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OVERSIGHT OF THE ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL'S HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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SECOND SESSION

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OVERSIGHT OF THE ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL'S HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2018

UNITED STATES SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 11:07 a.m., in Room SR–301, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Roy Blunt, Chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Blunt, Capito, Wicker, Fischer, Klobuchar, Cortez Masto.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HONORABLE ROY BLUNT, CHAIRMAN, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF MISSOURI

Chairman BLUNT. Well, good morning.

We have a couple of other members coming, but it does not get in the way of what we want to do. While my opening remarks are riveting, I wanted them to be—to have as many people here, Christine, to hear your opening remarks and that is what we have been waiting on. But we are pleased to have you with us today, Christine Merdon, the Acting Architect of the Capitol, testifying on behalf of the Architect of the Capitol.

But before I say anything more, I would like to recognize the great work that the staff did over the last few days, getting ready for and doing a great job, administering and everything that had to be done with President Bush lying in state—Mark Reed, the Superintendent of the Capitol, Takis Tzamaras, the Superintendent of the Senate side of building. Particularly, I want to be mentioning the work you and your team did. It was well handled and, you know, the big things, I think, that we do here do not seem to cause some of the questions maybe of just not asking enough things over a long period of time about the other things that we do.

This is the first of the series of hearings we intend to have in the next 2 years, particularly with the organizations like the Smithsonian, and the Library of the Congress, and the Copyright Office, that this committee has jurisdiction over. We are going to start today with the Architect of the Capitol. This is an agency that really covers a lot of ground—in fact, 270 acres of ground. The Architect of the Capitol team is responsible for 18.4 million square feet of buildings that the AOC is entrusted to operate and maintain as a place of business for the legislative branch and really a destination for millions of people each year.

I look forward to discussing the work and management of the AOC as we strive to ensure the Capitol and the campus are safe,

secure, efficient, and welcoming. I am pleased to be joined by my colleague and Ranking Member, Senator Klobuchar. Senator Klobuchar, if you have some opening remarks, I will let you do that and then we will turn to Acting Architect of the Capitol Merdon.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HONORABLE AMY KLOBUCHAR, A UNITED STATES SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Okay, thank you very much, appreciate it.

The United States Capitol, as we all know, is one of the most iconic buildings in the world. Ensuring that this building and all the buildings surrounding it are adequately maintained is not only important to the people that work here, but also to American history. As Acting Architect of the Capitol, you, Ms. Merdon and your staff are responsible for facilities maintenance as well as the operation of the U.S. Capitol, House and Senate office buildings, Library of Congress, U.S. Supreme Court building, and many other offsite facilities.

In case anyone is counting, that adds up to exactly 18.4 million square feet of building space and more than 570 acres of land. The AOC is doing a lot more than keeping the lights on and a lot of this is also protecting our National Treasures, preserving the historic integrity of the Capitol, and it requires a workforce with a unique skill set. There are many employees that I think people would be surprised that we need, but when you look at the fine paintings, we need painters when they need to be repaired or touched up.

I want to thank you for what you are doing and mention that all of the employees that work in your operation are very important. We look forward to hearing from you and learning what you are doing to implement the policies that best serve the AOC staff and the Capitol.

Thank you.

Chairman BLUNT. Thank you, Senator Klobuchar.

Well, after the 11th Architect of the Capitol, Stephen Ayers, retired in November, his Deputy became the Acting Architect of the Capitol, Christine Merdon, is really well prepared for that. In addition to her new role as the Acting Architect of the Capitol, she retains her current position as Deputy Architect and Chief Operating Officer, a position that she has held since 2010.

Prior to joining the AOC in 2010, Ms. Merdon worked in private industry as a Project Manager and eventually became the Senior Vice-President of Program and Construction Management, working on contracts in Washington, DC, Chicago, Illinois, and Los Angeles, California. She has been responsible for the successful program and construction management of more than $11 billion dollars in major project, construction efforts—Washington National Major League Baseball Stadium, O'Hare Airport Modernization Program, the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial, the Smithsonian Institute for the National Museum of African American History, the Abraham Lincoln and Thomas Jefferson Memorial renovations. You come to this with a great background of understanding all the things that need to be done. What you have done with projects at the White House and

Camp David, also an impressive part of what you bring to the role as the Acting Architect of the Capitol.

You know, we are beginning that process of selecting who will be the next Architect of the Capitol and frankly, in that interim period of time, hopefully with the cooperation of this committee—you are in a great position, now that you are Acting you are no longer the Deputy, to look at the things that need to be done, that are obvious in their need to be done and to make as much headway in those issues as we can, between now and the time someone becomes the permanent 12th Architect of the Capitol.

Ms. Merdon, we are glad you are here. I would like to recognize you for an opening statement and then we will follow that with questions.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHRISTINE MERDON, ACTING ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. MERDON. Thank you, Chairman Blunt. Thank you Ranking Member Klobuchar.

I appreciate you recognizing the great work that the Architect of the Capitol team did this week in honoring late President George Bush. It is a pleasure to see you again Chairman Blunt and I thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to attend the freedom award ceremony, which honored the AOC employees as well as the CVC's 10th Anniversary Ceremony. Your participation in both events meant a great deal to me and to members of our team. My daughter also appreciated your kind and generous words—from one parent to another, thank you.

Chairman Blunt, Ranking Member Klobuchar and members of the committee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you this morning in my new role as Acting Architect of the Capitol.

During my time at the Architect of the Capitol, we have had some amazing successes—the restoration of the Dome, Grant Memorial, Russell Courtyard, Brumidi Corridors and much, much more. Those successes have paved the way for even greater responsibilities for our agency. We have acquired and now manage additional office space. We are building an expanded campus on Fort Meade for the growing library collection and we will add the Thurgood Marshall Building to our portfolio by 2024. Furthermore, we are exploring opportunities to better serve the space and support needs of the Senate.

In my new role, I am learning even more about the needs of the agency, the needs of Congress and the overall Capitol campus. Let me be clear sir, I truly care about the protection of the people of our agency, our colleagues throughout the legislative branch and constituents from across this great nation. With your input, I plan to lean on my previous leadership of iconic national design and construction projects, to ensure a safe and secure Capitol campus.

At the request of the committee, today I am going to focus on our most valuable agency asset, the people of the AOC. The AOC has some of the most talented and widely admired craftsmen, tradesmen, artists, architects, engineers and scholars. Our work touches almost every person in the Nation in one way or another—whether it is through a visit to a Member of Congress's office in Washington, DC, submitting research questions to our agency online,

viewing our facilities as backdrops on the evening news, touring our grounds and arboretum and participating in one of our educational programs—our team does a good job of providing service and support that Congress and the Supreme Court needs. But there are areas that we need to improve.

Every 2 years, our agency voluntarily participates in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, FEVS, administered by the Office of Personnel Management. We use these results to measure staff satisfaction. We are busy analyzing the results and feedback, but in general, we are committed to continued progress on accountability as well as fairness in recognition, advancement and hiring. I look forward to reviewing the final analysis of FEVS with the committee later this month.

Over the years, we have earned a well-deserved reputation as an agency that "can-do." We have taken on new responsibilities and are committed to meeting ever-increasing workloads. I appreciate the committee's interest in our efforts to attract, empower and retain the very best public servants to support the needs of Congress and the Supreme Court so that we can fulfill our legislatively mandated duties.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before the committee. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Merdon was submitted for the record.]

Chairman BLUNT. Well, thank you again.

I am glad you are here, and you are incredibly well prepared to step into the top job of the responsibilities of the Architect of the Capitol. Also, after 8 years of the other job, I think you really have, again let me say it, a great opportunity to look at what maybe did not become the priority. Part of that may be the lack of insistence in the Congress that we have the kind of partnership we need to have.

You know, in things like, this week there was a Presidential executive order about when offices were going to be open. That really is not the directive that the Architect of the Capitol should follow, I think. You should wait, in my view, and decide what the Congress is going to do and that should be more of a determination of what the Architect of the Capitol does than what somebody at the White House says is the determination for Federal employees. You know, this is a different responsibility. I think it is a more significant reporting responsibility, maybe, than the Congress, and the Senate has asserted in the past. But I would like to help you make this interim period as meaningful as it can be, in terms of getting ready for whoever comes next.

I have some questions about just the human resources—the manual. I am not sure there is one. We have not been able to find one. I know there are references to pages in a manual that when you ask to see the manual, the manual appears not to be available to look at page 757, or whatever other page might be referred. What is the status of the personnel manual, and what do you think we need to do to meet that requirement—that you have one that is available, not just to the Congress, but more importantly to all of the employees of the Architect of the Capitol?

Ms. MERDON. Thank you, sir. Thank you very much for your question on the Human Resources manual.

Our employees, as I mentioned, are our most important asset. In 1994, as a result of the Congressional Accountability Act, there was a requirement for the AOC to create a Human Resources manual and that was created. We did meet all the requirements of the Human Resources manual, at that time. Over time, the manual has been replaced with policies. The policies actually allow us to have more rigor than a manual will, in executing and administering the human resources. So the——

Chairman BLUNT. Let me be sure I have that correct. Was there a requirement to have a manual in 1994?

Ms. MERDON. There was a requirement, and we met that but over time we have transitioned——

Chairman BLUNT. Has that requirement ever been eliminated? That you are no longer supposed to have a manual, you are now supposed to have policies?

Ms. MERDON. It has never been eliminated, but we consider our collection of over 50 policies to be the manual now. That is available online for all of our employees.

Chairman BLUNT. Is the manual itself, that the policies reference, available for all your employees?

Ms. MERDON. Yes. The manual is the policies—they are the policies.

Chairman BLUNT. There are, no manual any longer, there are 50 policies?

Ms. MERDON. Correct. That constitutes our manual now.

Chairman BLUNT. Do any of those 50 policies reference a manual?

Ms. MERDON. That is a possibility, and we have an opportunity to correct that. To go through those policies to ensure that all the appropriate references—you have previously met Theresa Bailey, my Chief Human Capitol Officer, and we will ask her. She has actually started looking at our policies to ensure that, number one, any changes are needed, and any of those references are reduced, or eliminated.

