

MEMBER DAY

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS FIRST SESSION

NOVEMBER 21, 2019

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COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

116TH CONGRESS

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BARRY LOUDERMILK, Georgia

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MEMBER DAY

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2019

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to call, at 8:35 a.m., in room 1310, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Zoe Lofgren (Chairperson of the Committee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Lofgren, Raskin, Davis of California, Fudge, Aguilar, and Loudermilk.

Staff Present: Jamie Fleet, Staff Director; Sean Jones, Legislative Clerk; David Tucker, Parliamentarian; Khalil Abboud, Deputy Staff Director; Peter Whippy, Communications Director; Veletor Mazyck, Chief of Staff, Office of Representative Fudge; Lisa Sherman, Chief of Staff, Office of Representative Susan Davis; Evan Dörner, Office of Representative Aguilar; Lauren Doney, Office of Representative Raskin; Mariam Malik, Staff Assistant; Courtney Parella, Minority Communications Director; Tim Monahan, Minority Deputy Staff Director; Jesse Roberts, Minority Counsel; and Jennifer Daulby, Minority Staff Director; Nick Crocker, Minority Director of Member Services; and Susannah Johnston, Minority Legislative Assistant.

The CHAIRPERSON. The Committee will come to order. We have a busy morning ahead of us, so I will keep my remarks brief.

House Resolution 6, the rules package adopted at the beginning of this Congress, requires committees to hold a hearing at which it receives testimony from Members, Delegates, and the Resident Commissioner on proposed legislation within its jurisdiction. In response, the Committee on House Administration is holding its first Member Day hearing.

Our Committee's jurisdiction is varied, to include, among other areas, elements of the day-to-day operation of the House, committee funding, the Smithsonian Institution, the Library of Congress, campaign finance, and elections.

As a Committee, we all work closely together, and we are pleased to hear this morning from our colleagues who are not on the Committee and who wish to share their legislative proposals with us.

Now, I would like—the Ranking Member, Mr. Davis, was unable to be here this morning, but we are happy to have Mr. Loudermilk, and I will now recognize him for any statements he might wish to make at this time.

[The statement of The Chairperson follows:]

ZOE LOFGREN, CALIFORNIA
CHAIRPERSON

JAMIE RASKIN, MARYLAND
VICE CHAIRPERSON

SUSAN DAVIS, CALIFORNIA
G.K. BUTTERFIELD, NORTH CAROLINA
MARCIA FUDGE, OHIO
PETE AGUILAR, CALIFORNIA

JAMIE FLEET, STAFF DIRECTOR

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

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RODNEY DAVIS, ILLINOIS
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

MARK WALKER, NORTH CAROLINA
BARRY LOUDERMILK, GEORGIA

ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

JEN DAULBY, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

Chairperson Zoe Lofgren Member Day Hearing-11.21.19 Opening Statement

House Resolution 6, our Rules package, requires committees to hold a hearing at which the committees receive testimony from Members, Delegates, and the Resident Commissioner on proposed legislation within its Rule X jurisdiction. In response, the Committee on House Administration is holding its first Member Day hearing.

Our Committee's jurisdiction is varied, to include among other areas: day-to-day operations of the House, Committee funding, the Smithsonian Institution, the Library of Congress, campaign finance and elections. As a Committee, we all work closely together and we are pleased to hear this morning from our colleagues who are not on the Committee and who wish to share their legislative proposals with us.

Mr. Davis, the Ranking Member, was unable to be here this morning, but we are happy to have Mr. Loudermilk, and I will now recognize him for any statements he might wish to make at this time.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I heard that collective sigh when you said that Representative Davis wasn't going to be here. Let the record reflect that.

Thank you, and welcome all that are here on time already for this Members Day. The new requirement in the House Rules that all committees hold a Members Day is a great opportunity for us to hear firsthand from our colleagues on both sides of the aisle on important issues within our wide range of jurisdiction.

We do have an obligation on this Committee to ensure that the legislative branch is running as efficiently as possible in order to make it easier for Members to perform their daily functions and best serve the constituents that we all serve.

We should also carefully and thoughtfully review and take up legislation before this Committee that not only has a positive impact on our Nation, but also makes sense for both the Federal Government and the American taxpayer.

I want to thank all of my colleagues who took time to come before us today to express their concerns or, more importantly, ideas, and I look forward to hearing what you have to say.

Thank you, and I yield back.

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Rep. Barry Loudermilk Member Day Hearing-11.21.19 Opening Statement

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We should also carefully and thoughtfully review and take up legislation before this Committee that not only has a positive impact on our Nation, but also makes sense for both the Federal Government and the American taxpayer. I want to thank all of my colleagues who took the time to come before us today to express their concerns or more importantly ideas, and I look forward to hearing what you have to say. Thank you, and I yield back.

The CHAIRPERSON. Thanks very much.

Not every Member has yet arrived, but we are going to be rewarding the Members who have been on time by hearing from them first. I will note that Members who are not able to attend will, without objection, have their remarks submitted for the record.

First, we would like to recognize our colleague, Mr. Tom Rice, who was elected in 2012 and represents South Carolina's Seventh District, which includes eight counties in northeastern South Carolina and includes Florence and Myrtle Beach. He serves on the Ways and Means Committee.

And of course, as I mentioned earlier, your full statement will be made part of the record.

We also have Representative Dean Phillips, who was elected in 2018 and represents Minnesota's Third District, which includes Minnetonka and the counties of Hennepin, Carver, and Anoka. He serves on the Financial Services, Foreign Affairs, and the Ethics Committee. That is the booby prize. I did it for 8 long years.

First, we will turn to you, Mr. Rice, and then Mr. Phillips.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. TOM RICE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Mr. RICE. Thank you, Madam Chairperson, and standing in for Rodney Davis, Mr. Loudermilk.

I am here to talk about the improvement of the Cannon Office Building, the renovation of the Cannon Office Building.

I have a little experience in offices. We have several office buildings back home. And I have built office buildings and rent them, and my wife still manages these things. So we have a little experience in commercial real estate.

She, out of curiosity, got on the website to learn a little bit about the Cannon Renewal Project, cost \$725 million, which is an absurd price. On the website it says 826,000 square feet. That is difficult for me to believe. I don't think it is that big. But even if you take that at face value, it is \$910 a square foot for the renovation.

The last office building that I built was in 2008, cost \$130 a square foot, much nicer in terms of modern office building, Class A space than the Cannon Office Building is, and was at a price of about one-eighth of what we are paying not to build—not to build—but to renovate the Cannon Office Building.

So if we are going to pay eight times as much for a renovation, we should expect that we would get a very top quality result. We decided to move into one of the spaces in the newly renovated section, and we did that. And there are certainly some upgrades to the old section, but it is nothing like I would expect from a \$50-a-square-foot renovation, much less a thousand dollar a square foot renovation.

The first thing that really came out and bothered me was the elevators. They had on the corner of where my office is, the elevators were not synchronized, so that if you would have to go and push one button and then walk over to the other side and push the other button, and they would come without any synchronization. It is a complete waste of time every day for everybody. And I got them to

work on that. It is only partially done. But we should expect a lot more.

The second problem—I am limited on time, I could spend a half an hour talking about this—the second problem is the vermin. We are overrun with mice. And Tom Rice, we used to keep individually wrapped Rice Crispy treats in a bowl for people to eat when they came in, but we had to stop doing that because the rats would get in the bowl every night and chew through all the paper.

And when you come in every day there is rat feces on the desk, on the floor, on the conference table. And it is completely absurd that we would consider paying \$1,000 a square foot for renovation and have to deal with this kind of nonsense, and, you know, typical Federal bureaucratic nonsense.

I used to rent to the—in one of my office buildings I had the Social Security Administration. Another office building, the FBI was one of my tenants. And I can absolutely assure you that if we had allowed these things to occur in these things that we were renting to the Federal Government, they would have first moved out and, second, sued me for providing inadequate space.

One of my workers in the Cannon Office Building became ill last month with pink eye, which she assumes came from rat feces on her desk that she put her hands on and then rubbed her eye.

And I promise you, if other forms of disgusting-type results had occurred, let's say we had mold in the office, everybody would be all up in an uproar and we would be evacuating the building. But for some reason we are okay with rat poop all over the office and all over our desk and in our drawers and in everything in that office.

Another problem is—I am sorry, I am going to run out of time—but one of the office buildings I ran I put balconies on, and we have spent a lot of money to put pavers, concrete pavers where people could walk on these things and have proper drains and all this. And they did the same thing. I noticed—I understood what system they put on the Cannon Office Building on the fifth floor.

And they also spent I don't know how many untold millions building up the railings on the fifth floor where it would be safe for people to go outside. But for some unknown reason, with this expensive concrete paver system they have put down for the flooring and with these higher railings, they don't allow you access to the outside, which is ridiculous.

And when I asked the Architect of the Capitol about it, they said, well, the flooring wouldn't allow for people to walk out there. Let me tell you, I have developed these things. I know what kind of flooring they put there, and the reason they put it there is so people could walk on it.

And then the last thing is the heating and cooling. You know, being in the commercial office building business, I understand that there are always issues with balancing. We have approached the Architect of the Capitol. I have met with the Architect of the Capitol. We have talked to him about it. And it is still, with a thousand dollar a square foot price tag, cannot seem to be working. All the people in my office that work in the pit area where the staff is, they all have blankets wrapped around them every single day.

To sum up quickly, for the price that we are paying, we should expect more. If I ran my office buildings the way the Architect of the Capitol is running these office buildings, I wouldn't have any tenants, and I would be fired. I would be fired from doing this. It is absurd. It is far below standard. And we are paying five times as much.

