

OVERSIGHT OF THE CONGRESSIONAL  
RESEARCH SERVICE

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
JUNE 20, 2019  
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WASHINGTON : 2020

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## OVERSIGHT OF THE CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE

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THURSDAY, JUNE 20, 2019

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

The Committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:02 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, Davis of Illinois, Walker, and Loudermilk.

Staff Present: Sean Jones, Legislative Clerk; Jamie Fleet, Majority Staff Director; Lisa Sherman, Chief of Staff for Mrs. Davis of California; David Tucker, Parliamentarian; Khalil Abboud, Deputy Staff Director; Evan Dorner, Legislative Assistant for Mr. Aguilar; Peter Whippy, Majority Communications Director; Lauren Doney, Communications Director and Deputy Chief of Staff for Mr. Raskin; Courtney Parella, Minority Communications Director; Timothy Monahan, Minority Director of Oversight; Jennifer Daulby, Minority Staff Director; Nicholas Crocker, Minority Professional Staff; and Susannah Johnston, Legislative Assistant for Mr. Loudermilk.

The CHAIRPERSON. The Committee will come into order. I am happy that we are here today to have an oversight hearing on the Congressional Research Service, which is one of the most important support services available to Congress.

The professional staff of CRS provides objective, authoritative, and confidential research and analysis on a vast array of issues but, like any agency of its size, CRS faces its share of challenges and this hearing is intended to have a candid discussion of those challenges so CRS can continue to support the Congress.

CRS must have an inspired and diverse workforce fostered by an inclusive work environment to operate at its fullest potential. Unfortunately, like most agencies, CRS has contended with budgetary constraints at a time of increasing workload. CRS's budget has remained mostly flat or has been decreased substantially in particularly lean years. In fact, CRS's operating budget in 2017 was \$5 million less than its budget in 2010.

These constraints have resulted in less capacity to serve Congress. It has resulted in fewer analysts doing more work. This pressure, compounded by our failure to invest meaningfully in personal office and committee budgets, has adversely limited the scope and depth of services available to Congress. These pressures also impact employee morale, which can further negatively impact agency performance.

The cycle of asking congressional support staff in our legislative branch agencies to meet more demands with fewer resources is unsustainable and needs to be changed. Congress depends on the expert services of CRS to perform its constitutional duties, so when service is impacted, the work of the Congress is too. We owe it not just to CRS to improve it but to the American people who sent us here to be their voice in Congress.

Although the Congressional Research Employees Association represents more than 80 percent of the CRS workforce, a common refrain is their exclusion from management decisions. By ignoring them and their learned experiences at CRS, management, I believe, is doing a disservice to both itself and its employees.

At CRS, the workforce must be involved in the decision-making and the direction-setting of the Service. The bargaining unit should be consulted when actions are being considered that will directly impact them and their work. Management should listen to the concerns of the employees.

Our goal here today is to develop a full picture of the challenges facing CRS and to devise solutions for the future. CRS does not have to face this alone. In fact, it can't. It is incumbent on this Committee and this Congress to ensure that CRS and the broader Library of Congress are sufficiently resourced with adequate support and funding.

I would now like to recognize our Ranking Member, Mr. Davis, for an opening statement.

[The statement of the Chairperson follows:]

ZOE LOFGREN, CALIFORNIA  
CHAIRPERSON

JAMIE RASKIN, MARYLAND  
VICE CHAIRPERSON

SUSAN DAVIS, CALIFORNIA  
G.K. BUTTERFIELD, NORTH CAROLINA  
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JAMIE FLEET, STAFF DIRECTOR

## Congress of the United States

### House of Representatives COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

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ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

JEN DAULBY, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

#### CHAIRPERSON ZOE LOFGREN OVERSIGHT OF THE CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE JUNE 20, 2019 OPENING STATEMENT

The Congressional Research Service is one of the most important support services available to Congress. The professional staff of CRS provides objective, authoritative and confidential research and analysis on a vast array of issues. But like any agency of its size CRS faces its share of challenges and this hearing is intended to have a candid discussion of those challenges so CRS can continue to support the Congress. To operate at its fullest potential, CRS must have an inspired and diverse workforce, fostered by an inclusive work environment.