Chairman BLUNT. Well, I think this is probably going to—we are going to have to have more discussion about this but it sounds like you are prepared to have that discussion. On the employees themselves, do you loan employees from like the Senate jurisdiction to the House jurisdiction?

Ms. MERDON. Sir we have our opportunities. They are available through our Architects Mobility Program for their development opportunities, to send employees from one jurisdiction to another. One example of this is, we had a Supreme Court gardener who wanted to learn more about horticulture, so we sent that person, as part of the Mobility and Advancement Program, to the botanic garden——

Chairman BLUNT. Okay, I am running out of time. Let me ask a question——

Ms. MERDON. Sure.

Chairman BLUNT.—specifically here. I mean this is the Senate oversight committee, the Senate Rules committee, so we should have particular interest in the Senate. Senator Capito used to chair

the legislative branch Appropriations Committee, and she and I are both still on the Appropriations Committee. If there are a number of—are there a number of employees that you say to the Congress, these are the number of employees we need for the Senate side of the building?

Ms. MERDON. Yes, sir.

Chairman BLUNT. Are they all still working on the Senate side of the building?

Ms. MERDON. We have, I think, one or two detailed, as far as the Development Program, detailed over to planning a project management. He was a floor care refinisher who was a nighttime worker and he achieved his Architect Degree during the day. We have him working in Planning and Project Management as a training program. We have, on a very minimal use and all in accordance with Appropriations law but very, very minimal—probably single digits—that other employees go to different jurisdictions for a small period of time. Some of those are development-training opportunities, as this one floor care refinisher, and we may have an opportunity for somebody to be over at another jurisdiction—but it is only for several weeks, and that jurisdiction pays for that employee. We make sure that does not harm the work from the jurisdiction were it comes from.

Chairman BLUNT. There are not employees we would anticipate in the number of employees available, that would be available to the Senate Superintendent that are not—this is not information I have from the Senate Superintendent. He is sitting right behind you. I am giving you an example. There are not employees who we believe would be available to the Senate Superintendent, that those positions have effectively been transferred to the House side of the building without any sign off from either the appropriating or the oversight committee?

Ms. MERDON. Not—there are—currently I do not believe there is anybody in the House. We did have a need for a painter, occasionally was searched, but those are very temporary. To my understanding, the oversight or appropriations does not sign off on it, but we are required to notify you now when that happens.

Chairman BLUNT. There is probably time for a second round of questions. We do have a vote at noon, so that is probably good news if you are the witness. But, we will try to move along here.

Senator Klobuchar.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Thank you very much. Thank you. Since 2010 you have served as Deputy Architect of the Capitol, as we talked about. What are your top priorities as the Acting Architect in the coming months as we work to appoint a new Architect and what are the biggest opportunities you see in the short term for improvement, and then maybe in long term?

Ms. MERDON. Thank you very much for asking that question, Senator. My top three priorities are people, projects and preservation—taking care of our people at the Architect of the Capitol. I have some of the best, most talented tradesmen, craftsmen, engineers as I mentioned here. Projects—we have quite a workload of projects and making sure that we are executing them on time and under budget, is a priority—and also making sure with preservation that we preserve these treasures for us, for our grandchildren

and our great-grandchildren. Those are my two top—three top priorities. I think we have some opportunity in some of our—we just received our FEVS survey. I think that gives us a lot of opportunity to say where can we make improvements, and I am looking forward to meeting with your staff to discuss those opportunities.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Okay, thank you. What—since you have taken over as Acting Architect, in the short period of time you have proposed some changes to personnel structure, including the addition of new senior level positions. Why do you think these are necessary, and why should they be done now instead of when a new Architect comes in?

Ms. MERDON. Thank you for the question ma'am. The last—it took several years to get a new Architect last time, but I commend your staffs in working very diligently and hard. I understand they are moving very fast and I think that is great. I think we are facing challenges in the agency. We have more buildings. We are doubling the size of Fort Meade in the next few years with the different modules that are coming. We have expanding role, expanding campus. As I mentioned, in 2024, the Thurgood Marshall, which is a judicial building, will become ours. I think being able to address those challenges and ensure accountability, having a need for more people to provide that accountability. The Chief Operating Officer's direct reports go from 14 to 17.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Okay. It has been more than 2 years since the Department of Labor determined that Restaurant Associates owed more than a million in unpaid wages to workers. Since then, the Senate's Superintendent Office has implemented a number of initiatives that are designed to ensure that Restaurant Associates complies with the Service Contract Act and other wage and labor laws. Do you commit to continuing the procedures in place to ensure workers are paid the wages they earn and will you commit to closely monitor wage and other data to ensure compliance?

Ms. MERDON. Thank you very much for that question. I worked very closely with Senator Blunt's staff at the renewal of that contract, and I think they did a wonderful job. It was a pleasure to work with——

Senator KLOBUCHAR. You can say yes or no, because then——

Ms. MERDON. Yes, yes.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Okay, great. Like many Federal employers, the AOC hires annuitance, who are retired Federal employees covered by Federal retirement plans. AOC policy states that rehired annuitants can only be reemployed for 13 months at a time. As part of their reemployment, their pay is reduced by the amount of retirement annuity they receive. However, rehired annuitants can be granted a waiver that allows them to receive a full salary in addition to their retirement annuity. The waiver is only supposed to be used in emergency circumstances, as you know. Data provided to our committee indicates that many rehired employees stay beyond their allowed 13-month terms. 5 out of 11 employees under reemployed annuitance status have served for 7 years or more. Can you explain the AOC's use of rehired annuitants and discuss what effect you think it has on employees seeking to be promoted within the agency? I guess you could add to this later, how many have re-

ceived a waiver to be paid a full salary in addition to their retirement annuity?

Ms. MERDON. We use rehired annuitance for emergency situations. Also for their institutional knowledge or if there is a risk to the agency if a loss of information—so we take a look at all those before we make a decision on a rehired annuitant. In 2015—I understand your concerns—we looked at the Rehired Annuitant Program because we had rehired annuitance on there for many, many years and that is when we instituted the temporary employee, part of that rehired annuitants. I do believe that there is opportunity to strengthen that, rehired annuitance, as well as take a look at our better succession planning for the agency. I am committed to do that in the interim because I think that is an opportunity for employee——

Senator KLOBUCHAR. So it is a 7 year emergency? It just seems like you could maybe develop an employee within the agency to take something over instead of saying there is a 7-year emergency related to a certain position.

Ms. MERDON. Yes, ma'am. I agree, but as you noted, some of the employees are permanent and some of them are temporary. During the transition in 2015, if they were a permanent employee, it would have been an adverse action to convert them to a temporary employee. That is why a number of them are permanent. But I agree with you fully. There is opportunity to make changes and better succession planning.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Okay, thank you.

Chairman BLUNT. Senator Cortez Masto.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member. I understand that you have 2,300 individuals working for you, is that FTE's?

Ms. MERDON. Yes, ma'am.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Okay. How many of those—and I may be wrong, just looking at the numbers that I have seen. Senator Klobuchar was talking about annuitants—I count 68, is that about right?

Ms. MERDON. 11.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. There are only 11 annuitants working for you right now?

Ms. MERDON. Correct.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Okay. Of the 2,300 FTEs—how many, actually, positions do you have that are vacant right now?

Ms. MERDON. I would have to get back to you on that ma'am. Ma'am I do not know the absolute answer at this time.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Okay. I am a big proponent of diversity. I think our government should mirror, in our workforce, the diversity we see in our community. Can you talk a little bit about maybe what you are doing in the recruitment and hiring when it comes diversity and diversity programs within the AOC?

Ms. MERDON. Thank you. I appreciate it very much. Ma'am, diversity is also very, very important to me. It is very important to the agency. In the hiring, we ensure that we advertise the positions on USA jobs, but we also reach out to other organizations such as the National Society of Black Engineers, Women and Construction, to make sure that they are notified of the positions too.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Okay, thank you. Can I jump back just to your positions. Again, I noticed, it looks like in Fiscal Year '18 your budget was about $712 million. In Fiscal Year '19, we have $733 million, how much of that is actual salaries and benefits?

Ms. MERDON. I am going to have to get to you the exact number, but I know our Line Item Construction Program is about 250.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Okay. If you could break down for me—and we will pull that, and we will work with you—I am curious about the budget and the break down——

Ms. MERDON. Sure.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. How much goes to Capitol projects. How much goes to staff. Traditionally, I am just familiar with the budget, most of it goes to salaries and benefits——

Ms. MERDON. Yes, ma'am.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO.—that is the nature of how we get things done in our Government. With respect to the diversity piece of it, besides diversity, what type of developmental programs do you have for employees to work on, to improve, to be able to promote, to be able to learn new skills throughout the Capitol?

Ms. MERDON. I appreciate the questions because I think training is very important. We like to grow people in the Architect of the Capitol. From a wage-grades perspective, say a labor position, we have the AMP Program, Architects Mobility Program, and ExCEL Program where employees can be detailed to other organizations, or within their own organization for a short period of time so they can have more exposure to a trade. AMP Program we are actually—is more of an apprentice program. As I mentioned before, we have taken an employee here. She was an AMP employee, and she became the first female mason that we have—now she works for the Library of Congress. We also have required training as with safety. All of our employees are required to have training. We have a standard training. We have career coaching, that we have for our employees and our HCMD, our Human Capital organization, and we also have leadership training. We partner with the Fellows Program, the Government's Fellows Program, and send our future leaders to that program. We are looking at various levels of training and development.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Then, can you address sexual harassment in the workforce and how you address the need for training, and to stop it and prevent that from happening?

Ms. MERDON. Absolutely. We take that training, prevention of sexual harassment, very seriously. In the last couple of years, we have moved from offering the training every other year to every year, and 100 percent of our employees are trained on the prevention of sexual harassment.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Okay. Then I am also curious about the annuitants and long-term. I completely understand that sometimes when you lose a position, a person in a position—they are uniquely qualified. They have the only area of expertise so you want to keep them on for a short period of time, but beyond that 13-month then you have got to question, what is going with your succession planning and your capacity building for the future?

Ms. MERDON. Yes, ma'am. I agree.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Whenever you are providing a background, I would be curious to see that as well, and how you are addressing that.