I told the Architect of the Capitol what we need to do is get the contractor in here and meet with the contractor to talk about these problems, but I assume, if we are paying them a thousand dollars a square foot to renovate it, the contractor is probably in Tahiti somewhere celebrating this wonderful victory that he got for getting this absurd contract.

So with that, I yield back.

[The statement of Mr. Rice follows:]

CHA Member Hour Written Testimony
Representative Tom Rice (SC-07)

Thank you, Chairperson Lofgren and Ranking Member Davis, for allowing us to discuss the issues we are seeing with our offices and share them with you. I appreciate your commitment to improving our office spaces.

According to the Architect of the Capitol, the Cannon Renewal Project is a ten-year program to repair or to replace key building systems that have grown outdated, such as heating, cooling, lighting, plumbing, fire and life safety, accessibility, and structural integrity. The Cannon Renewal project will cost \$725.7 million to improve the 826,465 square feet in the building. This translates to a cost of \$910.75 per square foot to improve this building. Despite these extraordinary costs to improve the building, many problems remain unresolved.

The number one problem is mice. As you know, mice can cause many issues in an office, with the worst being the spreading of disease. Contact with a mouse, or their feces, saliva, or urine can spread diseases including Hantavirus or Salmonella. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires that every workplace have a continuing and effective extermination program where rodents, insects, and other vermin are detected. Although traps have been placed throughout our office, no mice have been caught and we continue to detect their presence from their droppings scattered throughout the office. We have found mice or their remnants in the cubicle walls, inside desk drawers, on the floor, and on desks. We even found large amounts of urine on our couch. The mice are a hazard and one that should be controlled and stopped. This problem is not synonymous with a \$725.7 million price tag.

Another issue is the temperature. Regardless of the season, our office is incredibly cold. Staff have resorted to heaters to stay warm. Our requests to improve these frigid temperatures have gone unresolved. Again, this is not synonymous with a \$725.7 million price tag.

There is a door down the hall from our office that leads outside to the Cannon Rooftop. I would like to be able to access this area for photo and other moments with constituents. The rooftop railing appears to have been built up for this purpose resolving any safety concerns. Yet I still have not been granted access to the rooftop.

Lastly, although the elevators are much improved, at the beginning of the year, the elevators were uncoordinated. When I inquired, I was told it could not be fixed. I continued to press for a solution. Having an elevator manufacturer in my district, I inquired and they saw no reason why it could not be solved, so I persisted. It took until after August recess to have this problem somewhat fixed. Yet, the elevators continue to not be completely coordinated. Once again, this is not synonymous with a \$725.7 million price tag.

I understand that large construction projects take time and issues arise, however I think these are excessive. Thank you for the opportunity to share these remarks and comments on the

Cannon House Office Building and my office located at room 512 Cannon House Office Building.
I look forward to working together to resolve these issues.

The CHAIRPERSON. Thank you, Mr. Rice.

Just a note. Mr. Raskin and I both also serve on the Judiciary Committee, and we have a markup that goes back into session at 9 o'clock. Mrs. Davis will be here by then, but I don't want you to think we are not interested; we are. We just have another obligation.

Before I call on Mr. Phillips, I will note that Mr. Kilmer and Mr. Graves have joined us, and we will hear from them as well.

We will go into questions afterwards, but I just want you to know, Mr. Rice, we appreciate your testimony. We had the first ever oversight hearing on that construction in September, and obviously a lot of the overruns had occurred over the years with nobody looking from the Congress.

We have the Inspector General looking at it as well as the Architect of the Capitol. Your feedback is very welcome, and I am hoping we can follow up with our staff and you to loop you in with the Inspector General on that.

Obviously, it is more expensive to renovate than to build new, and we have a historic building, but those conditions are completely unacceptable, and I am hoping we can follow up with you subsequent to this hearing.

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Chairperson?

The CHAIRPERSON. Yes.

Mr. RASKIN. If I might also, I very much appreciate your testimony Mr. Rice.

Just one quick clarification. You started off by talking about the mice problem, which I am well aware of as a resident of Cannon, but then you switched over to rats. I don't know if there is media here, and I just want to make sure we are clear about that.

Mr. RICE. I guess, I am putting all of vermin under the umbrella of the term "rat."

Mr. RASKIN. As far as I know, we are just dealing with a mouse problem, a mice problem at this point. I mean, rats are a different breed entirely, I think, which isn't to defend mice as residents of the Cannon Building.

The CHAIRPERSON. Neither one are welcome. Neither are welcome.

Mr. RASKIN. Yeah. I yield back, Madam Chairperson.

The CHAIRPERSON. Mr. Phillips, you are now invited to give your testimony.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. DEAN PHILLIPS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

Mr. PHILLIPS. Thank you, Chairperson Lofgren, Mr. Loudermilk, Mr. Raskin, Members of the Committee. Thank you for the invitation to offer testimony this morning.

The Committee on House Administration plays a pivotal role in my top priority here in Congress, and that is restoring trust in government through reforms that put the American people back at the center of our system.

It is my mission to advocate reforms that reduce the influence of money in our politics and protect our democracy through legislation like H.R. 1, the For the People Act, and the SHIELD Act.

But I am here today to speak about a different type of desperately needed reform in the Halls of Congress itself.

Here in the House we work in social, organizational, and physical environments that were designed for the early 20th century. Congress, it seems, is designed to make collaboration and innovation difficult, and it is working very well.

A prime example of processes that fail us and our constituents is orientation. Like many of my freshman colleagues, I entered this Congress ready to listen, to learn, to advance good ideas no matter what party they come from, and to serve the American people.

While I thought the work of the House Administration Committee and its staff was exceptional with regards to planning and executing such a large logistical operation, I do think that improvements can be made to the content of the orientation program itself.

In short, I believe focusing on two things during orientation would greatly improve the event. First, the professional development of each and every new Member. Second, creating opportunity to collaborate with colleagues across the aisle.

For example, many new Members, like me, have no experience in government, let alone legislative bodies. Breakout sessions on process and procedures of this institution could significantly improve the ability of freshman Members to hit the ground running for our constituents.

Furthermore, as Members of Congress, we are tasked with providing oversight to enormous government agencies, without many of us having experience in these agencies. Professional development sessions with academics from the CRS or employees from the agencies themselves would be very useful in giving us a foundation of knowledge.

Finally, at a time when partisanship is at a fever pitch, I believe orientation needs to focus on intentionally creating spaces for cross-partisan relationship building. As an example of this, I have taken steps to lay a foundation of understanding and respect with my Republican colleagues by joining the Problem Solvers Caucus and partnering with my fellow Minnesotan, Congressman Pete Stauber, to send our staff in Minnesota to the very first ever de-polarization workshop in Congress, forging friendships with my Republican colleagues and their families.

In my view, this should be the rule, not the exception. The American people are expecting us to put party politics aside and get things done, and not doing so is a dereliction of our collective duty. We can and should be looking ahead and being intentional to ensure that every opportunity is taken to streamline the processes of Congress to get work done on behalf of the people.

One possible way to do that for orientation would be instituting a bipartisan orientation committee. Much like the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress has worked dutifully and respectfully to move forward institutional reforms, perhaps a similar group of Members could work together to plan orientation with an eye towards educating Members in the fundamentals of work in this institution and creating events conducive to relationship building.

We must look beyond ourselves. How have successful organizations across our country innovated at onboarding new employees? Where can we improve?

We should apply this critical eye not just to our processes but to our environments themselves. Right now my staff work behind desks that are far older than they are, cramped in spaces that seem to have been designed to disincentivize even speaking with one another.

While our space does limit us, we must not simply accept it and move forward hindered in our ability to work for our constituents. We must use design to inspire better outcomes.

The reality is that while these spaces and these processes may have worked decades ago, the world outside of Washington, D.C., has moved forward swiftly. If we continue to fail to keep up with that progress, we will become less and less able to deal with the emerging issues of the 21st century. And if we are to catch up, we need to be open to a much broader range of ideas.

That is why I believe we should also hold a summit to reinvent Congress where we bring in the very best minds from across the country to ideate and expand on the work currently being done here in the Select Committee on Modernization. There we can elicit the experience of those across the private sector, those who have managed large shifts in organizational culture and environment and learn how to implement such changes to streamline Congress.

We must take every opportunity now to improve the House of Representatives for tomorrow. Failure to do so will continue to diminish our ability to work on behalf of the people who sent us here.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson and Members of the Committee.
[The statement of Mr. Phillips follows:]

Thank you, Chairwoman Lofgren, Ranking Member Davis and members of the Committee.

Thank you for the invitation to offer testimony this morning.

The Committee on House Administration plays a pivotal role in my top priority here in Congress: restoring trust in our government through reforms that put the American people back at the center of our system.

It's my mission to advance reforms that reduce the influence of money in our politics and protect our democracy through legislation like H.R. 1, the For the People Act, and the SHIELD Act - but I'm here today to speak about a different type of desperately-needed reform in the halls of Congress themselves.

Here in the House, we work in social, organizational, and physical environments that were designed for workers in the early 20th century – Congress, it seems, is designed to make collaboration and innovation difficult.

And it's working.

A prime example of processes that fail us and our constituents is orientation.

Like many of my freshman colleagues, I entered this Congress ready to listen, to learn, to advance good ideas no matter what party they come from, and to serve the American people.

My first recommendation deals with Freshmen orientation. While I thought the work of the House Admin Committee and its staff was exceptional with regards to planning and executing such a large logistical operation, I wanted to respectfully request that House Leadership consider some improvements to the content of the orientation, focused greatly on the professional development of Members.

For example, many new Members, like me, have no experience in government, let alone legislative bodies. Breakout sessions on procedures of this institution could significantly improve the ability of freshman members to hit the ground running for our constituents.

