, affirmative guidance continues to discourage open-source collaboration and limits opportunities for innovation, cost savings, and public reuse of congressional technology.

Remote Appearance of Witnesses

RECOMMENDATION

Retain the Remote Appearance of Witnesses separate order (sec. 3(i), H. Res. 5) in the 120th Congress.

ENSURING ETHICAL CONDUCT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

These recommendations promote ethical conduct and institutional accountability by strengthening the standards governing members, witnesses, and the congressional workplace. They limit improper outside influence, protect the integrity of committee proceedings, improve financial transparency and workplace protections, and ensure that the House has effective mechanisms for enforcing its rules.

Disclosure Forms

RECOMMENDATION

Require all witness disclosure forms submitted to committees and subcommittees to be published contemporaneously in a centralized online database as structured data. Require the use of common identifiers to identify persons and entities appearing before multiple committees or on multiple occasions. Expand required disclosures to include payments from any foreign entity, regardless of whether the entity has business before the committee.

BACKGROUND

This recommendation requires structured data or common identifiers for documents that already have a publication requirement. The House adopted the truth-in-testimony requirement in Rule XI, cl. 2(g)(5) in the 105th Congress. It required electronic availability and permitted privacy redactions in the 112th Congress. The House added disclosure of foreign-government contracts and payments in the 114th Congress. It also added fiduciary disclosures, extended the lookback period to 36 months, included grants, and required publication 24 hours before a witness appears in the 117th Congress.

Expand Scope of Truth in Testimony Disclosure

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the Ethics Committee to review alleged violations of the truth-in-testimony requirements upon referral, complaint, or on its own initiative. Require the Committee to establish a process for receiving public complaints and, upon finding a violation, to notify the Clerk, who should maintain a public list of persons currently or previously barred from testifying. Require the Committee to report violations by attorneys to the appropriate bar association and notify the attorney's employer.

BACKGROUND

The House amended the truth-in-testimony rule to require disclosure of certain foreign-government contracts and payments while limiting the required disclosure to matters related to the subject of the hearing in the 114th Congress. The disclosure requirement was not confined that way before then. This recommendation would remove that limitation and give the Ethics Committee a new enforcement role by authorizing it to review alleged violations, receive complaints, maintain a public list of barred witnesses, and notify relevant bar associations.

Close the Personal Capacity Loophole for Truth in Testimony Disclosures

RECOMMENDATION

Require witnesses testifying in their personal capacity to disclose funding received by an employing or affiliated organization when the organization's work is connected or related to the jurisdiction or work of the committee.

BACKGROUND

The House expanded the truth-in-testimony rule in the 117th Congress by incorporating a fiduciary disclosure regime in Rule XI, cl. clause 2(g)(5)(B)(iii). That provision covers witnesses who serve as directors, officers, advisors, or

resident agents of organizations with an interest in the subject of the hearing. It does not expressly reach every employment relationship. This recommendation closes that gap.

Reform Member Stock Trading

RECOMMENDATION

Require the Committee on Ethics to review and update its guidance governing securities trading by members to improve transparency and address potential conflicts of interest.

BACKGROUND

House rules have not previously restricted securities trading by Members. The governing disclosure framework is principally statutory, including the STOCK Act of 2012. On July 22, 2026, the House passed HR 7008. The bill would bar new purchases of covered investments by members, spouses, and dependent children without requiring divestment or the use of blind trusts in most cases. The recommendation's request for updated Ethics Committee guidance would supplement that legislative approach within the House's existing ethics-administration framework.

Fellowship Registration

RECOMMENDATION

Require paid congressional fellows to register with the Chief Administrative Officer and require the CAO to publish, as structured data, each fellow's name, placement office, role, rate of pay, and the immediate funding organization. Permit support offices and legislative-branch agencies to employ fellows. Prohibit fellowships funded by entities that engage in political activities.

BACKGROUND

Congressional fellows are governed by regulations of the House Administration Committee and guidance in the Members' Congressional Handbook. House rules do not presently require fellows to register or disclose the immediate

sources of their funding. This recommendation would establish a new centralized disclosure system administered by the Chief Administrative Officer.