Ms. MERDON. We will be pleased to do that.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Okay.

Ms. MERDON. Thank you, ma'am.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Then a little bit—I know you know this and you were talking about the food service workers here and restaurants that we have. Unfortunately, there was a Presidential directive terminating Temporary Protective Status and a number of the employees that I have met here that work in our restaurants and food service, some of them have TPS and have concerns. Are you aware of that, and what are you doing, if anything, to alleviate, or work with them, or talk with them about their concerns every day?

Ms. MERDON. We work very closely with the employees, and we work with the contractor Restaurant Associates, but I will be committed to doing a deeper dive on that request and looking at the employees concerns.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Okay, thank you. I noticed my time is up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BLUNT. Thank you. Senator Capito.

Senator CAPITO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for being here and thank you for your service to the Architect or to the Capitol in general and our community—I appreciate that. I want to build on something that Senator Cortez Masto brought forward. She asked about sexual harassment. I think all the four of us who are in here, the Senators here, have worked on legislation that would improve the process for dealing with sexual harassment or harassment in general. But according to the OOC, which is the Office of Compliance, of the 47 newly filed requests for counseling that arrived in that office, 21 of those, or 45 percent of those, where from AOC employees—I am sure you are aware of this. Not all of these were workplace harassment. They were—some were for alleged violations of other provisions of the Congressional Accountability Act. Since Fiscal Year 2013, more new OOC filings have come from the AOC employees than from any other legislative branch. I was wondering how you can explain that. You sort of answered a little bit in the question moving forward in terms of training, is this—I am certain it is a red flag for you—how are you addressing this?

Ms. MERDON. Thank you for the question Senator Capito. It is a concern for us, and one of the reasons we began the training every year, in lieu of every other year, was to focus on eliminating that. We also encourage our employees. If they are not getting something resolved in their own organization, we have avenues of assistance. Avenues of assistance are DIDR, Diversity Inclusion Dispute Resolution, is one of them. The Office of Compliance is another avenue that we encourage people, if they are not getting resolution. But we encourage them to work through us first—but if they choose to go to the Office of Compliance. We also are looking—we met recently, about 2 months ago, with the Office of Compliance to start discussions about how we can even do better, and we are committed to starting an anonymous hotline at the beginning of

the year, so our employees have a safe, anonymous place to go to report harassment.

Senator CAPITO. You are going to be doing that?

Ms. MERDON. Yes, ma'am.

Senator CAPITO. Within your agency?

Ms. MERDON. Yes, ma'am.

Senator CAPITO. Let me ask you just quickly, what kind of turnover do you have with the 2,300 employees' Do people come and stay?

Ms. MERDON. Our employees do come and stay. I'll have to get back to you——

Senator CAPITO. Well, just generally——

Ms. MERDON. I mean we just celebrated our employees who have stayed 20, 25 years. We even had an employee that has been here for 45 years——

Senator CAPITO. Right.

Ms. MERDON That is not uncommon. Our employees do stay. They like working here. They like the agency.

Senator CAPITO. Well, yes. I mean the ones that I have had the privilege of meeting have been, a lot of them, a long time. I want to thank them because they do a lot of great work around the—around this—within your purview. Another question, I was the appropriator for the legislative branch. One of the things that really used to get under my skin, and I think the former Architect of the Capitol knows this, is the Reprogramming Request, where you would come to me, that we want to reprogram $7 million dollars for another project. Are you working to eliminate the Reprogramming Request because to me, I view it as a kind of a duck-and-cover on the budgeting process—in other words, I am going to go heavy on this part, maybe it is employees or something else, when I know I might need it over here. What would your response be? Are you doing Reprogramming Requests this year or have you done them last year, last summer, as we were moving into the end of the fiscal year?

Ms. MERDON. I would like to get back to you on that. I know we do Reprogramming Requests but I think we—by increasing accountability about how we spend our money in the jurisdictions, to ensure they are spending the money appropriately, we can reduce the reprogramming.

Senator CAPITO. I would encourage that because, again, I think it is a bit of a duck-and-cover. The other question that I wanted to ask was, when I was legislating, when I was head of the legislative branch Appropriations, you were just embarking on the Russell renovation. I would like to have—can you give me a little bit of the status report on that. The garage and also, I know the scaffolding has been taken down on the Union Station side, which is my side——

[Laughter.]

Senator CAPITO But where are we moving on that?

Ms. MERDON. Thank you and I am sure you're glad the scaffolding——

Senator CAPITO. Yes, I am glad.

[Laughter.]

Senator CAPITO. I can finally see the daylight. It is wonderful.

Ms. MERDON. Thank you. The first phase has been completed and we are starting the second phase——

Senator CAPITO. Which—what second phase? Is it other sides of the building?

Ms. MERDON. Yes. They are beginning the scaffolding on that phase. Regarding the Senate underground garage, if you do not mind, I would be happy to get back to you on the update of the——

Senator CAPITO. Yes, and I believe that includes the Plaza that is over top of the garage as well. I think the repair that is doing on that, on the Russell garage, had not been repaired for——

Ms. MERDON. Long time.

Senator CAPITO Many, many years.

Ms. MERDON. Yes, ma'am.

Senator CAPITO. Yes, because you can sort of see where—but, so thank you for what you are doing and thank you for being here today.

Ms. MERDON. Thank you for your support on this committee and the Appropriations, ma'am.

Senator CAPITO. Thank you.

Chairman BLUNT. Well, to follow-up on a couple of things that have been mentioned already, I would mention to my colleagues, Senator Klobuchar and I have sent a letter to the Inspector General asking the IG to look at the reports on harassment in the AOC and the high percentage of concern we have there. Also in the survey, the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, on a number of issues, it was of concern—the survey in 2018 was better in all categories than the survey in 2017. But in the hiring and promotion area, just continues to remain conspicuously low. I think less than, slightly less than half of your employees thought that the hiring promotion was something that they should not be concerned about. I do not know how much of that has to do with Senator Klobuchar's point and others that have been made of when you keep bringing people back, it certainly makes it hard for the promotion part of that to work, as well as you would think it should. That and the fact—the pay scales, how many different pay scales there are? I am going to have some more detailed questions in writing about both of those issues, but they continue to be a concern to people.

[The information referred to was submitted for the record.]

Chairman BLUNT. Now, you know, employee surveys are sometimes just that and you have to read some things into them. But by comparison, there are more concerns with the AOC on these topics than there are in most other places in the Capitol Hill community. Let us see if we can figure why that is, and what kinds of steps are being taken to do more about that. Senator Klobuchar, do you have any questions?

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Yes. I had one more question. That is—so, when you answered the question of Senator Cortez Masto, you said there were 11 of these. Were those just the permanent ones? Does that include——

Ms. MERDON. Permanent and temporary.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Permanent and temporary. There is only 11 that are getting retirement plus salaries?

Ms. MERDON. Not all of them get the retirement plus salary. There is only 7 out of the 11 that get the retirement plus the sal-

ary, the rest do not. We will potentially be bringing on just a few more during the Senate moves, as we typically do to handle the painting, and then are here for a month or two and then they leave. We—you know, because they know the buildings. They know the agency. We bring them for, you know, very short, fast——

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Do you what in the past—was that about average that you had like 10 to 15 or were there more sometimes?

Ms. MERDON. I think it is about 10 to 15. Right now it is 11, currently today, and 7 do receive the salary and the retirement, the rest do not.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Maybe you answered this question, but positions deemed temporary—did Senator Blunt or anyone ask you about this? This says they are exempted from the policies described in the AOC's career staffing plan including a competitive hiring process. Yet no defying time limit exist for temporary positions. This is a little different than the annuitance, right?

Ms. MERDON. Correct.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. When do you think a temporary position should no longer be considered temporary?

Ms. MERDON. A position that is temporary should no longer be considered temporary—it varies. Sometime, if there is a skill set that is needed, say, in our construction division—like a plaster who is very difficult to find in these days, and especially due to the market—we may keep that person longer. But if it is a temporary person who we do not have the funding for or the work for—you know, we always make sure that the temporary gets paid for by funds—and it is a skill set that we do not need, that person will be, you know, notified for 2 weeks and then told that their services are not needed anymore.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Then how many AOC employees are currently considered to be in temporary positions?

Ms. MERDON. I will need to be able to get back to you on the exact number because there are temporary employees in these jurisdictions—small numbers—but there are temporary employees throughout the agency.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Okay. Then finally, the AOC's Career Staffing Plan says that the AOC can use supplemental methods to reach a diverse pool of potential applicants including posting vacancy announcements in newspapers, professional trade publications, outreach, how often are these supplemental methods utilized?

Ms. MERDON. I believe almost all the time but I will confirm that.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Okay.

Ms. MERDON. We also have a partnership with the Phelps High School in DC and we also hire some of the students at that architecture, STEM students, in our agency during the summertime also.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Okay, thank you very much.

Ms. MERDON. You are welcome, ma'am.

Chairman BLUNT. Just an update on a couple of projects. Senator Capito asked about the Russell window project, how far behind is that project based on where you would hope to have been by this point?

Ms. MERDON. I will have to get back to you on that, sir. Right now, I was very engaged in it over the earlier part of the year, with the executives from the contractor. But I will ask the Senate Superintendent to provide me an update on that.

[The information referred to was submitted for the record.]

Chairman BLUNT. I would also like a sense of the additional cost because of that overrun of time on scaffolding and other things. Was the subcontractor problem there, has that been solved? Where the subcontractor could not handle the volume of windows that they were being sent?

Ms. MERDON. Yes, sir.

Chairman BLUNT. How was that solved?

Ms. MERDON. That was solved by the executives from the prime contractor getting involved, replacing some of the staff—their own staff on that job—and also working with the subcontractor to develop more efficient means to prepare the windows for delivery. I think working with our team, subcontractor and the contractor—they were able to resolve that.

Chairman BLUNT. Okay. I would like to know how far behind the original proposed schedule you are?

Ms. MERDON. Sure.

Chairman BLUNT. What the additional cost has been because of the scaffolding rental and all that lasted so much longer, at least on one side of building than anybody anticipated. Do we feel like we got that solved to the point that it will not happen three other times on the three other sides of the building that you are going to be working on. On the Russell garage, is there a timeline for that?