Unfortunately, like most agencies, CRS has contended with budgetary constraints at a time of increasing workload. CRS' budget has remained mostly flat or has been decreased substantially in particularly lean years. In fact, CRS' operating budget in 2017 was 5 million dollars less than its budget in 2010. These constraints have resulted in less capacity to serve to Congress. It has resulted in fewer analysts doing more work. This pressure -- compounded by our failure to invest meaningfully in personal office and committee budgets--has adversely limited the scope and depth of services available to Congress.

These pressures also impact employee morale which can further negatively impact agency performance. This cycle of asking Congressional support staff and our legislative branch agencies to meet more demands with less resources is unsustainable and must be broken. Congress depends on the expert services of CRS to perform its constitutional duties so when the service is impacted the work of the Congress is too. We owe it not just to CRS to improve it but to the American people who sent us here to be their voice in Congress.

Although the Congressional Research Employees Association represents more than 80% of the CRS workforce, a common refrain is their exclusion from management decisions. By ignoring them and their learned experience at CRS, management is doing a disservice to both itself and its employees. At CRS, the workforce must be more involved in the decision-making and direction-setting of the service. The bargaining unit must be consulted when actions are being considered that will directly impact them and their work. Management must listen to the concerns of the employees.

Our goal here today is to develop a full picture of the challenges facing CRS and devise solutions for the future. CRS does not have to face this alone. In fact, it cannot. It is incumbent on this Committee and this Congress to ensure that CRS and the broader Library of Congress are sufficiently resourced with adequate support and funding. I now want to recognize Ranking Member Davis for an opening statement.



Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Thank you, Chairperson Lofgren.

I would also like to welcome today's witnesses, Ms. Mary Mazanec, Director of the CRS, and Dr. Susan Thaul, who is here today in her capacity as the President of the Congressional Research Employees Association.

I look forward to hearing your testimony and having a productive dialogue about the current state of CRS and ways in which improvements can be made.

You know, as the Chairperson said, Congress has relied on CRS since the early 1900s as its primary support agency for public policy research and analysis. Daily—and I can tell you this as a 16-year former staffer. I know from working with CRS that you provide Members and other staff with authoritative, objective, and timely work products that assist all of us, Members and staff included, in doing our jobs. An agency with such an influential and rich history should be the gold standard of research organizations not just here but worldwide.

However, it is clear to me there are some internal struggles that have had a noticeable impact on the agency. I am not interested in participating in a public dispute today between management and rank-and-file employees. That is not the purpose of a congressional hearing. What I am interested in doing is having this Committee lay out our expectations for a path forward that will drive the necessary institutional changes that are needed in any agency.

CRS must improve their processes and mechanisms for establishing the agency's mission and meeting Congress's needs in the 21st century: strategic workforce planning, workforce training, performance management, recruitment, hiring, and diversity management.

Some of the ways in which this can be accomplished, in my opinion, are through surveys and focus groups, both internally and externally; IT analytics; management training and employee development opportunities, demonstrating how training efforts contribute toward improved performance and results. It is a must to have a system in place to continually assess and prove human capital planning and investment and its impact on accomplishing your mission to transparently align individual performance expectations to identify specific levels of achievement within CRS's mission.

We hope you conduct employee exit interviews and track that feedback to identify any trends that could be advantageous or problematic. And we hope we would see a culture that encourages a culture that creates and maintains a positive work environment, where employees are valued and can maximize their potential and contributions to CRS and, in turn, the mission of the United States Congress.

I intend to focus my questions within these areas and hope to learn more from our witnesses on the current procedures in place at CRS and where there might be room for improvement.

Let me be clear: I expect the Congressional Research Service and the Library of Congress to respond to the concerns and recommendations expressed by the Committee today. These are not merely suggestions; Congress needs to see action.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson, and I yield back.

[The statement of Mr. Davis of Illinois follows:]

ZOE LOFGREN, CALIFORNIA  
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VICE CHAIRPERSON

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ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

JEN DAULBY, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

### Ranking Member Rodney Davis Oversight of the Congressional Research Service June 20, 2019 Opening Statement

Thank you, Chairperson Lofgren. I would like to welcome today's witnesses, Mary Mazanec Director of the Congressional Research Service, and Susan Thaul who is here today in her capacity as the president of the Congressional Research Employees Association. I look forward to hearing your testimony and having a productive dialog about the current state of CRS and ways in which improvements can be made.