Furthermore, as Members of Congress, we are supposed to provide oversight to enormous government agencies without many of us having experience in these agencies. Professional development sessions with academics from the Congressional Research Service or employees from the agencies themselves would be very useful to giving us a foundation of knowledge.

Finally, at a time when partisanship is at a fever pitch, I think orientation needs to focus on intentionally creating spaces for cross-partisan relationship building. As an example of this, I've taken steps to lay a foundation of understanding and respect with my Republican colleagues by joining the bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus, partnering

with my fellow Minnesotan, Congressman Pete Stauber, to send our staff to the first-ever depolarization workshop in Congress, and forging friendships with my Republican colleagues and their families.

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There, we can elicit the experience of those across the private sector, those who have managed large shifts in organizational culture or environment and learn how to implement such changes to streamline Congress.

We must take every opportunity now to improve the House of Representatives for tomorrow. Failure to do so will continue to diminish our ability to work on behalf of the people who sent us here.

Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee.

The CHAIRPERSON. Thank you very much.

I would like to note that Representative Derek Kilmer, who was elected in 2012, represents Washington's Sixth District, which includes Tacoma, Bremerton, and Port Angeles, and he serves on the Appropriations Committee and is chair of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress.

Mr. Tom Graves was elected in 2010 and represents Georgia's 14th District, which includes Dalton and Rome. He serves on the Appropriations Committee as Ranking Member on the Financial Services Subcommittee and also as Vice Chair of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress.

We also have this morning Representative Pete Olson, who was elected in 2008, and who represents Texas' 22nd District, which includes Sugar Land and Pearland. He serves on the Energy and Commerce Committee.

We welcome all of you. I am going to the Judiciary Committee and will invite Representative Susan Davis to sit here in my stead.

Mrs. DAVIS [presiding]. Thank you very much while we played musical chairs here.

So I understand, Mr. Kilmer, you are next. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. DEREK KILMER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

Mr. KILMER. Thank you, Chairwoman Davis. I want to thank Chairperson Lofgren and Ranking Member Davis for hosting today's Member Day hearing. I also want to thank them for their leadership on the Committee on House Administration and for their partnership on the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress.

I am here today to talk about the important work of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress, which I chair and have the honor of working with Vice Chair Tom Graves, who has been a terrific partner in this effort.

We have been tremendously fortunate to work closely with the Committee on House Administration, and I look forward to our continued collaboration.

As you know, many of the issues in our mandate are issues that the Committee on House Administration has been working diligently on for decades. We are very fortunate to have your Committee's expertise and guidance as the Select Committee does its work.

Every few decades Congress takes a look inward and decides it needs to fix itself. In most of these instances Congress forms a select committee and charges them with figuring out what the problems are and recommending solutions.

The Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress is the latest incarnation of that. The last one was in 1992. The Committee is truly bipartisan, with six Democrats and six Republicans. I chair the Committee, Tom Graves serves as the Vice Chair, and we work as partners, as do our Committee Members.

I have been incredibly impressed and encouraged by the collaboration of the members of the Select Committee, and I believe that we are proving that it is possible for Members on both sides of the aisle to sit down together, engage in tough discussions, and ultimately find bipartisan solutions to the challenges that we face.

The Select Committee's approach has been to start with small but important wins while building support and buy-in as we move onto more challenging topics, and our work so far this year reflects this plan. We have unanimously passed 29 recommendations that take up important issues like transparency, staff diversity and retention, and technology in the House.

The extension that we recently received, combined with the institutional support that we have worked so hard to build over the course of the year, I think will help us as we work through the tough issues that we intend to take up over the course of the next year.

As you know, the Select Committee does not have legislative authority, but we are packaging our recommendations into legislation as a way of ensuring that they actually get implemented further down the road. By moving legislation to implement our reforms in realtime, we hope to have the opportunity to support the work of the referral committees, including this one.

This approach sets us apart from our predecessor reform committees, which generally produced a report rather than producing recommendations that could turn into legislation and then actually enact real change. Those past select committees didn't introduce legislation, and they didn't see forward motion on a lot of the recommendations before those committees were formally dissolved.

We look forward to working with the Committee on House Administration as the legislation implementing our reforms moves forward. We understand that the legislative version of most of our recommendations will end up in this Committee, and we will do our part to support and promote your process and your work, and appreciate this Committee taking up those recommendations and the legislation that will come before you.

So I thank you for the opportunity to speak before the Committee today and stand ready to answer any questions that you may have.

[The statement of Mr. Kilmer follows:]

**Written Statement for Rep. Derek Kilmer (WA-6)
Committee on House Administration
Member Day, November 21, 2019**

Chairperson Lofgren and Ranking Member Davis, thank you for hosting today's Member Day hearing. Thank you for your leadership of the Committee on House Administration, and for your partnership on the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress.

I am here today to talk about the important work of the Select Committee on Modernization, which I chair. We have been tremendously fortunate to work closely with the Committee on House Administration and I look forward to our continued collaboration. As you know, many of the issues in our mandate are issues that the Committee on House Administration has been diligently working on for decades. We are very fortunate to have your committee's expertise and guidance as we do the Select Committee's work.

Every few decades, Congress takes a look inward and decides it needs to fix itself. Historically, Congress has formed bipartisan Select Committees and charged them with figuring out what the problems are and recommending solutions. The Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress is the latest incarnation (the last one was in 1992).

The Select Committee on Modernization was created as part of the House Rules package for the 116th Congress and consists of six Democrats and six Republicans.

Our mandate is pretty broad. We are tasked with looking at:

- Rules to promote a more modern and efficient Congress;
- Procedures, including the schedule and calendar;
- Policies to develop the next generation of leaders;
- Staff recruitment, diversity, retention, and compensation and benefits;
- Administrative efficiencies;
- Technology and innovation;
- And franking and digital communications.

The Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress has also looked at issues that do not fit neatly into its mandate, but that committee members feel are important. For example, the committee held a recent hearing on encouraging civility and collaboration in Congress – something our members agreed was really important to talk about, especially now.

The Select Committee does not have legislative authority. But we are packaging our recommendations into legislation as a way of ensuring that they actually get implemented further on down the road. By moving legislation to implement our reforms in “real time,” we hope to have the opportunity to support the work of the referral committees. This innovative approach sets us apart from our predecessor reform committees, none of which introduced legislation to implement their recommendations before they were officially dissolved.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi recently extended the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress through the end of the 116th Congress, for which I am very grateful. The Select Committee was originally set to expire at the end of this year but now we have an additional year to continue working to modernize Congress so that we

can better serve the American people. Receiving this year-long extension also sets us apart from our predecessor committees and we intend to use the additional time to dig into tough issues and continue churning out recommendations and legislation.

There are a couple of additional things about the Select Committee that I think make it really unique.

- It is truly bipartisan. I mentioned that we have six Democrats and six Republicans. I chair the Committee and Rep. Tom Graves (R-GA) serves as Vice Chair. We work as partners, as do our committee members. Our members have formed a number of issue-specific working groups and meet regularly to explore problems and hammer out recommendations. The bipartisan collaboration on this committee has been so encouraging.
- We have a unified, non-partisan staff with one budget and one office. This breaks with the tradition of dividing resources between the parties.
- Over the past several months, our committee staff have held ongoing listening sessions with personal and committee staff in order to solicit input on how to best modernize Congress. Between our staff and our members, we have heard ideas from over 300 House staffers and 150 members. The problems we hear about are the same, regardless of party or position. If anything is clear, it is that we are all in this together. We face the same challenges in trying to do our jobs and we all want to do better by the American people.
- We are adopting recommendations on a rolling basis. Most previous Select Committees have issued end-of-the-year reports that contain all of their recommendations. Our approach is to

move when we have consensus. So far we have unanimously passed 29 recommendations.

- We have also played around with some small – but not insignificant – things. For example, we sometimes mix up the seating at our hearings so that members are not divided by party. And when we did a hearing on next generation leadership issues, we handed the gavel over to our two freshman members to co-chair.

I want to close with a few words about the Select Committee's process and progress thus far.

The Select Committee's game plan has been to start with small but important wins, while building support and buy-in as we move on to more challenging topics. Our work so far this year reflects this plan. The extension we recently received, combined with the institutional support we have worked so hard to build over the course of this year, will help us as we work through the tough issues we intend to take up next year.

We look forward to working with the Committee on House Administration as the legislation implementing our reforms moves forward. We understand that that legislative version of most of our recommendations will end up in this committee and we will do our part to support and promote your process and work.

Thank you again for your leadership and support.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you very much.

And we will now hear from Mr. Graves and perhaps come back and just have a few comments for you. Thank you.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. TOM GRAVES, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF GEORGIA**

Mr. GRAVES. Good morning, Mrs. Davis and Mr. Loudermilk. Good to be with you. We are grateful for Chairperson Lofgren and Ranking Member Davis for hosting this Member Day hearing today.

As the Vice Chair of the Select Committee on Modernization of Congress, I also want to thank this Committee, and particularly Ms. Lofgren and Ranking Member Davis for their partnership and for their participation in the Committee. They have been a great help to us, and it is wonderful to have their voices represented and your Committee as well on the Select Committee.

I want to thank Mr. Kilmer here, who has been a wonderful chairman to work with. The environment he has created and what we have been able to do in this Committee is unmatched, I believe, here in Congress to this point. I am grateful for the environment he has created of productivity and bipartisanship. It is one that all committees should, quite frankly, model.