Ms. MERDON. We will be able to provide that to you also. For the Russell garage——

Chairman BLUNT. Does anybody here with you know what that proposed timeline is?

Ms. MERDON Will be able to provide that?

Chairman BLUNT. Russell garage caucus, do you have——

Ms. MERDON. It is scheduled to be completed before inauguration.

Chairman BLUNT. Before inauguration?

Ms. MERDON. Yes.

Chairman BLUNT. A little over 2 years. Well, I think—we are glad you are here——

Ms. MERDON. I am glad I am here too.

Chairman BLUNT. Glad we started this conversation. Glad that both you and your team know that we are interested and it will not be the only one of these oversight hearings we will have. But I think Senator Klobuchar and I are both committed to have you here. To have the Smithsonian Institute here, to talk about what they are doing—to have the Library of Congress here. In terms of just impact on our daily life, it is hard to find anybody that has more impact on our daily life than those areas under your responsibility. I think we can do a better job as partners in that. I want to thank you and your colleagues for joining us today, as well as my colleagues that were able to be here. The record will remain open until Thursday, December 13th at 5 p.m. for additional questions for Senators to submit. We will get those to you as they come

in, and I would expect you and your staff to respond to those questions by December the 20th. Thank you all and the hearing is adjourned.

Ms. MERDON. Thank you, sir.

[Whereupon, at 11:51 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

APPENDIX MATERIAL SUBMITTED

Statement of the Honorable Christine A. Merdon, P.E., CCM
Acting Architect of the Capitol and Chief Operating Officer

Oversight of the Architect of the Capitol's Human Resources Policies
United States Senate Committee on Rules and Administration
December 6, 2018

Chairman Blunt, Ranking Member Klobuchar and members of the committee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you this morning in my new role as Acting Architect of the Capitol.

It is an honor to lead a group of employees who support, manage and serve more than 18 million square feet of facilities, including 190 structures, 6,600 offices, 79 hearing rooms, 2,000 bathrooms, 337 elevators and 46 escalators. This same group preserves approximately 4,800 trees and more than 40 water features, 570 acres of grounds, 14 miles of sidewalks, 7 miles of streets and drives, and also inspires more than 5 million visitors annually through our campus tour programs.

The Architect of the Capitol (AOC) serves Congress and the Supreme Court, preserves America's Capitol and inspires memorable visitor experiences. The agency is the steward of the United States Capitol, Library of Congress buildings, U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. Botanic Garden and surrounding office buildings, grounds and other facilities. We recognize this is an awesome responsibility and it is an honor and a privilege to work here.

During my time at the Architect of the Capitol, we've had some amazing successes. The Capitol Dome restoration was delivered on time and within budget; the meticulous conservation of the Grant Memorial bronze statues revealed the subtle details of the original sculpture; the Statue of Freedom was painstakingly cleaned and inspected; the Russell Senate Office Building courtyard rehabilitated to its former glory; Bartholdi Park was improved to provide a safe and accessible route for disabled veterans trying to reach the adjacent American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial; the Brumidi Corridors were restored and uncovered as much of the original design layer as possible; we've also completed several other repairs and maintenance projects to address multiple needs across the Capitol campus.

Those successes have paved the way for even greater growth in responsibilities for our agency. We have acquired and now manage the O'Neill House Office Building, we are building an additional campus on Fort Meade to house the ever-growing library collection and we will add the Thurgood Marshall Building to our portfolio by 2024. Furthermore, we are exploring opportunities to better serve the space and support needs of Senate staff.

In my new role, I am learning even more about the needs of the agency, the needs of Congress and the overall Capitol campus. When I think of the things that I want the agency to accomplish

during my watch, I am confident that those ideas will come to fruition with your help and support.

I truly care about the protection of the people of our agency, our colleagues throughout the legislative branch and constituents from across this great nation. With your input and encouragement, I also plan to lean on my previous leadership and management experiences of iconic and highly visible national design and construction projects, to ensure a safe and secure campus.

In addition to safety decisions, the AOC faces further challenges: attracting and retaining talented employees who are engaged and passionate about their work; supporting projects that are forward-focused and incorporate a broad view of and the growing needs of the Capitol campus; and ensuring the agency remains an authority on historic preservation so that future generations take pride in the facilities and art under our care. I think of these challenges as the three Ps: people, projects and preservation. I am committed to turning these challenges into opportunities.

At the request of the committee, today I am going to focus on our most valuable agency asset – the people of AOC.

The AOC has some of the most talented and widely admired craftsmen, tradesmen, artists, architects, engineers and scholars. Our work touches almost every person in the nation in one way or another – whether it is through a visit to a member of Congress's office in Washington, D.C., submitting research questions to our agency online, viewing our facilities as backdrops on the evening news, touring our grounds and arboretum, or participating in one of our educational programs. And our team does a good job of providing the service and support that Congress and the Supreme Court needs. But there are areas that we need to improve.

Every two years, our agency voluntarily participates in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) administered by the Office of Personnel Management. We use these results to measure staff satisfaction. We encourage all full-time, part-time temporary and seasonal Architect of the Capitol employees to participate in the survey because we truly want to hear from our team. More than 85 percent of AOC employees responded to the survey. We are busy analyzing the results and feedback, but in general, we are committed to continued progress on broader priorities of reducing bureaucracy and increasing accountability and fairness in recognition, advancement and hiring.

Previous FEVS scores have resulted in a variety of staff development at the AOC. Most recently our training has emphasized employee civility including etiquette, diversity awareness and cultural sensitivity; developing current and future leaders through the Supervisors Academy, and supporting the Architect's Mobility Program to empower employees to learn a new trade or skill.

I anticipate tweaks to training curricula and potentially the addition of other development programs following this year's FEVS analysis. My staff is scheduled to provide the committee with a full briefing on the results next week. I am looking forward to the opportunity to discuss the results with you at that time.

Even without the final analysis of FEVS, we know that attracting and retaining employees is one of our biggest challenges. The Senate Committee on Aging released a report last year that stated, "by 2026, aging workers will make up nearly one quarter of the labor force." Already, nearly half of AOC employees are 50 years old or older which is higher than the federal employment rate of 45 percent. Many AOC employees are retirement-eligible and many more will become eligible over the next few years. These significant changes to the makeup of the national workforce will present tremendous opportunities and challenges. Challenges from which the AOC is not immune.

Much of our work is very specific and highly specialized. Surveys indicate that for the skilled trades – welders, electricians, machinists and others that are prevalent in construction and facilities management – the shrinking talent pool is likely to become more acute. Recruiting and retaining skilled trades and craftsmen is increasingly competitive, particularly in this market. The Washington D.C. Economic Partnership recently reported a sixth consecutive year of growth in the area's construction market – an increase of 30 percent since 2012. While that's good news for the metro area, it makes our jobs more difficult to attract and retain employees.

As the Chief Operating Officer, and through my work on the transition to Acting Architect, I visited projects, offices and shops across campus, talked to hundreds of employees and supervisors, and spent a lot of time getting different perspectives. I am working with my executive team to further develop and implement action plans designed to attract, empower and retain staff.

We already know that some of our ongoing initiatives are successful. And we plan to build on those successes.

Andy Alleyne, an Army veteran, was hired as a night laborer. His job included sweeping, mopping and polishing floors in the Capitol Building. Andy was committed in career development and had a background in electronics engineering, so in 2014, Andy transferred to a job as an elevator mechanic helper. The position, was a career ladder wage-grade 5 with the potential of rising to a 12. Andy took full-advantage of this opportunity – he participated in on-the-job training and took courses offered by our human resources team. Today, he is a full-fledged elevator mechanic and an inspiration to others to work hard and utilize agency-offered training to advance their own careers.

Andy isn't the only employee to take advantage of these types of opportunities. Elizabeth Ward, a former gardener for Capitol Grounds, had an interest in sustainability practices and was interested in building her career around that field. Today, she is a sustainability program analyst

where she uses her experiences and expertise to improve facility project plans for the Senate Office Buildings. She has become a trusted and valuable asset to the AOC team.

These are two examples of employees who have propelled their careers forward with the support of the AOC. Yet I know we can and must do better. Since becoming Acting Architect of the Capitol, I have directed our Human Capital Management Division to review all of our current policies to determine those that need to be updated or withdrawn. I am committed to ensuring our policies better reflect the needs and requirements of our agency and follow the Architect of the Capitol Human Resources Act.

When benchmarked against other federal agencies, the Architect of the Capitol regularly ranks in the top quarter of Best Places to Work in the Federal Government. Even so, more work needs to be done. I truly believe that pursuing a career with the AOC is an honorable and worthy cause. In discussions with the committee, I believe you and your staff recognize and share a tremendous appreciation for our work and our team.

Over the years, our agency has earned a well-deserved reputation as an agency with a "can-do" attitude. We have taken on new responsibilities and are committed to meeting ever-increasing workloads. I appreciate the committee's interest in our efforts to attract, empower and retain the very best public servants to support the needs of Congress and the Supreme Court so that we can fulfill our legislatively mandated duties.

Our agency traces its origins to 1793. That year George Washington selected the site for the Capitol Building and laid the cornerstone. Now, more than 225 years later, our agency strives to uphold the unified and symbolic vision for the Capitol campus inherited from the nation's founders.

Supporting our nation's "grand experiment" requires commitment from all of us. We need your help. Thank you again for the opportunity to talk about the people of the AOC. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Senate Committee on Rules and Administration
Architect of the Capitol Human Resources Management Policies
December 6, 2018
Questions for the record
Ms. Christine Merdon

Chairman Roy Blunt

1) As Deputy Architect, you were required by 2 U.S.C. § 1805(e) to prepare and submit an action plan describing the policies, procedures, and actions you would implement as the Deputy Architect, along with timeframes for carrying out these responsibilities, to the Committee 90 days after your appointment. Did you submit this report to the Committee eight years ago? If so, please provide a copy of the report to the current Committee.

   A. If you submitted the 2 U.S.C. 1805(e) report, please describe how you have accomplished the goals you set in this report since your appointment eight years ago?
   B. If you did not submit the 2 U.S.C. 1805(e) report to the Committee, please disclose why you did not submit this report.