Congress has relied on the Congressional Research Service since the early nineteen-hundreds as its primary support agency for public policy research and analysis. Daily, CRS provides members and staff with authoritative, objective and timely work products that assist us in doing our jobs. An agency with such an influential and rich history should be the gold standard of research organizations world-wide.

However, it is clear to me there are some internal struggles that have had a noticeable impact on the agency. I am not interested in participating in a public dispute today between management and rank and file employees. That is not the purpose of a congressional hearing. What I am interested in doing, is having this committee lay out our expectations for a path forward that will drive necessary institutional change.

CRS must improve their processes and mechanisms for: establishing the agency's mission and meeting Congress's needs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; strategic

workforce planning; workforce training; performance management; recruitment; hiring; and diversity management.

Some of the ways in which this can be accomplished are:

- through surveys and focus groups, both internally and externally;
- IT analytics;
- manager training and employee development opportunities;
- demonstrating how training efforts contribute to improved performance and results;
- having a system in place to continually assess and improve human capital planning and investment and its impact on mission accomplishment;
- transparently align individual performance expectations to identify specific levels of achievement with CRS's mission
- Conduct employee exit interviews and track that feedback to identify trends;
- And encourage a culture that creates and maintains a positive work environment where employees are valued and can maximize their potential and contributions to CRS's mission.

I intend to focus my questions within these areas and hope to learn more from our witnesses on the current procedures in place at CRS and where there is room for improvement. Let me be clear, I expect the Congressional Research Service and the Library of Congress to respond to the concerns and recommendations expressed by the Committee today. These are not merely "suggestions." Congress needs to see action. Thank you and I yield back.

The CHAIRPERSON. Thank you.

Members are invited to put opening statements in the record.

The CHAIRPERSON. I would now like to welcome and introduce our witnesses.

Thanks to you both for being here.

Ms. Mary Mazanec has served as Director of CRS since 2011. Prior to her appointment as Director, Director Mazanec worked at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, where she was Deputy Assistant Secretary and Director of the Office of Medicine, Science, and Public Health in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response.

She was a Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Fellow, serving as a senior advisor to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and the Subcommittee on Public Health. Earlier in her career, she served as a senior policy analyst at the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission.

She received a Bachelor of Science from the University of Notre Dame, *summa cum laude*, and a Doctorate in Medicine from Case Western Reserve University Medical School and a Juris Doctor from Case Western Reserve University Law School.

We are also joined by Dr. Susan Thaul. Dr. Thaul has served as President of the Congressional Research Employees Association, or CREA, since February, 2016. Working at the Congressional Research Service as a specialist in drug safety and effectiveness, her portfolio includes drug development and approval, post-market safety studies and surveillance, drug importation, pharmaceutical promotion to consumers and health professionals, FDA appropriations, and regulatory science.

Before joining CRS in 2002, Dr. Thaul worked at the Institute of Medicine at the National Academies; the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs; the National Center for Health Services Research, now AHRQ; and the Harlem Hospital Prevention Prematurity Project; and the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation. She earned a Ph.D. in epidemiology from Columbia University and an M.S. in health policy and management from the Harvard School of Public Health.

I would like to ask the witnesses to try and summarize their written testimony in about 5 minutes. We operate under the five-minute rule. I think you are familiar with our light system, but when you are close to the end, the little yellow light will shine. When the red light shines, your five minutes are up and we would ask you to try and summarize.

You are both very distinguished individuals. We look forward to hearing from you.

First, we turn to you, Director Mazanec.

**STATEMENTS OF MARY B. MAZANEC, DIRECTOR, CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE; AND SUSAN THAUL, PRESIDENT, CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION**

**STATEMENT OF MARY B. MAZANEC**

Ms. MAZANEC. Chairperson Lofgren, Ranking Member Davis, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today regarding CRS.