Executive Branch Fellows and Detailees

RECOMMENDATION

Require all executive-branch fellows and designees placed in House offices to register with the Chief Administrative Officer, who would publicly disclose the fellow's name, the office where they are placed, their role, their rate of pay, and the department, agency, or office placing them.

BACKGROUND

Fellows placed in House offices by executive-branch agencies are not registered anywhere, and House rules do not address them. This recommendation would extend to executive-branch placements the same registration and disclosure regime proposed above for privately funded fellowships.

Office of Congressional Conduct Subpoena Power

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the Office of Congressional Conduct to request the subpoena of non-congressional individuals and entities. Require subpoenas to be approved by the Rules Committee.

BACKGROUND

The House created the Office of Congressional Ethics in the 110th Congress. Each Congress has reauthorized the office by separate order. The House renamed it the Office of Congressional Conduct in the 119th Congress. The House already grants subpoena authority to committees under Rule XI, cl. 2(m), and deposition authority through separate order.

Centralized Travel Disclosure

RECOMMENDATION

Require complete and centralized disclosure of all official congressional travel information as well as travel paid for by outside entities for official purposes.

BACKGROUND

Rule XXV, cl. 5 governs privately funded travel. It requires approval before travel and disclosure after travel, with the filings submitted to the Clerk and made publicly available. Official travel expenditures are reported through the Statement of Disbursements. This recommendation would centralize and standardize information that is already disclosed through separate systems.

Honoraria Disclosure

RECOMMENDATION

Require the Clerk to publish online, in a searchable database and as structured data, every payment made to a charitable organization in lieu of an honorarium on behalf of a member, officer, or employee of the House, showing the source, the activity, the date, and the amount. The database should carry both the filings the Clerk already receives under Rule XXV, cl. 5(f)(2) and the corresponding entries reported on the annual financial disclosure statement, so that publication does not turn on whether the sponsor happens to be a registered lobbyist.

BACKGROUND

Rule XXIII, cl. 5 bars a member, officer, or employee from accepting an honorarium for a speech, a writing for publication, or a similar activity, except as otherwise provided under Rule XXV. Rule XXV, cl. 1(c) permits a payment made to a charitable organization on the member's behalf, not exceeding \$2,000. It prohibits payments to charities from which members or close relatives derive a financial benefit.

Two disclosure regimes already reach those payments. The annual financial disclosure statement carries Schedule I, "Payments Made to Charity in Lieu of Honoraria," on which the filer reports the source, the activity, the date, and the

amount, as 5 U.S.C. § 13104(a)(1)(A) requires; a corresponding list of the recipient charities, with dates and amounts, goes separately and confidentially to the Committee on Ethics. Rule XXV, cl. 5(f)(2) adds a second track for payments from a registered lobbyist or an agent of a foreign principal: the member must report to the Clerk within 30 days the name and address of the lobbyist, the date and amount of the contribution, and the name and address of the charity, and the rule directs that the Clerk “shall make public information received under this subparagraph as soon as possible after it is received.”

The Clerk maintains seven public disclosure databases - financial disclosure reports, foreign travel, unsolicited mass communications, gift travel filings, legal expense funds, the Office of Congressional Conduct, and post-employment notifications - and none of them holds the 30-day filings that cl. 5(f)(2) directs the Clerk to make public. A payment in lieu of an honorarium from any other source appears only as four fields in an annual disclosure statement. This recommendation would provide a mechanism for the publication the rule already commands and would extend it to every payment in lieu of an honorarium, rather than only those a lobbyist or foreign agent makes.

Prohibit Members from Residing in Offices

RECOMMENDATION

Prohibit Members from residing in congressional offices.

Expelled Members of Congress

RECOMMENDATION

Prohibit Members expelled from the House from receiving privileges traditionally afforded to former Members, including former-Member identification and access to the floor of the House.