I take the requirements of the statute that established the Deputy Architect of the Capitol position very seriously. When I began as the Deputy Architect and Chief Operating Officer in September 2010, it was the AOC's interpretation that the 90-day action plan was required for the inception and establishment of the first Deputy Architect/Chief Operating Officer. However, from the beginning of my tenure, and in my earliest introduction to AOC oversight committees, I focused my actions on the statutory responsibilities prescribed in statute which include:

- Developing, implementing, annually updating and maintaining a long-term strategic plan covering a period of not less than 5 years for the Office of the Architect of the Capitol;
- Developing and implementing an annual performance plan that includes annual performance goals covering each of the general goals and objectives in the strategic plan and including to the extent practicable quantifiable performance measures for the annual goals;
- Proposing organizational changes and staffing needed to carry out the Office of the Architect of the Capitol's mission and strategic and annual performance goals; and
- Reviewing and directing the operational functions of the Office of the Architect of the Capitol.

At the start of my employment, I shared my vision to develop and implement the statutorily-required long-term strategic plan.

Through tremendous teamwork over the course of just one year, we collected input from colleagues throughout the organization. We asked challenging questions, researched best practices and in 2011 created an inspirational strategic plan to help us guide decision making and make continuous improvements in what we do and how we do it.

In support of our mission to serve, preserve and inspire, our four strategic goals are: maintain awe-inspiring facilities, foster an innovative and empowered workforce, provide extraordinary services and operate as one team, dedicated to one mission. We developed diverse strategy teams to collaborate on the best ways to achieve our desired outcomes and in the second iteration of the strategic plan, we continue to have active dialogues to tackle our toughest challenges and capitalize on new opportunities.

We kept our congressional oversight committees up-to-date during the development, implementation and reporting on our strategic planning. I also oversee the regular project and operational updates within the annual Performance and Accountability Report, which is provided to Congress each year. The agency values the input of congressional oversight and looks forward to working with the Committee going forward.

2) **AOC's 2018 FEVS results improved in all categories in comparison to 2016, however, results in the category of "Hiring and Promotion" remain conspicuously low. Just 49.9 percent of AOC respondents report a positive perception of AOC's hiring and promotion practices.**
   A. Why are hiring and promotion a persistent problem area in the AOC's FEVS results?

The Hiring and Promotions score (calculated as the average of responses that selected "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" to each of those questions) is 49.9 percent, an increase of 3.3 percent from the 2016 score. This positive trend is considered statistically significant and is evidence that sustained leadership focus, commitment and action can generate positive results. In addition, AOC's 49.9 percent compares with a government-wide score of just 38 percent.

The Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey is an important tool that AOC has opted to participate in. The agency is committed to continual improvement and is working to prioritize areas of focus based on the FEVS results. We have done this for past surveys, and it is important that we continuously improve our workplace and ensure that the AOC is a great place to work for all employees. The three areas the agency focused on since 2014 were promoting fairness in hiring and promotions; reducing bureaucracy and engaging employees in continuous improvement and innovation; and rewards and recognition. We will continue focusing on hiring and promotion for continuous improvement to ensure the AOC is a great place to work.

On December 12, 2018, the Partnership for Public Service announced the 2018 Best Places to Work in the Federal Government rankings. The Architect of the Capitol rose from 11th place among midsize federal agencies in 2016 to place 9th in 2018. This indicates that we are making significant improvements in areas that matter to our employees.

B. What aspects of the hiring and promotion process has AOC identified as contributing to negative employee perceptions?

When positions are filled competitively, it is AOC's policy to select the best qualified candidate. The AOC makes efforts to inform and prepare employees for new job and career development opportunities that help position them to be the best qualified candidate for open positions. In FY 2018, AOC promoted 219 internal candidates either through the competitive selection process or career ladder opportunities.

The reality is that not every employee will be promoted. However, the AOC is making a concerted effort to develop its employees so they can better position themselves for career advancement opportunities. To that end, we implemented a process that requires selecting officials to provide feedback to all internal candidates who are considered, but not selected, for any job vacancy. This feedback is designed to help employees better understand what the job requires and the specific areas where they need further development, and includes an explanation of what their interview may have lacked and appropriate coaching in preparation for a future opportunity.

C. **As Deputy Architect of the Capitol and Chief Operating Officer, you were responsible for providing overall organization management to improve the Office's performance. What, if any, changes in hiring and promotion practices did you implement following 2016 FEVS results, to improve employee perceptions of the hiring and promotions process?**

The AOC has developed and continually provides training to all employees in workplace behaviors and job-related knowledge, skills and abilities (including training to industry standards), while meeting certain AOC requirements through several initiatives. This includes an agency-wide training solution to meet AOC trade-specific and safety requirements (AMP, ExCEL) and leadership development training opportunities (Supervisory Academy and Leads Academy).

Based on our analysis of the 2016 results, the AOC announced a new comprehensive training module, Hiring 101, for hiring officials and those involved in the recruitment and hiring of talent for AOC vacancies. The module provides in-depth training on the entire hiring process and teaches how to apply the talent acquisition model in attracting, sourcing, recruiting and acquiring talent with the right skill sets and competencies needed to fulfill AOC's mission. This training supports AOC's strategic goal to promote fairness in hiring and promotions. From Fiscal Years 2016 to 2018, we held 30 sessions and trained 284 employees through this Hiring 101 program.

In addition, AOC created a new comprehensive program to empower AOC employee with strategies for career development and knowledge for professional enrichment. This program, CareerPath, is a training series that provides insight into navigating the AOC's recruitment and hiring process, guidance into resume writing and techniques to prepare for an interview.

D. **Based on the marginal improvement in the 2018 FEVS results, are there additional actions that you plan to take concerning AOC's hiring and promotions process?**
E. **Did you conduct internal surveys or track other metrics to measure improvement or progress toward meeting performance management roles?**

We are encouraged by the fact that the AOC has consistently scored higher than the government average and the average of similar sized agencies in this dimension, and our improvements are consistent with highly-rated federal agencies. We are pleased to see that levels of engagement and satisfaction of AOC employees has continued to increase and exceed those of employees in other government agencies. Our continued improvement is evidence that sustained leadership focus, commitment and action can generate positive results. Based on the analysis of the FEVS 2018 results, we are proceeding with strategic initiatives and actions including continuing to provide training to

supervisors on the hiring process and fair hiring procedures, as well as additional career path training for employees. Progress on our strategic plan goals is tracked on a quarterly basis and the implementation plan is evaluated and updated annually.

For many years, AOC has tracked time to fill positions, as a way to ensure that highly qualified candidates are not lost due to inadvertent delays in the recruitment and selection process. Turnover rate is another metric that AOC uses from time-to-time to determine the rate that the agency is losing talent (intended and unintended), and will determine ways to mitigate the risk of losing talent that we don't want to lose. We have also measured performance review completion rate, as well as performance rating distribution.

3) **What is the role of the Human Capital Management Division (HCMD) in AOC's hiring and promotion process?**

HCMD plays a pivotal role in AOC's hiring and promotion process. Attracting, recruiting, identifying and acquiring talent with the right skill sets and competencies is critical to the successful execution and achievement of AOC's mission. HCMD's specific responsibilities in this area are to provide comprehensive oversight, guidance and direction to AOC's management officials, employees and applicants for employment to ensure fairness in hiring and promotions in compliance with AOC's Career Staffing Plan policy; ensure equal employment opportunity for all candidates when positions are administered through the competitive process; and selecting the best qualified candidates for AOC vacancies and promotional opportunities.

HCMD is also responsible for revising the agency's policy regarding hiring, promotions, succession planning and other talent management practices in response to evolving or emerging business needs and/or hiring practices and new legislation.

A. **The director of HCMD is not a member of AOC's senior level cadre. Does HCMD have the necessary authority to fairly and independently execute AOC's human resources program?**

Yes, although the Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) is not a member of AOC's executive leadership team, the position has significant authority to fairly and independently execute AOC's human resources program. The CHCO is empowered to develop and implement human resource strategy in support of AOC's mission and strategic goals in collaboration with AOC leadership, and interacts with AOC's executive leadership team on a regular basis to address human capital matters.

4) **Does the AOC maintain statistical data to support its diverse hiring practices?**

Yes, the AOC conducts a workforce analysis as part of the Affirmative Employment Program (AEP) every three years. The next analysis will begin in early 2019 and will include the workforce for the agency as a whole, as well as for the 12 agency jurisdictions, and feature adverse impact analysis for awards involving gender and race.

Consistent with legal requirements and best practices that have been developed in the larger federal community, the analyses will also include a deeper dive into the estimation of external availability, internal availability and overall availability weighted in accordance with historical candidate sourcing (applicant flow); the statistical comparison of utilization to availability; and the analyses of hires,

promotions, terminations and compensation equity. The AOC will work with an outside contractor to assist in this effort to leverage additional expertise in the area of AEP Reports and workforce data analyses, including determinations of availability and comparisons of utilization to availability as well as recruitment and promotion practices.

The AOC is also committed to promoting fairness in hiring and promotion by having policies and procedures that support developing a workforce from all segments of society. We engage in recruitment and selection practices that comply with all applicable employment laws covered by the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995.

5) **Please describe the AOC process for developing job descriptions for existing and/or new AOC positions.**

   A. **What divisions and levels of management are involved in developing new job descriptions?**
   B. **What is HCMD's role in validating existing and/or new position needs?**
   C. **Does HCMD have the authority to ensure that position descriptions meet the requirements of AOC's personnel management policies?**

A position description (PD) is an official record of the work assigned by management to an employee. The process of developing PDs requires a supervisor to certify that the PD is an accurate statement of the major duties and responsibilities of the position and its organizational relationships and that the position is necessary to carry out functions for which the supervisor is responsible. The position descriptions are written in the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) four-factor Federal Wage System format or the nine-factor narrative General Schedule system format, depending on the duties and responsibilities.

The levels of management officials involved with the development of position descriptions may include the immediate supervisor and relevant higher-level supervisor(s). Supervisors consult with the HCMD's Talent Acquisition and Classification (TAC) Branch for assistance in developing new position descriptions or re-describing existing position descriptions before they are officially signed and classified. Our position classification specialists provide technical guidance to supervisors on describing the content of both the major duties and the related factor level descriptions. In some instances, this process may include an on-site desk audit of an occupied position.