CRS appreciates its role as Congress's trusted resource. We strive every day to maintain that trust and uphold our core values of authoritativeness, confidentiality, nonpartisanship, objectivity, and timeliness.

In my testimony today, I want to focus on three main things: our commitment to serving all of Congress, workforce initiatives, and our strategic planning efforts and future directions.

CRS continues to interact with virtually every committee and Member. In fiscal year 2018, CRS provided more than 62,000 custom products and services, authored and maintained approximately 9,000 general distribution products, hosted more than 8,600 congressional participants at our programs, and published nearly 6,000 bill summaries.

We continue to support this Congress on a wide range of policy issues, including energy, the environment, science, healthcare, border security, immigration, foreign affairs, and campaign finance.

CRS engages with Members at the very start of their careers in Congress. In January, in cooperation with this Committee, CRS was honored to again host the new-Member seminar in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Next, I want to turn my attention to the CRS workforce. Our most valuable resource is our corps of dedicated professionals who work in concert across the organization to carry out our mission. Just last week, during our annual staff appreciation ceremony, I had the opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding work of my CRS colleagues. I am proud and privileged to lead our team.

CRS continues to broaden and strengthen its research and analytical capabilities to ensure that we are able to provide the full breadth of public policy and legal work that Congress demands.

CRS, like Congress, is a workplace where every day is different. The fluid nature of our work often requires that staff prepare intricate analyses and respond to introductory questions which lead to more complex requests. For individuals who enjoy that challenge, CRS is a place where they can grow and thrive.

With Congress's generous support in fiscal year 2019, CRS has successfully strengthened coverage in a number of key areas. In the year 2020, the Congressional Research Service will continue to bolster its workforce. And even in this tight labor market, CRS continues to attract and retain very high-quality professionals who are drawn to our unique mission to support the Congress.

But as Congress evolves, CRS cannot remain static. We must continually evaluate how best to serve the Congress. Accordingly, the Service engaged in a strategic planning process with the Library. During the process, approximately 130 CRS staff participated in 12 working groups. The resulting CRS Directional Plan

identified two main goals: enhance service and access for all of Congress and optimize resources utilization.

Nested under these goals are specific objectives and key initiatives that emphasize CRS priorities, such as advancing diversity and inclusion efforts and aligning the CRS work model to meet Congress's needs.

An example of a recent key initiative was the public release of nonconfidential written products. For the first time in our history, in September of 2018, nonconfidential CRS written products were made available to the public. Today, more than 5,500 products are on Congress.gov. We are on track to meet the remaining goals and deadlines by the end of this year.

Information technology is a critical tool that CRS uses to create, deliver, and showcase our work. CRS continues to support the Library-wide efforts to centralize information technology. We meet regularly with our colleagues in OCIO and are continually identifying means to ensure that this transition period is seamless and that IT issues are addressed promptly.

Moreover, CRS, in partnership with OCIO, has launched an initiative to modernize the Service's IT systems. The goal of this critical 5-year initiative is to improve efficiency and foster innovation in CRS operations while continuing to protect the security and the confidentiality of congressional data. CRS is scheduled to test a prototype of a new content management system in this fiscal year.

Finally, on behalf of my colleagues at CRS, I would like to express my appreciation to the Committee for its continued support. CRS looks forward to the Committee's input so that we can continue to be Congress's foremost resource.

I am happy to respond to your questions.

[The statement of Ms. Mazanec follows:]

**Statement of Mary B. Mazanec**  
**Director, Congressional Research Service**  
**Before the Committee on House Administration, U.S. House of Representatives**  
**June 20, 2019**

Chairperson Lofgren, Ranking Member Davis, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today regarding the Congressional Research Service (CRS) and its work to support Congress. CRS appreciates its role as Congress's trusted resource and is committed to providing exceptional information, research, and analytical service to every Member and committee. In addition to addressing your questions, during my testimony I will highlight examples of recent support the Service has provided to Congress during the previous and current legislative session. I also want to update you on a number CRS initiatives, as well as focus on the future direction of the Service.