When the Select Committee first started, he and I chose to work together and combine our resources as one team. I say "he and I." It was actually his idea. Instead of separating into two different teams and having two different staffs and two different offices working from different spaces, we have chosen instead to work together as one team. Thanks to the Chairman this experiment has created a bipartisan bond of trust and collaboration unlike anything I have experienced thus to this day in Congress.

Under this unique approach, as he mentioned, we have been able to pass 29 recommendations unanimously, and that is something that has not occurred in Congress in a special select committee such as this in more than two decades, and that is a great accomplishment.

And we are not done yet. We have more to come. Just last week, the House extended the Committee through the rest of this Congress, which we are grateful for because there is more work to do. I am excited to have the opportunity to build on this year's work and dive even deeper into the issues affecting the legislative branch.

Every recommendation we make aims to strengthen the capacity of the legislative branch so that we can better serve all Americans and each of our constituents better.

Our first round of recommendations included transparency-focused recommendations, and that was done in May, and we aim to open up Congress for the American people.

Our second round highlighted the need for better technology and better processes here in the House, which I think we can all agree are deeply needed. For example, one of our recommendations was that Members of Congress should receive mandatory cybersecurity training.

This is an idea that came from our Member listening day in the very beginning of our inception of the Committee, and it came from Kathleen Rice from New York, who has a bill on this very practice.

If Congressional staff are mandated to undergo this type of training, we believe Members should as well. That is just one example of some of the thoughts we had there in the beginning.

In September we held a hearing related to the congressional schedule. This is one that I think all Members are very curious about and have had a lot of great thoughts and input on, and that is, how do we better comprise the calendar and schedule to assist each of us in doing our job better, but also representing our constituents more thoroughly.

We have had a hearing to discuss improving civility throughout the Halls of Congress, which I know is on everybody's minds here, how can we create a more productive environment, as we have heard from Mr. Phillips as well.

We have had conversations about budget and appropriations reform, congressional mailing standards, and communicating with our constituents.

I want to thank the members of this Committee for working with us during this process. You have been really good partners, and we couldn't have done it without you and your staff and all the insight that has been provided.

As this hearing today focuses on legislation within your jurisdiction, I want to reiterate how significant it is that we are working together on legislation that this Committee hopefully will markup in the days ahead and move to the floor, which includes the first 29 recommendations. This creates a precedent for our committees to continue working together to improve the institution on behalf of the American people.

This ongoing work is a big deal because it is the first time a committee like ours has seen work move through the legislative process. So we are in new territory, and we are doing it together.

We have clearly made it known to everyone that no idea is too big, no idea is too small, and we encourage everyone to continue sharing their ideas with reform with us.

And, Mrs. Davis, we greatly appreciate the time this morning.

Mr. Loudermilk, good to spend it with you. I yield back.

[The statement of Mr. Graves follows:]

Committee on House Administration

Member Day Hearing

11/21/2019

Testimony of Rep. Tom Graves

Madam Chairwoman and Ranking Member Davis, thank you hosting today's Member Day hearing. As the Vice Chair of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress, I also want to thank you for your partnership and leadership on the Select Committee.

I also want to commend Chairman Kilmer for the work he's done to create an environment of productivity and bipartisanship. When the Select Committee first started, we chose to work together and combine our resources as one team, instead of separating the staff and office space by party line. Thanks to the chairman, this experiment has created a bipartisan bond of trust and collaboration unlike anything I've been a part of in Congress.

Under this unique approach we've been able to pass 29 recommendations. And we're not done yet. Just last week, the House extended the committee through the rest of the 116th Congress. I'm excited to have the opportunity to build on this year's work and dive even deeper into issues affecting the legislative branch.

I want to thank the members of this committee for working with us during this process. You have been great partners. We look forward to partnering with you on efforts to move our bill.

Every recommendation we make aims to strengthen the capacity of the Legislative Branch so that we can better serve all Americans. Our first round of transparency-focused recommendations in May aimed to “open up” Congress for the American people.

Those recommendations included:

- Streamlining the bill-writing process to save time and reduce mistakes.
- Finalizing a new system that allows the public to easily track how amendments change bills, and how bills change current law.
- Making it easier to know who is lobbying Congress and what they’re lobbying for.
- Creating one-click access to a list of agencies and programs that have expired and need Congressional attention.
- Creating one-click access to see how Members of Congress vote in committees.

Increasing accessibility and transparency in Congress promotes more accountability to our constituents, and that’s a good thing.

The second round we developed after talking with current and former Members of Congress, and those familiar with the House’s current technology policy, capabilities and procedures. We want to better serve the American people by improving our effectiveness and ability to deliver modern, 21st century solutions.

There were 24 recommendations in total, which included:

- Reestablishing and restructuring an improved Office of Technology Assessment.

- Improving IT services in the House by reforming House Information Resources (HIR).
- Requiring HIR to prioritize certain technological improvements, reform the approval process for outside technology vendors, allow Member offices to test new technologies.
- Creating one point of contact for technology services for each Member office.
- Creating a customer service portal to improve technology services in the House.
- Leveraging bulk purchasing of the House by removing technology costs out of Member offices' budgets and moving into a centralized account.
- Prioritizing a "rapid response" program at the Congressional Research Service for nonpartisan fact sheets on key issues.
- Developing a constituent engagement and services best practices HUB for Members.

We also recommended that Members of Congress should receive mandatory cybersecurity training. That idea came from our colleague Kathleen Rice from New York, she has a bill that requires this practice. Congressional staff have to undergo cybersecurity training, Members should as well.

Our work is far from over. In September we held a hearing relating to the congressional schedule and calendar, and a hearing to discuss improving civility throughout the halls of Congress. We've had conversations about budget and appropriations reform, congressional mailing standards, and communicating with our constituents.

No idea is too big or too small, and we encourage you to continue sharing your ideas for reform with us. Thanks again for having us here today to share our work.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you very much.

And I just wanted to acknowledge, before moving on to Mr. Olson quickly, just our gratitude really for the work that you all are doing in such a fine bipartisan manner. You are good listeners, but more than that, I think you are trying to find ways to best apply what you are hearing from Members and perhaps even go beyond the initial suggestion, but how can we do better in some other areas as well. So we greatly appreciate that.

And thank you also for working on the modernization of the franking process, and hope that we will see some real results as soon as possible. I just want to congratulate you as well for the fact that you are also being extended into the next—second year of the term, and we look forward to all your recommendations.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Olson, you are recognized for five minutes.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. PETE OLSON, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS**

Mr. OLSON. Thank you, Chairwoman Davis and Mr. Loudermilk, for this opportunity to talk to this Committee about a very important issue I feel should be addressed sooner rather than later. I won't read my opening statement because you guys have it, you can read it yourselves, and plus, I don't want to burden some of our listeners with my Texas twang.

I know my statement is in some ways not the direct purview of this Committee, it is more with the Ethics Committee, but to make the changes I think we have to make, the Ethics Committee will have to have some input from the Rules Committee, and that is why I am here this morning.

First of all, my district, Texas' 22nd District, it is the largest district in America right now, over 1 million people and growing. It is the most diverse district in America, in the entire world. It is on track for this census to be 25 percent, 25 percent, 25 percent, 25 percent equally divided between Caucasians, African Americans, Asians, and Hispanics.

Two-thirds of the people, of the students in our public schools, are bilingual. We have the wealthiest county per capita in Texas. Not a bunch of people making millions of dollars, but the average salary is somewhere between (inaudible) dollars, and, again, we have all these issues.

As I mentioned, in our public schools, two-thirds of our kids are bilingual. The biggest news radio station in my region is Univision 45. They have the highest ratings at 5 a.m., 6 a.m., 10 a.m., noon, 4 p.m., 5 p.m., 6 p.m., and 10 o'clock at night. They are number one. Their audience is bilingual. Ninety percent speak Spanish and English and maybe another language.

And so my point is, this Congress has to have the weapons going forward, the tools to communicate with all these different groups. These communications are the key to us being Representatives for the people. And right now our current system does not allow that to happen.

Our current communications policies are like rubbing sticks for fire. They are archaic. We can basically use email, frank mail in

10 and 499s, but that is the last century. We have to upgrade to be using modern technology, that means social media.

For example, the problems I have encountered since I have been in Congress. When Hurricane Harvey hit my State, my region twice, came back after hitting us once, after hitting San Antonio, I could not tell people where to go to get advice through the Red Cross. If I put on some sort of social media, "Go contact the Red Cross," Ethics would say that violates our rules.

Another example. If our veterans, if there is some sort of legal seminar to teach our veterans, our combat heroes their rights when they become civilians, if that is not held somewhere where the VA is, one of their buildings, if it is held in a private building, a law firm, or some civic center, like the Rosenberg Civic Center, I can't put that out on my social media. I am banned from doing that.

Now, if I go to the Floor and give that same input on the Floor, that is okay. In fact—I am not proud of this—we had this test with the Ethics Committee yesterday because we found out—another issue I have had—a young lady did a great thing. She got this big award for this big app contest, some scholarship money. Great.

We called the Ethics Committee and said, Can we put this out on social media? And their answer was not just no, but heck no. You are somehow promoting this—I don't know what they are trying to do. But the bottom line is, we asked them if I get the poster I wanted to put in the social media, put that on the floor with an easel, made the same exact speech I want to put on social media, is that okay? And they said, We think so. And that is wrong.

We have to untie our hands in this Congress and the next Congress, all the Congresses, to make sure we can communicate with the people in the means that they take the information, and that means unleashing social media through all the mediums not just on the Floor.

Thank you so much for having me. I am happy to take some questions. And to our soldiers here, I have to remind you, in three weeks Navy will beat Army.

I yield back.