HCMD is responsible for ensuring that position descriptions are established and classified. HCMD reviews new and revised position descriptions to classify these or provide classification advice and guidance. Position classifiers do this by applying applicable OPM Position Classification Standards to evaluate the position title, occupational series and grade level. The classification specialists also have a continuing role in performing on-site audits of Wage Grade and General Schedule positions by conducting individual or group audits.

The AOC has adopted the use of OPM position classification standards and job grading standards to determine the proper title, series and grade of most positions, as per 2 U.S.C. § 1831. The Chief Human Capital Officer has authority to determine when to supplement an OPM qualification standard with one specific to the AOC.

D. How does AOC ensure that hiring and promotion comply with the open competition requirement of the Architect of the Capitol Human Resources Act (2 U.S.C. § 1831)?
E. Does HCMD have an independent role as a competition advocate to ensure that hiring and promotion decisions reflect fair and equitable consideration?

The Architect of the Capitol Human Resources Act (AOC HR Act) required the AOC to put into practice a process that ensures all applicants for employment and employees of the AOC are appointed, promoted and assigned on the basis of merit and fitness after fair and equitable consideration of all applicants and employees through open competition. We believe this is accomplished through the AOC's Career Staffing Plan policy. The policy provides uniformity in conducting and documenting the process by which recruitment and selections are accomplished.

The Career Staffing Plan policy also complies with the AOC HR Act's directive to support the mission and functions of the organization consistent with best practices in the federal government. The Plan provides for a number of actions that are not subject to competition. One of these flexibilities is the use of direct-hire capability for hard-to-fill and temporary positions. In addition, the plan exempts other actions from competition such as reassignments or changes to lower graded positions. Other excepted actions include those involving statutory, regulatory and administrative placements.

The AOC is committed to employing the best qualified candidates while engaging in recruitment and selection practices that comply with all applicable employment laws covered by the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995. HCMD has the independent authority to ensure all hiring decisions comply with all applicable laws and policies. The Career Staffing Plan policy has been and will continue to be used to promote fair and equitable consideration and the best recruitment and hiring practices in accordance with applicable employment laws.

6) AOC Order 213-1 provides that the AOC may designate personnel positions as exempt from the requirements of AOC's Human Resources Management policies, including open competition. Is order 213-1 consistent with the requirements of the Architect of the Capitol Human Resources Act?

    A. Is order 213-1 intended to reflect the statutory authority to set compensation for certain positions under 2 USC § 1849 and, if so, how does that authority exempt those positions from the requirements of the Architect of the Capitol Human Resources Act?

Yes, AOC Order 213-1 reflects the authority under 2 U.S.C. § 1849. As indicated above, it is the policy of the AOC to provide opportunity to all applicants, both internal and external, consistent with the AOC Human Resources (HR) Act.

B. **The statutory authority of 2 USC § 1849 permits the AOC to set compensation of up to 32 positions at up to the highest rate of compensation for the Senior Executive Service for the relevant locality. Are there any current AOC employees whose compensation exceeds the highest rate of compensation for the Senior Executive Service for the Washington, DC area?**

No, none of these positions currently exceeds the highest rate of compensation for the Senior Executive Service from the Washington, D.C. area. In addition to these 32 positions, there are five statutorily defined positions within the AOC whose compensation is specifically dictated.

C. **How many pay schedules does the AOC utilize for employee wages/salaries? Please provide a list of all AOC pay schedules/scales and relevant wage/salary rates, with descriptive information concerning each schedule's applicability.**

The AOC uses eight pay schedules to compensate its employees. These include the following:

General Schedule (GS) – The GS pay system covers AOC employees in professional, technical, administrative and clerical positions.

AOC Federal Wage System (FWS) – FWS system covers AOC skilled and unskilled trades employees who are paid by the hour. FWS consists of non-supervisory wage grade (WG) employees, wage leaders (WL) and wage supervisors (WS). Each of these defined group of employees (WG, WL, WS) has a specific pay schedule.

Senior-Rated (SR) - SR is the pay plan that is used to compensate a cadre of executives at the AOC.

Administratively Determined (AD) – AD is a pay plan code that may be used by the agency to administratively determine the rate of pay for an employee, a group of employees or a category of employees.

Union Trade (UT) – A pay plan that is used to compensate temporary union employees. The UT pay plan is used to set the negotiated rate of pay for respective union employees.

Davis Bacon (DB) – This is a pay plan for wage rates published by the Department of Labor that is utilized to pay certain DB temporary construction workers who serve on intermittent work schedules.

7) **What factors determine when an existing or new position may appropriately be filled by a re-employed annuitant, rather than a new hire or promotion?**

The federal government provides opportunities for retirees to return to federal service under the rehired annuitant program. The AOC follows the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) guidance for this program. Support for mission critical requirements and/or mitigation of identified workforce challenges are the two primary factors used to determine whether a position may be filled by a re-employed retired annuitant. Specific criteria to justify the re-hiring of a retired annuitant includes the following:

- **Emergency Hiring Need**: Requests are based on a need to respond to an Emergency involving a direct threat to life or property, for example, natural disaster or other unforeseen occurrence.
- **Severe Recruiting Difficulty**: Requests on this basis must include a description of the length, breadth and results of the recruiting efforts for the position and any other factors demonstrating that a legitimate recruiting need cannot be met without the requested waiver. These factors may include, but are not limited to, unusual qualification requirements or working conditions, possibility of job re-engineering or contracting, or a need to fill the position without further delay.
- **Need to Hire/Retain a Particular Individual Uniquely Qualified for a Specific Project**: Requests are based on the need to hire or retain the services of a particular individual who is uniquely qualified for a specific project, such as Election Year Moves, etc. Requests submitted on this basis must meet the following criteria: 1) Candidate's unique qualifications **and** 2) Justification that work could not be assigned to other employees.
- **Requests Based on Other Unusual Circumstances Not Rising to the Level of an Emergency**: An individual whose services are needed on a temporary basis due to other unusual circumstances. Jurisdiction heads must provide justification describing the unusual circumstances.

A. **Are AOC divisions required to record justifications for or request authority to re-employ an annuitant?**

Yes, management officials are required to provide a justification to support their request to hire a retired annuitant, as per the agency's Re-employed Retired Federal Annuitants Policy. The completed form must be submitted to the Chief Human Capital Officer for review and recommendation to the Architect of the Capitol for final decision.

B. **Does AOC reconsider, on an annual or other basis, whether re-employed annuitants should be replaced through promotion or outside hire?**
C. **Does HCMD have an independent role in validating requirements for, or justifications for, re-employing an annuitant?**
D. **How does the AOC ensure that re-employed annuitants do not outlast the approved 13-month re-employment period?**

Yes, HCMD's evaluation of the management official's justification to re-hire a retired annuitant is conducted independently and without influence.

When there is a need to retain re-employed retired annuitants beyond the 13-month appointment, AOC's evaluation to continue their employment includes consideration of the rationale provided to support the request and whether the workforce need can be achieved hiring a candidate via AOC's normal recruitment and selection process. Currently, the AOC has a very small percentage of employees that are re-employed retired federal annuitants.

With strengthened succession planning, we can continue to reduce the number of re-employed retired annuitants.

E. **Please provide samples of adequate justifications for the AOC to make emergency hires?**

Since the inception of AOC Order 335-7, Re-employed Retired Federal Annuitants Policy, no re-hires of retired annuitants were attributed to an emergency as defined by the aforementioned policy.

8) **Does the AOC offer relocation incentives to potential employees?**
   A. **What standards must a candidate meet to qualify for the incentive?**

In accordance with agency policy, the AOC may offer as a workplace flexibility a relocation allowance if the agency determines that the position will likely be difficult to recruit and fill based upon the knowledge, skills and abilities required for the position, labor market conditions that may affect our ability to recruit and fill the position, or recent efforts to recruit suitable candidates for similar positions were met with negative results.

The policy applies to current Federal employees from another geographic region being considered for full-time, permanent employment under the General Schedule pay plan. All other pay plans and candidates who are not currently Federal employees are ineligible for the relocation incentive.

9) **Does the AOC possess a central reference of all human resource management policies?**
   A. **Is this documentation easily accessible for employees?**

Yes, all of the agency's human resources policies are centrally located for all employees via AOC's Intranet, Compass. In addition, every AOC employee receives an Employee Guide that provides information for employees on agency policies, with topics ranging from AOC's mission, culture, performance and conduct expectations, leave, benefits and host of other topics to help employees navigate their AOC experience.

To supplement this information, HCMD is currently undertaking an initiative to further delineate all AOC HR policies so that employees can easily identify and locate the specific policy they may need.

   B. **How does the AOC ensure its human resource management orders are consistent with statute?**

I have directed the CHCO to review all of our policies immediately and on an annual basis to ensure consistency with statute.

10) **Presidential Executive Orders are not applicable to legislative branch agencies. How do you, as acting Architect, evaluate whether policies expressed in Presidential Executive Orders are appropriate for implementation within your organization?**

When there is a new executive order (or other executive branch policy initiative/OPM directive) dealing with Federal employment, we consider whether to voluntarily adopt it as a best practice at the AOC. The AOC HR Act (2 U.S.C. § 1831(b)(1)) directs the AOC to generally create a human resources program that incorporates practices common in other federal agencies and the private sector. To evaluate initiatives of other federal agencies, we consider whether it would assist/further the AOC in its mission to serve Congress and the Supreme Court.

11) How does the AOC prioritize the hiring of veterans and individuals with disabilities?

It is a priority for the AOC to attract diverse candidates. We strive to reach out to all segments, including veterans, persons with disabilities and minorities. Our talent acquisition program prioritizes hiring veterans and transitioning service members, in accordance with the Veterans Employment Opportunity Act made applicable to the AOC by the Congressional Accountability Act.

12) How often does AOC offer training opportunities for employee development?

A. Does the AOC offer training opportunities to all employees, or does the AOC reserve training for specific development purposes within AOC jurisdictions?