With its customized product and service offerings, general distribution products, seminars and 24/7 online presence, CRS continues to interact, in some way, with virtually all Member and committee offices. In fiscal year 2018, CRS experts provided more than 62,000 custom products and services, including confidential memoranda; in-person, telephone and email consultations; congressional testimonies; background products, and other miscellaneous services. The Service produced and maintained approximately 9,000 general distribution products; hosted more than 8,600 congressional participants at its seminars, institutes, and training programs; and published nearly 6,000 bill summaries on LIS/Congress.gov.

CRS strives to provide expertise in every area of importance to Congress: American law, domestic policy, foreign affairs, government, and science and industry. In just this past week, CRS staff prepared many confidential memoranda that were provided to various Members. Additionally 30 new reports, 20 new two-page In Focus products, and three new Legal Sidebars were published. Each week on its website, CRS features five new reports of particular note—this week topics include Sudan, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, regulating “big tech:” legal implications, opioid treatment programs, and U.S. Farm Program Eligibility and Payment Limits Under the 2018 Farm Bill. Also, CRS highlighted 25 of the most recent and relevant

research products in five current “hot topic” issue areas: Iran, Venezuela, the southern border, prescription drug pricing, and Midwest flooding.

CRS analysts are also routinely invited to testify before congressional committees. This past week, one analyst testified before the Senate Banking Committee on “Reauthorization of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program.” Also, an analyst served as a panelist on “Asylum Protection in the United States and the European Union” before a meeting of the Helsinki Commission. In addition, CRS offered a 90-minute open house session for congressional staff regarding a current topic of interest. Also, this week, the Service continued the 4-part advanced seminar series on House and Senate legislative processes. Next week CRS is offering seminars on three topics of congressional interest.

In addition to the day-to-day work to support Congress, CRS also conducts special programs and spearheads strategic initiatives. In January, CRS was honored to again host the New Member Seminar, in cooperation with the House, Williamsburg, Virginia. Seventy Members of Congress attended this policy orientation, which provided critical information and training on legislative and budget process, as well as objective overviews of policy issues such as health care, defense, immigration, cybersecurity, transportation, and global challenges.

CRS also provides a twice-yearly Federal Law Update. During this two week seminar, the Service’s legislative attorneys provide federal law updates and analysis for Members and their staff, including review of recent Supreme Court decisions. This highly-valued program is one of the most-attended by Members and staff.

Notably, for the first time in its history, non-confidential CRS written products were made available to the public via Congress.gov. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018, directed the Librarian of Congress, in consultation with the CRS Director, to establish and maintain a public website containing CRS non-confidential products. CRS’s early planning to implement this directive contributed to the Library’s ability to meet the statutory deadline, September 18, 2018, and launch the public website. At that time, the Library exceeded the implementation plan target by making over 600 non-confidential reports accessible to the public at [crsreports.congress.gov](https://crsreports.congress.gov). Today, more than 5,500 non-confidential products are available on the



public site. In collaboration with the Library, CRS is on track to meet the remaining deadlines identified in the implementation plan.

#### FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Throughout its history, CRS's mission has been to provide exceptional research, analysis, and information to meet Congress's legislative, oversight, and representational needs. As CRS continues in its second century, it aspires to distinguish itself as Congress's foremost resource for research and analysis on policy and legal matters. In order to position CRS and its staff to best serve a 21<sup>st</sup> century Congress, CRS continually examines its operational capabilities and processes, including identifying staffing needs and key initiatives.

*Strategic Planning.* In fiscal year 2018, the Service engaged in strategic and directional planning in coordination with the Library. The CRS directional plan was informed by insightful feedback from congressional users of the Service. Further, the Service used an inclusive process to ensure staff from throughout CRS had the opportunity to provide meaningful input during the development of the directional plan. Approximately 130 CRS staff, including CREA representatives, participated in 12 working groups. Additional input was solicited from both managers and staff in a variety of venues including: senior management and first-line supervisor meetings, brown bag lunch dialogues, all-staff meetings, and focus group sessions. The resulting five-year directional plan includes updated mission and vision statements, confirms CRS's core values, recognizes the Service's guiding principles, and identifies the Service's priority initiatives going forward. The plan is aligned with the goals and objectives identified in the Library's strategic plan for 2019-2023. The directional plan identifies two major goals: (1) enhance service and access for all of Congress and (2) optimize resource utilization. Nested under these goals are specific objectives and key initiatives that emphasize CRS priorities, such as advancing diversity and inclusion efforts, evaluating and aligning the CRS work model to meet Congress's needs and tracking user satisfaction with CRS products and services.

