

The Honorable Karen L. Haas
Clerk of the House

Statement before the House Appropriations Subcommittee
on the Legislative Branch

May 12, 2011

Chairman Crenshaw, Ranking Member Honda, and Members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate having the opportunity to provide testimony related to the operations and FY2012 funding request for the Office of the Clerk.

The Office of the Clerk has served the House effectively due in large part to the support and guidance of the Appropriations Committee. Not only has the Office of the Clerk been given the resources to meet its responsibilities to the House, but we have been entrusted with initiatives that will improve and positively impact the way business is conducted for many years to come. I would like to thank the Subcommittee for its support over the past year.

The Office of the Clerk oversees the operations of the House Floor and the support functions necessary to carry out legislative processes – duties this office has discharged faithfully and competently for more than two hundred years. As newly reappointed Clerk of the House, I am excited to be called upon to continue the proud history of the Clerk's office in faithfully supporting the business operations of the U.S. House of Representatives and its Members.

We are all aware that our country is facing difficult financial times and with that in mind we will work to provide you with the continued exemplary service you are accustomed to, while making every effort to hold the line on spending. I would like to highlight a few on-going projects and significant accomplishments of the Office of the Clerk.

ELECTRONIC VOTING SYSTEM

Thanks to the funding you provided, we successfully replaced the decades old Member display boards for the electronic voting system. The new boards utilize light emitting diode (LED) technology which saves energy, runs cooler, and provides a much clearer and more detailed display. The new board has the capability to display graphics and play video, should the House need that technology in the future. In addition the project was completed early and under budget.

HOUSELIVE

In April of last year, the Office of the Clerk launched HouseLive.gov, a web streaming service for the House community and the general public. This service offers an on-line, real time video of proceedings of the House of Representatives. We have recently added a new video player which has several new features, including added capabilities for iPads, iPhones, and Droids. Shortly, we will be adding enhanced internal video clipping capabilities for archived video, streaming video to mobile devices and we

are planning to further expand our search capabilities. These upgrades will continue the effort to make House proceedings more easily accessible.

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LIMS)

The Legislative Information Management System (LIMS) is essential to the legislative operations of the Office of the Clerk. LIMS is the system used to process and track all legislation from its introduction on the House floor to its signing by the President. It also provides the mechanism by which the minute to minute activity on the House floor can be entered and made available for publishing on the Internet in real-time. This multi-year modernization project began in 2000 and every year we continue to implement enhancements in this mission critical area. In 2012, we are scheduled to begin the next 3 components of LIMS; implementation of the Floor Action Reporting System (FARS); modify and improve the Legislative Activity Guide (LAG), a list of Members and how they voted; and the Legislative House Action Calendar System.

ELECTRONIC DISCLOSURE FILING SYSTEMS

Implementation of the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007 (S.1) continued to be a major focus of the Office of the Clerk. The system that was created enabled individual lobbyists to electronically file their disclosure reports. There are approximately 5,000 lobbying registrants representing some 20,000 clients currently registered with the Office of the Clerk. Furthermore, there are approximately 15,000

individual lobbyists now registered in the Office of the Clerk's new lobbying contribution system. The law requires that each lobbying registrant, as well as each individual lobbyist, file a report with the Office of the Clerk disclosing certain contributions (Form LD 203). Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA) contributions as well as contributions to presidential libraries, inaugural committees, and other funds used to pay for events for Members of Congress must also be reported. Increased computer resources as well as human resources are needed to manage the additional responsibilities.

LEGISLATIVE COMPUTER SYSTEMS

Not only have the demands on Legislative Computer Systems (LCS) increased due to the need to support the electronic filing system for lobbyist disclosure for both the House and Senate, but we anticipate the need for more computing capacity as legislative transparency and accessibility of information become increasingly important. LCS has procured, configured, and deployed laptops to essential Clerk personnel to ensure that our business functions can continue by providing remote access to those staff most needed to support legislative business. Additionally, all of the workstations in the Clerk's office have been upgraded as part of our regular 3-year replacement cycle. We are also in the process of reviewing all Clerk websites to refresh their functionality and appearance.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The Office of the Clerk has continued to participate with the House Sergeant At Arms and Chief Administrative Officer to conduct emergency preparedness exercises. The Office of the Clerk participates in regular House and Senate Officer meetings as well as the monthly Emergency Planners meeting that includes representatives from all of the major stakeholders in the legislative process.

VACANT CONGRESSIONAL OFFICES

To date during the 112th Congress, the House has experienced three vacancies (New York 26th, California 36th, Nevada 2nd). The 111th Congress, had 12 vacancies due to the resignation or death of Members. The administration of these offices is a statutory responsibility of the Clerk, requiring time and resources of the Office of the Clerk to ensure appropriate operation and management consistent with public law and the Rules of the House.

ART AND ARCHIVES

The Office of the Clerk, with the support of this Subcommittee, continues to fulfill its mission to support the House's archival, historical and curatorial needs. We have responded to increased committee and Member needs and anticipate these requests to continue their growth in FY2012, and the appropriations request reflects this.