BACKGROUND

Rule IV, cl. 4(a)(4) denies floor privileges to former members who are registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal, have a direct personal or pecuniary interest in pending legislation, or represent an organization seeking to influence legislation. The House applied a similar limitation to use of the House exercise facilities in the 119th Congress. This recommendation would add expulsion as another disqualifying condition within this existing framework.

Exercise Facilities for Former Members

RECOMMENDATION

Retain the separate order relating to exercise facilities access for former members (sec. 3(m), H. Res. 5) in the 120th Congress.

BACKGROUND

The House restricted access to its exercise facilities by certain former members in the 110th Congress. Every Congress since has continued that restriction. Retaining the provision would continue a requirement that has remained in effect under both parties.

Displaying Statement of Rights and Protections Provided to House Employees

RECOMMENDATION

Incorporate the existing separate order requiring the display of statement of rights and protections provided to House employees (sec. 3(n), H. Res. 5) in the rules or retain it in its current form in the 120th Congress.

BACKGROUND

The continuation of this separate order under both parties provides an established basis for incorporating it into the House rules. The House first approved it in the 116th Congress, and it has been continued without interruption in every Congress since.

Non-Disclosure Agreements

RECOMMENDATION

Retain the separate order relating to non-disclosure agreements (sec. 3(o), H. Res. 5) in the 120th Congress.

BACKGROUND

The House first adopted this separate order in the 116th Congress and has continued it in every Congress since. It has remained in effect through three changes in the House's composition.

Requiring Members to Pay for Discrimination Settlements

RECOMMENDATION

Retain the separate order requiring members to pay for discrimination settlements (sec. 3(p), H. Res. 5) in the 120th Congress.

BACKGROUND

The House first adopted this separate order in the 116th Congress and has continued it in every Congress since.

Mandatory Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Policies for House Offices

RECOMMENDATION

Retain the separate order requiring mandatory anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies for House offices (sec. 3(q), H. Res. 5) in the 120th Congress.

SECURING THE CONTINUITY OF CONGRESS

These recommendations strengthen the House’s institutional resilience and preserve its ability to independently exercise its constitutional functions in a crisis.

Assuring the Continuity of Congress

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the Speaker or the Speaker’s designee to place the House in a fully remote session during an emergency. Require the House to approve that determination by majority vote and to reaffirm it by majority vote every 30 days. Require the Committee on House Administration to establish regulations governing remote sessions. The House already maintains continuity procedures for catastrophic quorum failures under Rule XX, cl. 5(c).

Separately, the House should provide that in ordinary circumstances it may be placed in recess only by a vote of the chamber or by unanimous consent, and not on the authority of the Speaker alone. The emergency recess and reconvening authorities in Rule I, cl. 12(b) and (c) would be left intact, as would a recess taken pursuant to a separate order of business. The privileged motion that the Speaker be authorized to declare a recess, now in Rule XVI, cl. 4(c)(1) (A), should at the same time be made available to any Member rather than entertained only in the discretion of the Speaker.

BACKGROUND

The House authorized remote proceedings in the 116th Congress. While the House did not maintain remote-proceeding authority after the 117th Congress, its rules address related continuity concerns through the provisional quorum procedure in Rule XX, cl. 5(c) and the Speaker’s list of Speakers pro tempore in Rule I, cl. 8(b)(3). This recommendation would add a standing process for activating remote sessions during future emergencies.

Commission on Security and the Continuity of Congress

RECOMMENDATION

Establish a select committee or other temporary House body to review security and continuity-of-Congress planning and recommend improvements to the House's procedures, authorities, technology, and institutional arrangements for maintaining operations during emergencies. Existing House rules already address catastrophic quorum failures, but not through a standing body charged with comprehensive continuity review.