*Workforce.* The directional plan goals reflect CRS's focus on its most valuable resource—the corps of dedicated professionals who work in concert across the organization to carry out its mission to serve the Congress. As I had the pleasure to reaffirm at our annual staff appreciation

ceremony last week, I continue to be most proud of the CRS workforce and privileged to call them my colleagues.

CRS is committed to engaging employees in a collaborative and inclusive work environment. In addition, professional development of the Service's workforce is a priority, which is reflected in the directional plan. CRS must ensure that its staff hold the necessary expertise and skillsets, and that it is organized in a manner that facilitates collaboration and integration of the relevant disciplines to fully inform the legislative debate. To that end, the Service has undertaken initiatives to enhance and expand development and training opportunities, support diversity and inclusion with strategic recruitment and increased awareness, improve internal communications, and recognize exemplary staff performance.

CRS continues to strengthen its research and analytical capabilities to ensure that it is able to provide the requisite mix of skills and expertise across the breadth of public policy areas that Congress will confront in the coming years. With Congress's generous support for this effort in the fiscal year 2019 budget, CRS has successfully addressed coverage gaps in a number of the policy areas targeted in its fiscal year 2019 request. In fiscal year 2020, the Service will continue to bolster its workforce with recruitment of additional expertise and identify areas of potential need as part of its ongoing assessment of resources in alignment with the evolving congressional agenda.

*Work Model.* Another focus of the directional plan addresses CRS's work model, consistent with the goals to enhance service and effectively utilize resources. Accordingly, CRS is engaged in a multi-faceted process to test and implement potential alternatives to components of the current CRS work model, such as organizational structure and processes. I established a CRS working group to address these issues, which includes staff engaged in direct support of Congress, a CREA representative, and managers, to ensure that comprehensive perspectives are represented.

*Information Technology.* Information technology is a critical tool CRS uses to create, deliver, and showcase CRS's work for Congress. CRS continues to support Library-wide efforts to centralize information technology activities. I and members of my staff meet on a regular basis with colleagues in the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO). We are continually

identifying means to improve communication to ensure that this transition period is seamless and that IT issues are addressed in a timely manner.

Moreover, CRS, in partnership with OCIO, has undertaken modernization of the Service's IT systems. This critical five-year initiative, Integrated Research Information Systems (IRIS), will improve efficiency and foster innovation in CRS operations, while continuing to protect the security and confidentiality of congressional data. With the initial year of funding provided in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018, CRS, in collaboration with OCIO, has made progress in the effort to modernize its information technology systems. During the first phase, the focus of the IRIS initiative is to modernize an environment that will support CRS's work for Congress in four key areas: information research, policy and data analysis, content creation, and product delivery. CRS continues to engage stakeholders through various venues throughout the development and implementation phases. The Service is scheduled to test a prototype of a new content management system, before the end of the fiscal year, which will inform future development efforts.

*Knowledge Management.* In fiscal year 2018 CRS also embarked on a knowledge management initiative. Activities included the development of the CRS Research Portal, which consolidates research materials and identifies best practices used by analysts to respond to selected policy issues. By the end of fiscal year 2018, 18 research sites containing approximately 20,000 documents were added to the portal. Other activities included digitization of critical or one-of-a-kind research materials. This ongoing initiative also captures the institutional memory of CRS staff, a unique and valuable contribution of the Service.

Finally, on behalf of my colleagues at CRS, I would like to express my appreciation to the Committee for its continued support. CRS looks forward to the Committee's input as we seek to improve products and services and strengthen operational capabilities in our ongoing effort to be Congress's foremost resource for the highest quality of public policy research and analysis.

The CHAIRPERSON. Thank you very much.  
Dr. Thaul, we would be happy to hear from you.

#### STATEMENT OF SUSAN THAUL

Ms. THAUL. Thank you.

Good morning, Chairperson Lofgren, Ranking Member Davis, the other Committee Members who are here—it is nice to see so many here—and staff. Thank you for inviting me.