Official records of the House, under the Clerk's care since 1789, continue to grow in number and complexity. Part of the FY2012 request supports this important documentation of the House's activities. In the 111th Congress, we experienced a 30% increase in House records, 3.4 million records, this was accompanied by a marked increase in electronic records as well. I expect growth to continue in the 112th Congress, and I am planning to allocate resources accordingly, particularly to the area of electronic records and media (photographs, audio tapes, video tapes, etc).

The Office of the Clerk's curatorial, archival, and history staff in the Office of History and Preservation (OHP) saw an enormous amount of change during the second half of 2010. On October 20, the Speaker of the House appointed OHP Historian and Deputy Chief Matthew Wasniewski to the position of House Historian. The Speaker and Minority Leader charged the new Historian with consolidating the history function of the House under the Office of the Historian. Planning this transition occupied most of the fourth quarter of 2010 and in anticipation of the consolidation, OHP became the Office of Art and Archives (OAA). The two offices will continue their close relationship as the details of the transition are worked out in 2011.

The Clerk is the custodian of art and historical artifacts in the House. The FY2012 request supports our ongoing effort to streamline website access for committees and Members to view the House's collection. My plan is to increase the items of the House's heritage available for viewing on the Clerk's website, given the demonstrated increase in requests for such information. During the 111th Congress OAA experienced an increase of 97% in requests for reproductions of House Collection items, and even

larger increases in visitors viewing the Clerk's art and history web material. Putting the House Collection online enables us to efficiently respond to this growth, to utilize the House's resources more efficiently, and to provide more open access for the public.

The Office of the Clerk will continue to provide guidance to Members concerning their records management. Our plans for FY2012 will build on the strong outreach efforts this Committee has supported in the past. In 2010, the archival staff more than doubled the number of consultations in 2009, and I expect that trend to continue.

PAGE PROGRAM

The Page Program is an important responsibility of the Office of the Clerk. Under the leadership of the Deputy Clerk of the Page Program and with the direction of the Page Board, we continue to explore opportunities to offer the Pages a complete legislative experience.

HOUSE LIBRARY UPDATE

Under Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk of the House is charged with the responsibility of maintaining two copies of printed documents of the House, as well as the House Journal in the library at the Clerk's office for use by Members and staff. Historically, the Clerk has maintained a legislative and legal reference library since the Second Congress in 1792. Since the 104th Congress, library services are provided under the Legislative Resource Center (LRC). The House Library

is located in three locations, the Cannon HOB, the Madison and Adams buildings of the Library of Congress. Presently, the House Library is a legislative, law and general reference library that provides information services to House Members and staff, the House Parliamentarian, House committees, legislative and general counsel, constituents and other government entities.

The Office of the Clerk continues to work on a plan for modernizing the library. First, the library needs to preserve and improve the collections located in the Cannon, Madison and Adams buildings. The book collections in all three buildings need to be evaluated for re-binding etc. We have finished digitizing the House calendars, next are various House publications, including original documents of the Clerk and the legislative histories of popular laws. Second, the Cannon and Madison libraries need adequate ventilation systems. A preliminary report has already been written on the Madison library with in-depth analysis on what books need to be preserved and what needs to be accomplished to make the environment healthier.

Third, the Office of the Clerk is working to find a suitable space for a full functioning House Library Reading Room. Our goal is to provide a valuable one-stop research facility that has its total focus on the U.S. House of Representatives. We are in the initial stages of development and in cooperation with the Architect of the Capitol will keep the Subcommittee apprised of progress and any future funding requests.

OFFICE OF THE HOUSE EMPLOYMENT COUNSEL (OHEC)

OHEC continues to play a vital role in providing counsel, support and representation to employing authorities of the House.

THE SERVICE GROUP

Our administrative support of the Member and Family Room, the Lindy Claiborne Boggs Congressional Women's Reading Room and the House Prayer Room and attendant services for floor operations remain a priority.

FY2012 BUDGET REQUEST

After an initial review of the operations of the Office of the Clerk over my four months in office, I believe there are opportunities for reductions in spending and improved efficiencies. We have made structural changes to the Office of Publication Services moving printing services into the Legislative Resource Center. This creates a one-stop shop for our customers as well as streamlines our interactions with the Government Printing Office. Additionally this will also help to reduce some of the duplication of efforts that have been identified within our operations. While this is just one example, we are dedicated to working with the Subcommittee to achieve savings and make improvements in the upcoming year.

In FY2012 the Office of the Clerk expects two major expenses: \$1,000,000 for supplemental stenographic reporting; and \$816,000 for closed captioning for the House Floor proceedings. In addition we anticipate that our office will be integral in the effort to make House proceedings more transparent as well as provide immediate access to electronic documents in a more open data format. This is an ongoing effort that will require significant resources in both equipment and manpower for the foreseeable future.

We continue to work diligently to contain costs and to be wise stewards of taxpayer dollars. We make every possible effort to negotiate the best price for services and look for tasks which can be performed in-house to control costs. Please be assured we will continue to save money in every possible way.

I appreciate having the opportunity to appear today. I am ready to assist you in any way throughout the development of the FY2012 spending bill for the House and will be more than happy to answer any questions you may have.