A cornerstone of the AOC's strategic goal for an Innovative and Empowered Workforce (IEW) is employee development. AOC offers discretionary and nondiscretionary training opportunities continually to all employees. In the Partnership for Public Service's 2018 Best Places to Work in the Federal Government, the AOC ranks 6th of 25 midsize federal agencies in training and development. Our score is 71.6 percent, an increase of 2.9 percent from the 2016 score. In addition, AOC's 71.6 percent compares with a midsize agency median score of 62.8%.

Discretionary training programs include offerings such as CareerPath sessions, other career development assessments/workshops, Excellence in Government (EIG) Fellows Program, and Skillsoft courses. Skillsoft is an online portal with anytime access to thousands of training resources in a variety of topics to enhance personal and professional growth.

Nondiscretionary or training that is deemed essential to specific job duties are offered through online or in-person mandatory and safety training programs required by certain agency standards. Examples of some training offerings include: Appropriations Law, Contracting Officer Technical Representative (COTR), and Adding an Element of Coaching to Your Craft. AOC also sponsors specialized courses for specific trade or skill needs such as Steam Systems, Maintenance, Safety and Optimization, Variable Frequency Drives, International Plumbing Code and Fall Protection.

HCMD develops and continually provides training to all employees in workplace behaviors and job-related knowledge, skills and abilities (including training to industry standards), while meeting certain AOC requirements through several initiatives. This includes an agency-wide training solution to meet AOC trade-specific and safety requirements – Architect's Mobility Program (AMP), Exchange in Critical Learning and Expertise Program (ExCEL) – and leadership development training opportunities (AOC Supervisory Academy and the Excellence in Government Fellows Program through the Partnership for Public Service).

13) How does the AOC advertise the Architect Mobility Program among its employees?

The AOC advertises Architect's Mobility Program (AMP) positions in USAJOBS through the use of Monster talent acquisition system. All AMP positions are competed and advertised for internal AOC candidates only. Permanent AOC employees are eligible to apply to advertised AMP positions. HCMD and jurisdictions recruiting for AMP positions announce and inform their employees of these career enhancement opportunities. The AOC also developed an electronic alert system to announce these

and all other job opportunities. The day that a job is posted, our alert system sends an email notification listing AOC jobs to employees that have subscribed to get the alert.

A. How does the AOC select employees for the Architect Mobility Program?

Upon closing of the vacancy announcement, HCMD's HR specialists conduct a review of the applications received to determine whether eligibility and qualifications for the relevant position have been met. Once the screening is completed, HR specialists convene a review panel. Applications of eligible employees are rated and ranked by the review panel. Best qualified candidates are then certified for the selecting official for continued consideration. Upon receipt of the certificate, the selecting official reviews all applications and convenes an interview panel. The final selection is subsequently made by the selecting official.

B. Has the Architect Mobility Program successfully satisfied its mission? Can the program be beneficially improved or expanded?

The AMP provides career enhancement opportunities to employees who are serving in career-limiting positions. The program is also satisfying the need to train and develop internal talent to fill trades positions, some of which are hard-to-fill in the skilled trades field.

The AOC is evaluating improvements to the AMP program, such as increasing the number of positions and frequency of available slots to ensure that we continue to develop the pipeline of skilled employees from the population of employees serving in career limiting positions.

14) What incentives and award opportunities does the AOC provide to employees?

The AOC provides a comprehensive awards program to recognize excellence in performance and reward employees whose contributions, creativity and service benefit the AOC. The following are awards and recognition opportunities available to AOC employees:

Awards & Recognitions	Criteria Overview
Special Contribution Awards	• Special Contribution Awards recognize a one-time, nonrecurring special act, service or achievement that benefits the AOC. • They recognize contributions with greater impact than On-the-Spot awards.
On-the-Spot Awards	• On-the-Spot Awards use the same criteria as Special Contribution Awards and are generally used to provide recognition when the contribution does not meet the minimum monetary value for a Special Contribution Award. • They recognize contributions that have less impact and might otherwise go unrecognized.

Time-Off Awards	• Time-Off Awards recognize the same kind of one-time, nonrecurring special acts, services or achievements as Special Contribution Awards. • As with Special Contribution Awards, the act, service or achievement must benefit the AOC.
Performance Awards	• All employees covered by the Performance, Communication and Evaluation System and Senior Rated Executives covered by the Performance Review Process who receive an "Outstanding" performance rating.
Architect's Honor Awards	• These are honor awards that the Architect or his designee personally presents to employees or groups of employees in recognition of their exceptional efforts that support the AOC's mission. • These awards include, but are not limited to: o Architect's Citation o Architect's Commendation o Leadership o Spirit of Inclusion Award o Safety o Valor o Community Service o Product/Process Excellence o Service Excellence o Team Award for Projects o Award for Small Business
Organizational Honor Awards (Certificate of Appreciation and Jurisdiction Commendation)	• These are AOC jurisdictional internal organizational awards that offer an honorary or non-monetary award to recognize contributions that are significant to the goals and objectives of the jurisdiction. • These awards include but are not limited to: o Certificate of Appreciation o Jurisdiction Commendation
Service Recognition	• Service Awards recognize an employee's length of federal service. • Service pins and certificates are presented to employees beginning with 5 years of service and every 5 years thereafter. • Service awards for 25 years or more are presented by the Architect or a designee on a semi-annual basis at a Service Recognition Ceremony.

Recognition Upon Separation (Jurisdiction Career Achievement Award and the Architect's Distinguished Career Award)	• The Jurisdiction Career Achievement Award recognizes a separating employee's cumulative achievements that were significant to the goals and objectives of a jurisdiction. • The Architect's Distinguished Career Award is the highest award bestowed to employees upon separation. This award is appropriate only where it can be clearly demonstrated that the cumulative contributions of the employee during a career or extended term of service in the AOC were 'significant and extraordinary' benefits to the AOC or the federal service.
Externally Sponsored Awards	• Each year the AOC is invited to participate in a number of external honor awards programs, which offer the opportunity to further recognize the achievements of AOC employees. • Award titles and sponsoring organizations include: o Washington Building Congress Craftsmanship Award o Certificate of Excellence in Accountability Reporting/Association of Government Accountants (AGA) o Project Achievement Award/Construction Management Association of America (CMAA)

15) How does the AOC ensure that interns are provided a meaningful work experience?

The AOC's summer intern employment program seeks to recruit and select individuals to fill paid positions that will offer students skill enrichment and experiential learning while promoting careers in public service. The AOC emphasizes the importance of planning work assignments and projects for interns for the 12-week duration.

Summer interns are provided with the opportunity to learn and develop new skills that will enable them to not only be successful in their professional lives, but can prove helpful in their personal lives as well. AOC offers financial classes that focus on financial responsibility, creating a budget, establishing an emergency fund and how to avoid going into credit card debt. Resume Writing 101 was another class offered to assist them in creating and tailoring their resume as they transition from college into the job market.

16) Which AOC division is responsible for implementing AOC's Government Purchase Card program?

The Acquisition and Material Management Division (AMMD), an office within the AOC Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), is responsible for overseeing and implementing the purchase card program.

A. What management level of AOC employee are permitted to become Government Purchase Card holders?

Purchase card holders are purchasing technicians, purchasing agents and Contracting Officers.

B. How many employees are authorized Government Purchase Card holders?

Currently, the AOC has 73 purchase card holders.

C. Are authorized cardholders required to undertake annual procurement training?

Purchase card holders take Financial Systems Management, appropriations law (refreshed every five years), and simplified acquisition training for competitive purchases before a card is issued. Additionally, AMMD provides procurement training to the card holders before issuance of the card. This involves reviewing the purchase card, simplified acquisition and Small Business Set-Aside requirements.

D. Are Government Purchase Card purchases required to be tagged for the purposes of AOC inventory management?
E. At what equipment value are Government Purchase Card purchases required to be tagged into inventory control and management?

Accountability of AOC inventory is controlled by AMMD's Personal Property Management Office (PPMO). The agency requires that personal property with an acquisition cost of $1,500 or more be tagged. Sensitive personal property, defined as requiring a high degree of protection and control due to its high-risk nature or its inherent attractiveness, portability and/or sensitivity, is considered accountable regardless of its acquisition cost and is tracked and managed within the personal property management system. Work-in-Progress, bench stock and operating materials and supplies are also considered accountable and are tagged.

F. Does the same division monitor both purchase cards and inventory management?
G. If not, please describe coordination between the purchase card program and inventory management.

Yes, AMMD manages both the purchase card program and the PPMO program.

H. Does AOC engage in routine audit of purchase cards purchases?

Yes, each card holder's purchase card files are reviewed by AMMD on at least an annual basis. Reviews check for compliance with all applicable AOC policies and all applicable laws.

I. How does AOC judge the validity of purchase card requirements?

All purchase card procurements must first have a "Request for Small Purchase Form" that includes the approval signatures of both the requestor's direct supervisor as well as the individual within that requestor's jurisdiction who has approval authority to obligate government funds – usually the jurisdiction's superintendent. Additionally, the purchase must be entered and approved in FMS prior to placing the order for each purchase.

J. Do purchase card audits involve both the validity of the initial procurement requirement, and traceability of the purchased item(s) through inventory control and current inventory?

Purchase card audits involve the validity of the initial procurement requirement. The approving official at the jurisdiction level initially reviews and approves or denies the request. AMMD primarily reviews for compliance with laws and our contracting manual. Inventory is controlled by the PPMO.

K. Are there established consequences for misuse of the purchase card program?

The AOC prescribes that any misuse of a government purchase card shall be immediately reported to the OIG. In the event of an unauthorized or inappropriate purchase or failure to follow AMMD purchase card requirements, AMMD has the authority to cancel the card. The card holder may also be personally liable for any cost resulting from a violation of policies and procedures.

L. How often has the AOC revoked an employee purchase card?

Due to the agency's internal controls, regular audits and program policies and procedures, we have been able to effectively prevent a situation where revocation of a card is necessary.

17) How does AOC balance the needs of to the two chambers of Congress separately, but fairly?

A. Other than in connection with training or development opportunities, does AOC loan resources or personnel between AOC jurisdictions?