[The statement of Mr. Olson follows:]

Congressman Pete Olson (TX-22) Testimony
Committee on House Administration
November 21, 2019

Chairwoman Lofgren, Ranking Member Davis and members of the Committee:

As members of the United States Congress, the work we do has a direct impact on the lives AND businesses of the people in our districts. In times of crisis, people look to their elected leaders to guide them to help.

And yet, as members of Congress, our ability to highlight the success of local organizations and to act as a resource to our constituents during times of crisis is hampered by rules that make no sense.

I can go to the floor of the House of Representatives on a Monday afternoon and make a speech honoring the amazing work of an organization like the Red Cross, but on Monday night I am prevented from putting the text of that same speech on social media.

I'm not talking about some hypothetical — this is a very real disparity, and I have firsthand knowledge of the negative impact it can have.

Two years ago, in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, people across my district, TX22, bombarded my office with messages asking, **"Where can I go to help?"**

You'd think the answer would be easy — but it wasn't.

Hands tied by House rules, all I could do was say, "There are plenty of places you can go. I suggest you look them up."

That's not what I wanted to say, but it's what I had to say.

Of course, if I went to the House Floor, I could have rattled off dozens of organizations that were on the ground, repairing homes, hosting blood drives and in desperate need of volunteers.

That's not fair.

I can't promote official VA Veterans Health fairs on social media — even if hosted by a local VFW, if the VFW is located at a private venue. Vets don't get care because we can't let them know where to go to get assistance.

That's not fair.

It's not fair to the people of TX22, and it's not fair to anyone who looks to their member of Congress for help, or some small bit of recognition for doing something that makes our communities better.

I ask that the Committee on House Administration revisit and reform current rules.

Our constituents deserve it, and the Freedom of Speech provided to all Americans in our Constitution demands it.

Thank you.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Olson.

I wanted to turn to Mr. Loudermilk and see whether you have any comments as well that you wanted to make.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. I do. Appreciate it. And I do have a question for Representatives Rice and Olson.

Since you just went, Representative Olson, I will just say this. I agree with your frustration on some of this. I think it is something we need to look at and figure out a way. Because in a couple instances, in my district we have some organizations that are very targeted. In other words, there is not more than one organization doing this in the entire State.

And one of those is very personal to me, which is an organization that is trying to help veterans who are suffering from PTS and PTSD. We have 22 veterans a day, 22 a day that commit suicide.

What they do is try to intercept the veterans and get them help before they take that drastic measure. Any help that I do to them, I can't do what you are talking about. I have to do it either through a campaign side or try to do it personally or something like that. And so that does get to be a frustration in there.

And another is, tomorrow evening I will be having an event that I am having to do through the other side of our operation here that is actually trying to help the needs of people in our district that are homeless and also young families, young mothers. There is a desperate need for diapers and things for young children that I would like to be able to help in that, and I am not able to do that.

So I appreciate what you have to say, and I think it is something we should digest.

One other thing, and maybe I should go sit over there some, too, or if the Ethics Committee has a hearing to sit down. I think it is crazy that when we are looking for approval for travel from the Ethics Committee, anytime that I have done that, I would say 80 percent of the time the approval for my travel comes less than 24 hours before I leave. And with my staff it is usually after they are already at their destination. And I think we have to do better than that.

And if I may, Representative Rice, I am with you on all fronts, being someone who is in Cannon as well. And we did have a hearing recently on the renovations. And the cost factor is exorbitant. And a lot of it isn't the contractor, it is our own government, our own regulation, as well as a historic building and renovation.

But we should expect more out of it, and one of the things that—with the elevators, yeah, we need some definite work. I got on an elevator a couple weeks ago. I couldn't get off. The elevator went between floors, but the door wouldn't open.

So I finally decided, let me go back to the floor that we started on and it opened there. So I went around and I told the Capitol Police, I said, just to let you know, elevator number 9, I am getting on, we got stuck on the elevator. He goes, yeah, that has been happening a lot. I will call them again. And so I understand your frustration.

But also the new elevators in the hallway where one is reserved for Members only—

Mr. RICE. Yes.

Mr. LOUDERMILK [continuing]. But there is only one call button.

Mr. RICE. It makes it take longer for Members and everybody else, too.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Well, and it is not just that. I will see people, constituents, people there visiting other offices, they will push the call button, and that one reserved for Members only is the only one that comes up and they are standing there not knowing what to do, you know, so——

Mr. RICE. I think we don't do enough to hold people accountable. I mean, I think that is one of the reasons why bureaucracy is a difficult way to manage anything.

But if they can't get rid of the rats—vermin—vermin—if they can't get rid of the vermin, and they can't seem to handle these things that are, you know, very commonplace and easy to handle in the commercial office space sector, then perhaps we should consider hiring a management company that does know how to do it and get the Architect of the Capitol doing something else, because they are not doing an acceptable job of managing the Cannon Office Building. And people in my office are getting sick from it, and that is not acceptable.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. And the last comment I will make is on the heating and cooling. You are having the exact opposite problem that we are having on our side of the building because of the management of the heating and air system.

During the summer, because of shutting off the entire air conditioning system on the weekends, it takes almost 2 full days to get our office cool when we come in after a weekend. And, I mean, it is very hot in our offices for a full day, and usually it is on into the next day. So I think it is something we need to work on.

Thank you.

Mr. RICE. Thank you.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you very much. I appreciate the discussion from both of you.

I wanted to just mention to Mr. Olson briefly that I think we all understand a lot of that problem. And franking is trying to help us communicate in the way that we actually speak to people, in a way that doesn't—certainly doesn't put people off and feel like somehow we are just coming down hard on one decision or another.

But the other issue is how we deal with private charities and whether or not it is perceived that we might be pushing one out and not another. And sometimes we all face the situation, if you start saying yes too many times, then you start saying no, and people feel that you are not being open and fair to everybody.

So I think that part of the difficulty is that we can't really use our official resources to be seeming to either promote or allow information floating from private charities.

And so it is something we have to work better on. And it may be that there are some solutions that people have come up with in terms of how we link information, get around that, so it is not coming directly from our offices.

But we appreciate your bringing all of that forward, and it is something to continue to try and address. Thank you.

Mr. OLSON. Thank you very much. I know this is not your purview directly but thank you for listening to me and my concerns, because we have to get to the 21st century with communications.

There is no reason the Floor has its rules, and out there with the social media we have different rules. So thank you for your time and consideration.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you. Thank you, both.

And we are going to turn to what is actually our second panel here, but, Mr. Takano, you are here and I wanted to introduce you now.

Representative Mark Takano was elected in 2012 and represents California's 41st District, which includes Riverside, Moreno Valley, Jurupa Valley, and Paris. He is the Chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and serves on the Committee on Education and Labor.

Please, you are recognized for five minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. MARK TAKANO, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. TAKANO. Thank you, Chairwoman Davis. I want to acknowledge Mr. Loudermilk as well.

I appreciate the work of Chairperson Lofgren, Vice Chairman Raskin, and Ranking Member Davis and Members of the Committee. I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify at your Member Day hearing.

I am here to advocate for the reestablishment of the Office of Technology Assessment, and I want to ask that this Committee do a hearing on H.R. 4426, the Office of Technology Assessment Improvement and Enhancement Act. It is a bipartisan, bicameral bill I introduced with Representative Foster and Senators Tillis and Hirono in September that would modernize the way in which a reconstituted Office of Technology Assessment would operate.

I want to thank Vice Chair Jamie Raskin for his support of the bill. He is not here, but he is one of the cosponsors of the bill.

The foundation for good policy is accurate and objective analysis. And for more than two decades, the Office of Technology Assessment, before it was defunded, set that foundation by providing relevant, unbiased technical and scientific assessments for Members and staff. But in 1995, the Office of Technology Assessment was defunded, stripping Congress of a valuable resource.

Congress has an important role to play in making sure that the benefits of advances in science and technology are distributed equally throughout our society and that the potential harms are mitigated. In order to do this, we need to strengthen our capacity to understand emerging technology and its social and policy implications.

Now, there is wide agreement within Congress and among our external stakeholders that Congress needs access to unbiased technological expertise to weigh the pros and cons of policy questions surrounding current and emerging technology issues, including cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and many, many more matters. The challenge is in determining how Congress can best gain access to and utilize this expertise.

Last year, appropriators funded the Congressional Research Service to work with the National Academy on Public Administration to conduct a report on current science and technology re-

sources available to Congress and recommended options for enhancing their resources.

This report, which is actually called—I want to get the name for you here—the National Academy of Public Administration, NAPA. That is what NAPA stands for. We agree with the NAPA report's assessment of the needs of Congress and with their determination that restoring the OTA would be highly desirable. However, we disagree with their conclusions that restoring OTA is not viable and that the Government Accountability Office alone can meet Congress' total tech assessment needs.

In 2002, GAO began conducting technology assessments. More recently, GAO received funding to establish the Science, Technology Assessment, and Analytics team, otherwise known as STAA. You can call it STAA, but STAA stands for Science and Technology Assessment and Analytics team.

Now, while GAO does great work, the inadequate policy responses to emerging technology issues, the continued calls for Members and staff on both sides of the aisle to restore OTA, and the \$6 million in the fiscal year 2020 House appropriations bill to restore the OTA demonstrate that GAO hasn't and won't be able to fully address Congress' needs.

And this is not just a numbers issue. Even with increased staffing, GAO is not really well suited to anticipate issues or identify future trends, nor is it responsive and accessible to all Members.

There is a clear need for the forward-looking approach of OTA to complement the work of GAO and CRS. There is also room to improve on and modernize the OTA to address its past criticisms and to enable it to better meet our current needs.

Among the concerns I have heard are that the old Office of Technology Assessment was not responsive to all Members and that it did not always maintain a fresh approach.