BACKGROUND

The House has legislated on continuity within recent memory, but never comprehensively. Rule XX, cl. 5(c) permits the House to operate with a provisional quorum when it is without a quorum because of catastrophic circumstances, and Rule I, cl. 8(b)(3) requires the Speaker to deliver to the Clerk a list of members to act as Speaker pro tempore in the case of a vacancy in that office, a provision used in October 2023. The Continuity in Representation Act of 2005 (enacted as part of Public Law 109-55) requires expedited special elections following extraordinary vacancies. No standing body has been charged with reviewing these arrangements as a whole. The House creates study bodies of this kind by resolution, ordinarily as a select committee.

Powers of the Clerk

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the Clerk, when neither a Speaker nor Speaker pro tempore has been elected, to hire staff and authorize compensation for leadership, committee, and personal offices.

BACKGROUND

Rule II, cl. 2(i) gives the Clerk supervisory authority over the office of a member who has died, resigned, or been expelled, including authority to terminate employees and appoint staff to operate the office until a successor is elected with the approval of the House Administration Committee. The House adopted Rule II, cl. 4(e) in the 119th Congress, directing the Chief Administrative Officer

to assist the Clerk in carrying out those duties. This recommendation would extend the chamber's existing vacancy-management framework to leadership, committee, and personal offices when the House has not yet elected a Speaker or Speaker pro tempore.

Committee Remote Deliberations

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize committees to conduct fully remote proceedings at their discretion, including remote participation for purposes of quorum, debate, and voting, subject to regulations established by the Committee on House Administration.

BACKGROUND

The House authorized committees to conduct proceedings remotely by H. Res. 965 in the 116th Congress and continued that authority in the 117th Congress. It covered remote quorum counting, remote voting in committee, electronic documents in place of printed ones, and a chair's authority to recess to address technical difficulties; the 117th Congress removed the requirement that a committee notify the Speaker before conducting remote proceedings. The authority lapsed in the 118th Congress. Committee proxy voting has a longer and more contested history: it was prohibited effective January 3, 1975, restored in the 94th Congress, and eliminated again in the 104th Congress.

USCP Oversight

RECOMMENDATION

Provide additional committee resources to support dedicated United States Capitol Police oversight staff for both the majority and minority of the Committee on House Administration. Require those staff positions to possess relevant security and law-enforcement oversight expertise.

USCP Board Oversight

RECOMMENDATION

Require the House Sergeant at Arms to publish regular reports on the operations of the Capitol Police Board, including summaries of Board meetings and actions.

BACKGROUND

The Capitol Police Board and the Office of Inspector General of the United States Capitol Police are established by statute, and Congress has imposed reporting requirements on both entities. House rules do not presently require the Sergeant at Arms to publish reports concerning the Board's meetings or operations. This recommendation would add a House-specific public-reporting obligation to the existing statutory oversight framework.

Cybersecurity

RECOMMENDATION

Provide members and staff with House-supported cybersecurity resources for both official and personal accounts used in connection with congressional work, including hardware security keys, multifactor authentication, technical assistance, and cybersecurity training.

BACKGROUND

The Chief Administrative Officer provides cybersecurity services for House offices administratively, and no House rule addresses them.

Surveillance by the Executive Branch and Foreign Powers Working Group

RECOMMENDATION

Establish a House working group to examine potential surveillance of members, staff, and congressional information by executive-branch law-enforcement and intelligence agencies and by foreign powers. The working

group should examine protections for congressional communications and information systems, including unofficial devices, unencrypted systems, and congressional information stored on nongovernmental servers, and recommend appropriate rules, statutory, technological, or administrative reforms.

Preserving Speech or Debate Protections in the Cloud Working Group

RECOMMENDATION

Establish a House working group to examine the application of Speech or Debate Clause protections to congressional information stored or processed through cloud and other third-party digital services and recommend appropriate statutory protections.

Public Health and Biosecurity

RECOMMENDATION

Establish an office within the Chief Administrative Officer responsible for providing expert advice, planning, and guidance to protect the House from infectious disease, biological threats, and other biosecurity risks.

Office of Congressional Conduct

RECOMMENDATION

Retain the separate order relating to the Office of Congressional Conduct (sec. 4(d), H. Res. 5) in the 120th Congress.