First and foremost, AOC is very careful to ensure that we remain in compliance with appropriations law. In FY 2018, an IG-sponsored, independent audit firm provided the AOC its 14th consecutive clean audit opinion on our financial statements, which is provided to Congress within the annual Performance and Accountability Report.

In all aspects of the AOC's organizational structure and operations, we strive to balance the needs across campus in support of our mission to serve Congress and the Supreme Court. Through our master planning, strategic planning and budget development processes, we ensure a jurisdictional and holistic look at the operational and capital needs across the agency. Budgetary constraints often

require the need to prioritize agency resources in a fair and balanced way, and jurisdictions have broad latitude in developing and executing their individual strategies in support of their clients. An essential component is the ability of the agency to clearly define and present our operational and financial needs to Congress on a regular basis.

Regarding personnel, the agency offers details to employees and encourages their participation in AMP and ExCEL programs as a part of AOC's Strategic Plan to foster an Innovative and Empowered Workforce. As outlined in the Career Staffing Plan, AOC detailing employees meets the Agency's strategic goals and fulfill its mission. A detailed employee is on a temporary assignment, without a change in pay, to a different position and/or another jurisdiction for a specified period, with the employee returning to his/her position of record at the end of the specified time period.

Employees may also take part in the Exchange in Critical Learning and Expertise Program (ExCEL). The ExCEL program is a knowledge exchange program that improves organizational productivity, improves strategic efficiencies and increases employee knowledge. The program is a true opportunity to share capabilities, skills and techniques.

Detail opportunities not associated with employee development are typically utilized by management to address the mission and operational needs of an organization. These types of details are used in situations such as meeting emergencies established by peak workload or unanticipated absences.

B. Are Senate resources or personnel currently loaned to support other jurisdictions' projects? Please identify the resources or personnel, and the purpose of the loan.

Currently, there are two Senate employees detailed for employee development and to meet operational needs of the Agency, thus providing a mutual benefit for both the employee and management. One employee is a night custodial employee detailed to Project Planning and Management, Architecture Preservation Branch; detailed upon recently receiving his architecture degree. The second employee is an executive administrative support assistant, with business administration/financial management degrees, detailed to the AOC Chief Financial Officer's Accounting Division.

C. How does an AOC jurisdiction request the loan of another jurisdictions' personnel?

For details or ExCEL opportunities, a jurisdiction official need only contact HCMD to initiate the process. Should a future cross-jurisdictional employee detail need arise, we will request approval from the Committee as needed, and per the Committee's November 15, 2018 correspondence.

D. Do loan requests require approval from HCMD, CFO, or the AOC executive office, and what documentation, if any, is required?

Employee details to another position or jurisdiction along with ExCEL opportunities must be reviewed and approved by HCMD and appropriate AOC leadership. Employee details are documented in writing.

E. Does AOC have formal policies to govern loan requests between jurisdictions and, if so, how does that policy ensure that the lending jurisdiction is not disadvantaged.

Employee details are governed by the policies outlined in AOC's Career Staffing Plan. Jurisdictional participation is voluntary and would not be used if it causes undue hardship to any AOC jurisdiction or negatively impacts the agency's statutory requirements.

F. If jurisdictional loans occur, how does the AOC ensure the borrowing jurisdiction reimburses the loaning jurisdiction for the resource or personnel cost?

The AOC is in full compliance with appropriations law, as evidenced by the 14th consecutive clean audit opinion on our financial statements in FY 2018, as indicated within the annual Performance and Accountability Report that is provided to Congress each year. In the event of the need to reimburse funds across jurisdictions, the AOC administratively credits and debits the appropriate accounts to ensure costs are properly charged where earned.

18) In recent years, the AOC has not completed multiple oversight reports that are required by statute to be provided to committees of both houses of Congress. Which AOC personnel are responsible for ensuring that required oversight reports are timely prepared and submitted to the relevant oversight committees?

The entire Executive Leadership Team reports to Congress and our oversight Committees in a variety of ways to meet both statutory and non-statutory requirements. The agency also provides regular project and operational updates via routine meetings with oversight staff and on a variety of agency-wide programs within the annual Performance and Accountability Report, which is provided to Congress each year.

The agency is committed to ensuring that we fully comply with all requirements. As such, I have directed my Office of General Counsel to review all pertinent statutes. If any potential compliance issues are found, they will be immediately corrected.

19) As a reminder, during the hearing, you stated you would follow up with additional information on the topics listed below. Please provide the information here as well.

A. The number of vacant FTE positions.

The AOC is currently accepting applications for 152 full, part-time and temporary vacant positions. This includes recruitment for support for House and Senate moves as well as summer interns.

B. The breakdown of the AOC's $733M budget for salaries/benefits and Capitol projects.

Of the AOC's FY 2019 enacted budget of $733.7 million, $435 million is annual operating funding. Of this, $249.5 million is provided for employee salaries and benefits. Capital projects were provided $298.7 million in FY 2019.

C. How the AOC plans to address its succession planning and capacity building for the future in regards to re-employed annuitants' service extending longer than a 13-month term.

In FY 2018, HCMD launched its efforts to work with AOC jurisdiction heads to discuss three important and interrelated talent management topics: Workforce/Succession Planning; Talent Acquisition; and Talent Development.

Because the labor market continues to evolve, and how candidates look for jobs has changed, HCMD updated the way it recruits new talent more than a year ago. The talent acquisition model is a strategic approach to hiring the best talent for AOC, and it not only addresses current talent needs, but also focuses on forecasting future workforce needs. HCMD is working in collaboration with jurisdiction leadership through a continuous cycle of outreach, employer branding, relationship building, development of creative recruitment strategies and proactive sourcing to attract and identify highly qualified candidates.

Succession planning and talent development are also closely linked to talent acquisition. HCMD collaborates with AOC jurisdictions to plan and prepare for the departure of employees with institutional knowledge, skill sets and competencies needed to execute AOC's mission and strategic goals. Developing an internal pipeline of and creating opportunities for qualified candidates is our primary focus for future succession planning.

D. If the AOC has submitted reprogramming requests over the past two years and if the AOC is working to eliminate reprogramming requests.

The AOC submitted two reprogramming requests in FY 2017, and one in FY 2018. The AOC remains committed to reducing reprogramming requests to the Congress except in rare instances to maximize stewardship of available resources or accommodate the most urgent customer needs.

E. An update on the Senate Underground Garage Restoration project.

Construction is underway on the multi-year project to renovate the Senate Underground Garage and Senate Park. The temporary swing spaces for the SUG occupants are fully operational. We are working on mobilization of the south wall waterproofing work and hazardous material abatement in the garage. The Senate Underground Garage and a large portion of Senate Park will remain inaccessible throughout the project, which is expected to be complete before the 2021 Presidential inauguration.

F. An update on the Russell Stone and Window Restoration project, including how delayed the timeline for the project is, what the additional costs incurred are due to the delay, and if the AOC feels confident the delay issues won't be repeated on the next three project phases.

The initial work (Sequence 1) on the Russell Senate Office Building (RSOB), Exterior Envelope Repair and Restoration project was delayed about 10 months due to unforeseen and differing site conditions along with government and contractor delays. The 10-month schedule extension was at no cost to the government. Following the delay in this initial work (Sequence 1), we consolidated future awards to allow for overlap and continuous subcontracted work, helping to shorten durations, and reducing down time between scaffolding and compound assembly. The sequence of the work is now:

- Sequence 1 (C Street and Matching Interior Courtyard Elevations) was completed this past fall and the contractor met their revised completion date.
- Sequence 2 (Constitution Ave, First Street, and Matching Interior Courtyard Elevations) was awarded late, in Spring 2018, due to Sequence 1. The construction compound along Constitution Avenue is currently being completed and scaffolding is expected to start along Constitution Avenue and the Interior Courtyard this winter. The AOC gained efficiencies by continuing the scaffolding along Constitution Avenue to First Street to meet the unique needs of the RSOB, Exterior Envelope Repair and Restoration and the Storm Window projects. Scaffolding construction will proceed from Constitution Avenue to First Street. This sequence of the project is on track for completion in Spring 2021.
- Sequence 3 (Rotunda, Delaware Avenue, and Matching Interior Courtyard Elevations) has not been awarded. It is anticipated that Sequence 3 will be awarded in Summer 2019, and work will run in parallel with Sequence 2 for approximately two years. Sequence 3 is projected to be complete in Spring 2022.

The differing site conditions that were discovered in Sequence 1 have been incorporated within the award of Sequence 2 and the planned award of Sequence 3. Therefore, we are confident that we can complete those phases of the project within the durations noted above and the current budget.

G. The AOC's current number of temporary employee positions.

The AOC currently employs 245 temporary employees.

H. **How often does the AOC utilize announcements in newspapers, professional trade publications, and other supplemental methods for posting job vacancies?**

As part of HCMD's talent acquisition initiatives, the AOC continuously places announcements in newspapers, professional trade publications and other supplemental methods for posting job vacancies. We are also optimizing emerging technologies as print publications have now expanded to the digital format.

To maintain a competitive edge in the labor market, we have enhanced our employer branding and presence on social media platforms (e.g., Twitter, LinkedIn) to diversify our talent pool. The diversification of our multigenerational workforce extends beyond gender, race and ethnicities, to include disabilities, broad skill sets, diverse backgrounds and experience. In viewing the totality of our workforce profile, we are always looking for ways to overcome barriers to achieving a diverse workforce reflective of the labor market where we work and live.

We meticulously craft job announcements that will attract a diversity of candidates – moving away from traditional language to describe required skills and experience. To appeal to our next generation of employees, we emphasize our workplace flexibilities, a known attraction for the millennial population.

With a national shortage of skilled trade labor, impacting both the private and public sectors, the agency has doubled its efforts to target trade schools and colleges focusing on skilled trade curriculum. We cast a broad geographical net to extend our reach to areas with a high concentration of skilled labor. Furthermore, we enlarge our candidate pipeline by adding compelling content to our social media pages to tell the story of our agency culture, core values, and employees – showcasing our diversity.

At the AOC, we strive for greater workplace diversity as it only strengthens our organizational performance. To realize this goal, recruitment strategies that reach diverse audiences is a fundamental component of our talent acquisition program.

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