Our bill envisions a modernized OTA that is responsive to all Members of Congress and provides short-term technical expertise while maintaining the forward-looking assessment work OTA was known for. Our bill includes a rotator program to bring in experts from academia and industry, ensuring a steady flow of cutting-edge expertise.

We propose calling this rebooted office the Congressional Office of Technology, emphasizing its position as an essential tool of Congress. An updated Technology Assessment Office, like the proposed Congressional Office of Technology in my legislation, would combine deep technical expertise and robust forward-looking reports with the ability—

Mrs. DAVIS. Excuse me, Mr. Takano, if you could please wrap up your comments.

Mr. TAKANO [continuing]. To be responsive to the immediate questions and needs of Members and staff.

The needs will inevitably continue to rise as Congress responds to rapid changes in technology. As we continue to seek new and innovative ways to modernize Congress, restoring OTA and making it more responsive, accessible, and transparent is an important means through which we can ensure Congress has the tools it needs to respond to the unique challenges of our time.

[The statement of Mr. Takano follows:]

The Honorable Mark Takano
41st District, California
Committee on House Administration
HR 4426 The Office of Technology Assessment
Improvement and Enhancement Act

Chairperson Lofgren, Vice Chairperson Raskin, Ranking Member Davis, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

I'm here to advocate for the reestablishment of the Office of Technology Assessment and for a hearing on HR 4426, the Office of Technology Assessment Improvement and Enhancement Act, a bipartisan, bicameral bill I introduced with Representative Foster and Senators Tillis and Hirono in September that would modernize the way in which a reconstituted OTA would operate.

The foundation for good policy is accurate and objective analysis, and for more than two decades, the OTA set that foundation by providing relevant, unbiased technical and scientific assessments for Members of Congress and staff.

But in 1995, the Office of Technology Assessment was defunded, stripping Congress of a valuable resource.

Congress has an important role to play in making sure that the benefits of advances in science and technology are distributed equally throughout our society and that the potential harms are mitigated. In order to do this, we need to strengthen our capacity to understand emerging technology and its social and policy implications.

There is wide agreement within Congress and among our external stakeholders that Congress needs access to unbiased technological expertise to weigh the pros and cons of policy questions surrounding current and emerging technology issues including cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and so many more matters.

The challenge is in determining how Congress can best gain access to and utilize this expertise. Since 2002, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has been directed to conduct technology assessments. More recently, GAO received funding to establish the Science, Technology Assessment, and Analytics team, otherwise known as S-T-A-A. While GAO does great work, the inadequate policy responses to emerging technology issues and the continued calls from Members and staff on both sides of the aisle to restore the OTA demonstrate that GAO hasn't and won't be able to fully address Congress's needs.

And this is not just a numbers issue. Even with increased staffing, GAO is not well-suited to anticipate issues or identify future trends. Nor is it responsive and accessible to all Members.

Our bill envisions the Congressional Office of Technology (C-O-T), a modernized OTA that is responsive to all Members of Congress and provides short-term technical expertise while maintaining the forward-looking assessment work OTA was known for, work that has only grown more crucial over the last 20 years.

Appropriators also funded the Congressional Research Service (C-R-S) to work with the National Academy on Public Administration (NAPA) to conduct a report on current science and technology (S-and-T) resources available to Congress and recommend options for enhancing resources. The NAPA panel found modest gaps in personalized S-and-T assistance for

Members and staff; access to outside experts; and short-to-medium term S-and-T reports. The panel also identified a gap in horizon scanning, a key strength of OTA.

An updated technology assessment office, like the proposed Congressional Office of Technology in my legislation would complement GAO and CRS by combining deep technical expertise and robust forward-looking reports with the ability to be responsive to immediate questions and the needs of Members and staff.

These needs will inevitably continue to arise as Congress responds to rapid changes in technology.

As we continue seeking new and innovative ways to modernize Congress, restoring the OTA and making it more responsive, accessible, and transparent is an important means through which we can ensure Congress has the tools it needs to respond to the unique challenges of our time. This is an important strategic investment in our institution's capacity to create technology policy that protects our constituents while encouraging innovation.

I urge you to support HR 4426 and to hold a hearing on expanding science and technology capacity in Congress can be improved. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I yield the balance of my time.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you very much.

Mr. TAKANO. Sorry. I wasn't paying attention to the time.

Mrs. DAVIS. That is all right. We appreciate it.

Mr. Loudermilk would like to make a few comments.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Sure.

Thank you for your comments. As somebody who spent 20-plus years in the IT sector, there is a lot that we can do with technology, especially on the legislative side.

But I would also like to see maybe the legislation to include our operations in our offices of how we can actually safely, securely, but effectively use technology to improve our operations and our constituents.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Loudermilk, I fully agree that the idea that I think the TechMod Committee is working on, or the committee Mr. Kilmer leads, which is an emphasis on a technology information lab for Congress and its operations, that is sorely needed. I mean, I feel like I don't have enough information nor skills or practice to use technology safely and securely.

That is a different mission than the dilemma I faced as a legislator in December 2015 representing Riverside County when we had two assailants in Riverside that—the San Bernardino shootings occurred next door to me. We had the Department of Justice arguing before a U.S. magistrate that Apple should open up the iPhone and order its code writers to open it up. You had Apple saying, no, we don't want to do that. And Congress had not really dealt with the issue of encryption.

So who are we to believe as Members of Congress, the Justice Department, that says they should have this ability to do that, or the industry? We don't really have our own policy advisers to lay out those options for us.

The OTA, I think, is—the Congressional Office of Technology, I envision it as a place where we, Members of Congress, we the first branch of government, have our own bank of experts, that we are not waiting around for GAO to issue a report, but that this office has already begun to scan the horizon in the future and began to look at the ways in which innovation will need to be addressed by policymakers, how much to regulate or not regulate, et cetera, but lay out those policy options, and we need that expertise.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Loudermilk.

I also, just commenting briefly, the first thing that came to my mind, of course, is the GAO and having them more engaged in this effort, more proactively if possible. But I think that you bring some important issues to the fore, obviously being dealt with in a number of committees, Armed Services, for example, in terms of how we do a better job of sharing some of that technology and making sure that its function is applied in a way that makes sense for our cities, for our communities.

Mr. TAKANO. Yes. And, Madam Chairwoman, I do want to acknowledge that GAO has established this function and it is staffed up, and they do really great work. But I think we all know what it takes to get GAO to study something.

Mrs. DAVIS. Sure.

Mr. TAKANO. My belief is that we need something that is far more responsive to Members' needs. This Office of Technology As-

sessment needs to do the more anticipatory, forward-looking kinds of future scanning, which GAO is also engaged with. But I think we need something akin to the Congressional Budget Office, which has that sort of independent authority, we get our bills scored, but only in the technology space, that we—and that Members on an individual basis can also, with their individual technology sort of projects, can also get consultations.

As you know, we are very fortunate to even have a technology expert on our own personal staff. So I urge a hearing on this by the Committee.

Mrs. DAVIS. All right. Thank you very much for bringing that to our attention. We appreciate you being here.

Mr. TAKANO. Thank you.

Mrs. DAVIS. And seeing no other Members ready to testify, I want to thank our colleagues for joining us this morning. And this hearing of the Committee on House Administration is, without objection, adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 9:26 a.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

Representative Justin Amash (I-MI)
Member Day testimony for the record
House Committee on House Administration
November 21, 2019

Thank you Chairperson Lofgren, Ranking Member Davis, and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify about my bill, H.R. 3403, the Searchable Legislation Act.

Congress considers thousands of pieces of legislation each year, many of which amend existing law. When members of Congress and staff—or members of the public—read legislation, it is frequently not apparent how the legislation changes existing law, because congressional legislation is not required to show the context for the deletions and insertions it makes to existing law. I have introduced a separate bill to address this issue.

Current law also does not require legislation to be in a searchable electronic format. To be able to track changes between bills and existing law, it is necessary first to have text in a searchable, machine-readable format.

I have introduced H.R. 3403 to require every bill, resolution, and document produced by Congress to be created, transmitted, and published in a searchable electronic format, consistent with recommendations from a congressional data task force the bill codifies. These new standards will open up the legislative process by increasing access to congressional documents.

I am grateful for the work the Office of the Clerk, the Government Publishing Office (GPO), and the Bulk Data Task Force are already doing to modernize congressional data and convert our laws into the United States Legislative Markup (USLM) XML format. Congress must complete this work so that members, staff, and the public can easily access and understand proposals to change our laws.

Thank you again for having me here today. I look forward to continuing to work with all of you.

**Testimony of Congressman Tony Cárdenas of California
Committee on House Administration Members Day Hearing
Thursday, November 21, 2019**

I would like to start by saying thank you to Chairperson Lofgren, Ranking Member Davis, and the members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify about one of my highest priorities in this Congress, H.R. 2420, the National Museum of the American Latino Act.

H.R. 2420 would finally create the National Museum of the American Latino. The museum will illuminate the American Latinos contributions of the story of America. It will provide for the collection, study, research, publication, and establishment of exhibitions and programs related to American Latino life, art, history, and culture. To add, the museum will provide for collaboration with Smithsonian Institution museums, research centers, other museums, and educational institutions in the United States and abroad to promote the study and appreciation of American Latino life, art, history, culture, and its impact on society here in America.

Latinos make up nearly 20 %, or 59 million of the population and are the nation's largest minority group in America. We have \$1.7 Trillion in spending power. We have been in space and have fought in every American War. We have 60 Medal of Honor recipients, won Nobel Prizes, and currently have one of the most popular musicals about one of our American Founding Fathers. We have made significant contributions in civil rights, sports, music, the arts, film and television, and are the positive force that makes America great.

The museum is important for those of Latino heritage, but also important to educate all Americans on the vast contributions Latinos continue to make, particularly at a time when racism and xenophobia are rampant. The effort of establishing an American Latino Museum is on its 25th year. In 1994, the start of this effort includes, the Smithsonian Institution's own report, *Willful Neglect*, which addressed the lack of Latino representation and penned ten recommendations to rectify this issue. In September 2018, the UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Initiative release a report on the slow progress of the Smithsonian Institution in addressing this issue and found only three of its ten recommendations from its report have been addressed. This is unacceptable. I stand on the shoulders of many whom came before and am proud to report that, today, we have the most bipartisan support for this bill with 245 cosponsors and growing in this House and 26 in the Senate.

With the tremendous amount of bipartisan support for this bill, including from most of my colleagues in this room, I ask that you move forward in marking-up this bill so that we can make history, pass it out of the House and hopefully get it to the President's desk. Thank you.

Testimony of Rep. Anna G. Eshoo
Member Day Hearing
 House Committee on Administration
 1310 Longworth House Office Building
 November 21, 2019

Chairperson Zoe Lofgren, Ranking Member Rodney Davis, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today before the House Committee on Administration.

Because of the nature of our work, the House of Representatives attracts all types of cyber adversaries—hackers, criminals, and agents of foreign countries—who pose real risk to our work and to our country. I thank this Committee, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), and your staff for the critical work you do day in and day out to secure official House servers, systems, and devices from cyberattacks.

However, I remain concerned that the digital activity of Members of Congress and our staff on personal devices and personal accounts represents a significant vulnerability for the House that is not currently being addressed. Although official business is conducted on House-managed devices and accounts, personal devices and accounts still represent significant cyber vulnerabilities for the House. For example, if an employee's personal cell phone is compromised by an adversary, that employee is likely carrying that compromised cell phone in official meetings where it could turn into a surveillance device. In today's highly connected world, we must begin to think of personal devices and accounts as risks to the House since these devices are with us 24 hours a day.

To address this issue, I request that the Committee authorize the development of a mandatory list of cyber hygiene best practices that are effective, user-friendly, and tailored for personal devices and accounts of individuals in the House community (including Members, Delegates, the Resident Commissioner, officers of the House, and all employees of the House). This list should include general best practices, such as the use of two-factor authentication and password managers, regularly patching software and operating systems, turning on screen locks on all devices, and using House-approved encrypted messaging services, in addition to any House-specific practices you recommend. As cybersecurity protocols and best practices are constantly evolving, this list should be regularly updated and widely distributed.

I also request that CAO staff be available to assist individuals in the House community in implementing the above best practices to secure their personal devices and accounts, including smartphones, computers, laptops, tablets, social media accounts, and email accounts. Assistance from CAO experts would provide those who are less familiar with cyber hygiene with the support they need to take essential steps to secure their online activity.

Chairperson Lofgren and Ranking Member Davis, I respect your strong leadership of this Committee, and I have confidence in your ability to mitigate cyber risks the House faces. If I can be helpful in your efforts, just let me know.

House Administration Committee Member Day 11/20 Rep. Fitzpatrick's Testimony

I am here today to thank Chair Lofgren's and Ranking Member Davis' leadership in government reform and transparency efforts. You have worked with CAO to make more information on legislation and proceedings in Congress available online through an accessible format.

I also support the Chair and Ranking Member for working with the Modernization Committee to improve congressional staff retention and diversity.

Your committee has focused on making congress more efficient through streamlining the bill-writing process, promoting continuing education programs for members of congress, and modernizing our technology. I hope you all will continue to focus on these priorities.

I encourage the committee to expand its focus to include term limits for members of congress. 80% of Americans support term limits. Rarely is there an issue that garners that much support. More change in this body is a good thing and I think we can all agree on that. I am also support "No Budget No Pay" – members of congress should not be compensated if we do not do our job. I think both common-sense proposals fit with the direction of the committee.

I want to encourage the committee's consideration of my bill H.R. 164 - The CLEAN Public Service Act which would eliminate members of congress' pensions going forward. While still allowing members to contribute to a Thrift Savings Plan. Most of our constituents do not collect a pension so why should we?

Thank you all, and I hope the committee can keep up the good work.

**House Committee on House Administration
Members' Day
November 21st, 2019**

Congresswoman Carol Miller (WV-3)

Thank you, Chairwoman Lofgren and Ranking Member Davis. It is a pleasure to be here.

Today, I want to speak to you about a Concurrent Resolution I introduced earlier this year which seeks to honor all our veterans from the Greatest Generation.

House Concurrent Resolution 10 will allow the last remaining Medal of Honor recipient from the Second World War to lie in state in the rotunda of the Capitol upon their passing. During World War II, only 464 U.S. military personnel received the Medal of Honor and 266 of recipients were awarded the medal posthumously.

When I introduced this legislation in January, only four Medal of Honor recipients were still with us. Since then, those numbers have dwindled to just two: Charles H. Coolidge of Tennessee and Hershel "Woody" Williams of West Virginia, a constituent from my district who I am proud to call my friend.

Woody was stationed in the Pacific Theater during World War II. A young Marine, he fought in the Battle of Guadalcanal and in Guam, before landing on Iwo Jima on February 21, 1945.

On the day the flag was raised, Woody's unit was surrounded. Under a barrage of enemy fire, Woody charged ahead, flamethrower in hand, attacking the enemy and opening a gap in their defenses that enabled his fellow Marines to forge on.

For this display of heroism, President Truman awarded Woody the Medal of Honor. As part of his ongoing legacy, the US Navy christened the USNS Herschel Woody Williams in 2017 and the VA named their Huntington medical facility in his honor.

A lifelong West Virginian, who resides in Ona and he continues to advocate for Gold Star families throughout the country.

The bravery and dedication these great men, like Woody, have shown our country is why we need to ensure that this resolution is passed, to honor those that sacrificed so much to protect us from evil and tyranny. They must never be forgotten.

This bipartisan legislation is a great opportunity to do just that. Honoring our nation's heroes, like Presidents, Generals, leading members of Congress, and exceptional citizens such as Rosa Parks and Reverend Billy Graham, in the Capitol Rotunda and Statutory Hall is one of the highest honors this nation bestows and brings so much attention to the accomplishments of these incredible Americans.

Honoring the last surviving Medal of Honor Recipient will highlight the bravery and sacrifice of the Greatest Generation as a whole, from soldiers fighting tooth and nail overseas, to the Americans at home who gave up so much to power the war effort.

I ask the Committee on House Administration to consider H.Con.Res. 10. The legislation has a list of bipartisan co-sponsors and was included as a provision of the House-passed version of the NDAA, passing on a voice vote. It is so important that our nation never forgets the sacrifice that so many made to protect democracy and freedom all around the world.

Thank you again Chairwoman Lofgren and Ranking Member Davis.

Rep. Seth Moulton Testimony for House Admin Committee Member Hearing 11/21

Working in Congress seems like going back in time compared to my previous positions in the private sector. The Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress has done great work to address big-picture problems that affect the efficiency and effectiveness of Congress as an institution. However, there are several smaller problems that are easy to address and could make a huge impact on the day-to-day Congress' operation. These ideas will rarely rise to the Member level, but they all embody an undue amount of staff time and could be addressed administratively.

First, the Committee should consider creating an online system for adding cosponsors to bills and adding signatories to letters. Interns and staff members spend an unnecessary amount of time physically delivering cosponsor forms to the cloakroom, which is staff time that could be spent adding value to their offices. This would also improve the appropriations process if the two were linked, allowing offices to keep track of their priority rankings as they go, especially if the online form for prioritizing appropriations requests was more intuitive and easier to edit. There are outside groups currently working on technology that plugs directly into Microsoft Teams, which the House already adopted; the House just needs to allow the change in process.

Another potential efficiency is to centralize the digital processes for the tour and flag request systems. Congressional offices serve as the middlemen for both tour and flag requests, acting as a liaison of information without actually having any control over either process. While offering these services serves as one form of constituent relations, the convoluted systems make it extremely difficult to be effective. Staffers often deal with long back-and-forth exchanges to schedule a single tour, such as emailing lengthy forms and Excel documents with Social Security information between constituents and tour offices. Depending on the tour sites offered by the Member office, staffers can work with up to ten different offices that all have entirely different processes. While Congress cannot change the tour booking process for other offices, it can create a system that collects all of the necessary information required by each tour site in one place. And with flags, we can streamline the process by allowing each step to be completed online. At minimum, we should allow for online transparency in the process that occurs between the Flag Office and House Supply Office if the two cannot be consolidated. For example, it would be useful to see the exact status of where a flag is in the process to make it easier to troubleshoot issues when they arise.

Booking rooms for events and signing up for mandatory staff training on the Hill is also more complicated than it could be. The House, Senate, CVC, LOC, and Committees all have different processes that are difficult to find and execute. Staffers would benefit from a streamlined process that allows you to view all available rooms for a certain time slot online. Congressional staffers' priority should be policy-making, not event planning. Similarly, each of the four mandatory trainings for staff have separate website locations, passwords, and rules. A one-stop portal for both event spaces and mandatory trainings would save time for Member office staff and for those constantly tracking down Congressional staff for not completing their trainings. With both options, even simply consolidating the list of resources in a single place on HouseNet would be beneficial.

Finally, creating a universal onboarding process for new staff members on the above processes and others would help new staff get up to speed faster than relying on different points of contact depending on the Member office. Each of these suggestions would significantly cut down on inefficient use of staff time. As an institution that is frequently criticized for using its time inefficiently, Congress should empower staffers to be as effective as possible.

Testimony of Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett (VI)

Committee on House Administration

Hearing: "Member Day"

November 21, 2019, 8:30 AM, 1310 Longworth Building

Chairwoman Lofgren, Ranking Member Davis, members of the committee. Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to present a statement of my views on legislation and matters under the jurisdiction of this committee.

I would like to use my time addressing a few specific areas, and in particular to speak to concerns of the island territories of the United States.

Congress doesn't always acknowledge the contributions that the territories make to our nation; but the geographical importance of the territories and our high participation rates in the United States armed forces are clearly an integral contribution to our country.

The five populated U.S. territories – the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa – are part of America. The nearly four million people residing on these U.S. islands are Americans. They are subject to Federal law. Hundreds of thousands from our islands have served in the United States armed forces. Many have died in their service to our country.

Yet, these millions of Americans have almost no say in Federal decision-making, even when it directly effects the American territory that they live on. U.S. citizens in U.S. territory do not have right to vote for the President

of the United States. They do not have equal voting representation in the Congress. This has a direct correlation to persistent poverty across all of the U.S. territories.

In addition, the territories are excluded or under-included in important federal laws under this committee's jurisdiction that are intended to protect voting rights and election systems, such as the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, and the Help America Vote Act of 2002. Federal law also, inexplicably, requires that election ballots for the Delegate from the Virgin Islands and American Samoa to the House of Representatives must be separate from those for other elected officials. These are but a few examples.

That is why, when this committee brought to the floor an aggressive package to address long-standing issues of voting rights and election reform, H.R. 1, the For the People Act of 2019, I fought hard for the bill to call for progress on the voting rights and election integrity issues facing Americans in U.S. territories.

As passed by the House, H.R. 1 calls for a congressional task force to review these issues, and requires the task force to make recommendations on providing U.S. citizens residing in U.S. territories with equitable voting representation in Congress, voting rights in the presidential election, and fair inclusion in the federal voter protection and election integrity laws.

While H.R. 1 remains pending in the legislative graveyard that is otherwise known as the United States Senate, I have recommended that this committee

further explore the federal voting rights, federal voter protections, and federal elections in the U.S. territories through a field hearing.

Furthermore, there are other ways in which this committee has power to improve and provide more equitable federal treatment of Americans in the territories. I ask that you consider support for my bill, H.R. 405, to permit each territory of the United States, along with the District of Columbia, to provide and furnish statues honoring their citizens for placement in Statuary Hall in the same manner as statues honoring other American citizens.

As we all know, each State has two statues in the U.S. Capitol commemorating two citizens important to its history. The U.S. territories are the only American jurisdictions that are not permitted any statutes in the Capitol. The District of Columbia was allowed one through special legislation in 2012, and the Delegate from the District has later sought legislation to have a second. My bill, H.R. 405, would allow all Americans to see two statutes from their corner of the country when they visit the Capitol.

I would also encourage the committee to look at fair inclusion of the seals of the U.S. territories and the District of Columbia where the seals of the 50 States are depicted in the Capitol complex, such as in the main reading room of the Thomas Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress.

I close by thanking you for your consideration, for working with me in the past, and for your support of Americans residing in U.S. territory.

**Testimony of Congressman José E. Serrano of New York
Committee on House Administration Members Day Hearing
Thursday, November 21, 2019**

Chairperson Lofgren, Ranking Member Davis, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of H.R. 2420, the National Museum of the American Latino Act.

The effort to establish a Latino Museum started 25 years ago when the Smithsonian Institution released *Willful Neglect*. This candid report acknowledged a lack of Latino inclusion throughout the institution and laid out a set of ten recommendations to improve it. The most significant step was the creation of the Latino Center in 1997. However, 24 years later, in September 2018, the UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Initiative released a report measuring the Smithsonian's progress and found only three of its ten recommendations from the original report had been addressed.

To further this effort, former Representatives Xavier Becerra of California and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida introduced the first bill in Congress to begin the establishment of a Latino Museum in 2003. In 2008, President George W. Bush signed legislation including their language forming a Commission to study its creation. In 2011, the Commission's final report to Congress and President Barack Obama found that a Latino Museum was necessary and feasible, and it laid out a roadmap to help get us there. It has been over eight years since its release.

H.R. 2420 will finally authorize the process to create a Latino Museum by establishing a Board of Trustees to provide recommendations to the Smithsonian Board of Regents on the design, placement, construction, and establishment of a future museum. It will include a diverse set of voices to ensure all parts of the Latino community are fully represented.

H.R. 2420 authorizes the Smithsonian to undertake a campaign to raise half of the funds necessary to pay for this ambitious endeavor from private sources, while also authorizing federal appropriations for the rest, as is historically done for other museums.

H.R. 2420 also establishes educational grant programs to help bolster the work of other Latino Museums across the country and provide scholarship opportunities for students studying in the fields of Latino history, arts, and culture to help train a pipeline of talent to keep this history alive well into the future.

Passage of H.R. 2420 will show that representation and inclusion matter. Latinos currently make up almost one-fifth of the U.S. population. We are the largest and second-fastest growing ethnic group. We have served in every American war and have made significant contributions in the world of sports, music, the arts, sciences, and beyond. From the American Revolution to the fight for civil rights, Latinos have been on the frontlines of history. These stories and heroes are often overlooked, but to deny their telling is to deny a very important part of what made this country what it is today. They deserve a dedicated space of their own on to tell the full story of America.

H.R. 2420 is one of my highest priorities during my final term in Congress. With 245 bipartisan cosponsors and counting, I urge the Committee on House Administration to help make this dream a reality for so many of us in the Latino community. Thank you.

Statement for the Record from Rep. Haley Stevens (MI)
Committee on House Administration Member Day Hearing
November 21, 2019

Thanks to the Committee on House Administration for hosting this Member Day Hearing. I would like to use this opportunity to voice my strong support for the mission and work of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress.

After sending a letter, along with 36 of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, urging House leadership to extend the Committee's charter, I was pleased that request was granted to allow the Select Committee to continue its important work for another year.

The Select Committee has already made Congress more inclusive, efficient, and useful to the needs of modern-day Americans. For example, under the leadership of Reps. Derek Kilmer and Tom Graves, and with the valuable participation of Chairperson Zoe Lofgren and Ranking Member Rodney Davis, the Committee has worked to improve communication with our constituents, maximize our time in Congress and back home, and promote a more transparent and inclusive environment, among many others. The Committee also sets a wonderful example of the importance of bipartisanship.

But there is still much work to be done to bring this body up to speed with the 21st century. I look forward to seeing all that the Select Committee on Modernization will accomplish over the course of the next year to make Washington work for the American people.

*Honorable Kathy Castor Submitted Testimony for the Record
House Committee on Administration
Member Day*

Chairperson Lofgren and Ranking Member Davis,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify about the abuse of campaign account funds from defunct political campaigns and recommend a bipartisan solution -- a solution that has already been passed by the House in H.R. 1, the For the People Act. As the House Committee on Administration continues its work to fight corruption, I believe addressing the use of zombie campaigns for self-enrichment by former politicians should be a priority. We must demonstrate our continued commitment to rooting out corruption and strengthening our institutions.

In 2018, Tampa Bay Times and Tampa TV station, WTSP Channel 10, investigative reporters published an exhaustive report that found an astounding number of political campaign accounts with large balances years after the campaigns have ended. The report enumerates a disturbing number of occasions in which zombie campaign accounts have been used to pay for personal expenses and to employ family members of several former Members of Congress. For example, one former U.S. Representative from Florida was holding \$1 million in his campaign account. Over the last 13 years, the former Member of Congress has used the funds for personal enjoyment, luncheons and social club functions. Another former Member of Congress used campaign funds to pay more than \$20,000 to his son and spent thousands of dollars on dues to a South Carolina country club. As recently as this month, reports of abuse have continued. In fact, just last month, a new complaint was filed with the Federal Election Commission (FEC) over a former Member's abuse of campaign funds for personal use.

This is a clear abuse of campaign funds by former Members of Congress that erodes the public's trust in the institutions of the U.S. government and contributes to the narrative of widespread corruption in politics. Americans rightfully expect that public officials work for them, in the public interest and not in their own personal interest.

On February 26, 2019, I, along with Representatives Bilirakis and Raskin introduced H.R. 1363, the Honest Elections and Campaigns Act, which has been referred to this committee and the Committee on Judiciary. This bipartisan legislation requires former Members of Congress and others to close their campaign accounts within two years after the next qualification period for Congress if they are no longer seeking office. The bill also calls for the limited and discrete disbursement of funds remaining in the campaign account as the campaign comes to a close. Funds may be disbursed to cover outstanding campaign debts, give to charities, donate to local, state or national political parties, or refund to the original donor. Our bill also prohibits campaign funds from going to family members and limits disbursements to official campaign duties consistent with the law. Similar language was included in the House-passed H.R. 1, For the People Act, but further action is needed to fully address zombie campaigns.

The FEC has taken first steps to address this issue by sending letters to 50 politicians still operating zombie campaigns. In the letters, recipients were asked why their campaign accounts

were still operational and, in some cases, demanded justification for certain expenses. While I appreciate the FEC's concerted effort to address corruption, it is not moving fast enough due to its limited resources and caseload. I believe that it is the responsibility of the Congress to shine a brighter light on this issue and tackle it head-on by taking up H.R. 1363 and adopting it as a stand-alone bill.

I again want to thank you for allowing me to testify on topics important to maintaining our democracy and rooting out corruption. I look forward to working with you to clean up the culture we see in Washington and show that the people's government works for them, not big corporations and special interests with outsized influence. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me or my chief of staff, Clay Phillips.