I am Susan Thaul, President of the Congressional Research Employees Association, CREA. CREA represents about 500 of the approximately 600 CRS employees.

I am happy to sit beside Dr. Mazanec. She has listened to CREA. CREA's role, though, is not only to be heard. It is sometimes to convince management that there is a problem, that there is a solution, and that working together can help.

We don't always agree. In my written testimony, I mention eight such issues, but today I will focus on three: the need for a more diverse and inclusive workplace, the need to restore confidence in our promotion and performance appraisal procedures, and the need to fix the morale crisis in one of our six research divisions.

First, diversity. In 2016, partly because of CRS employee answers to the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, Dr. Mazanec appointed a diversity and inclusion advisory group. It had managers and nonmanagers and a CREA representative.

The group did its homework. The report laid out a thoughtful plan. But, somehow, central office staff changed much of the report before submitting it to the Director in the group's name. After much back-and-forth, the full report was issued, but then the report that was posted on the CRS website was missing some of those recommendations. I think there was a communication opportunity that was missed there.

Since then, the Director has formed two other groups that are looking at diversity issues, and we hope that the outcome is different this time. There are so many ideas that we have that could improve diversity and inclusion perception and reality, but now, three years after the Federal survey, we don't see that CRS has an effective plan or a way to measure real progress.

Second, performance appraisals and promotions. Again, here, CREA and management are not quite in sync.

CRS has, from what we can tell, no clearly stated policy or standards for promotion, and it desperately needs one. CREA has handled performance appraisal cases where there is clearly a disconnect between supervisors and employees about what their expectations are.

With access to anonymized data, CREA analysts could examine whether promotions and performance ratings vary by characteristics of the individual or of the immediate supervisor or the division or office. There may be no problem at all, but without our knowing that, suspicion abounds.

When employees perceive actions as unfair, management loses some of its moral authority, and that can affect decisions to leave. And such attrition is very costly. It takes time and money to recruit, screen, hire, and train and that takes time away from our ability to serve Congress.

CREA has raised issues about promotion, for example, again and again. I think there is hope. Last month, Dr. Mazanec told me that CRS management was interested in looking at promotion procedures.

I propose that management involves CREA now. We have experts who advise Congress on these issues. Why not use us to boost the chances that the plan we develop and communicate to supervisors and employees will succeed?

Okay, I am going to talk very fast.

Finally, let's fix the American Law Division.

ALD is one of the six research divisions within CRS. ALD's work is unique, but so are the number and types of complaints we hear from its staff. Current and former legislative attorneys report a toxic environment. Employees fear speaking up.

The numbers tell us that there is a problem. During the last 3 years, attrition in our other five research divisions averaged about seven and a half percent per year. For ALD, it is a little over 19 percent each year. New hires haven't yet gained the experience with the kind of work CRS does. At ALD, the number of people who have been here for more than three and a half years is about 46 percent.

Since the Committee announced today's hearing, we have heard from many former ALD employees urging us to ask the Committee for help. We are asking now: Please urge CRS management to meet with CREA former employees and attorneys in ALD now. Let's explore the reasons for what we are hearing. Let's find solutions. I think they exist.

We have other issues. My written testimony talks about the concern of shifting from experts to generalist staff. We talk about work-life balance and issues of how to help that. And finally, CREA is concerned that management's fear of the potential reaction of some members makes them shy away from controversial but important issues.

But it is time for your questions. I am interested in what you suggest. I look forward to beginning working with Dr. Mazanec and her staff so that we can turn all our energy toward meeting the important and enormous needs of Congress. Thank you.

[The statement of Ms. Thaul follows:]



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Written statement of

**Susan Thaul, Ph.D.**  
**President, Congressional Research Employees Association**

to the Committee on House Administration, United States House of Representatives  
at its hearing on "Oversight of the Congressional Research Service"

June 20, 2019

Good morning. Next year marks the 50th Anniversary since Congress gave what had been the Legislative Reference Service, a new name: the Congressional Research Service. President Nixon signed that bill into law on October 26, 1970.

The 91st Congress wanted our group to focus beyond information gathering. It wanted us to also provide analysis as a way of better meeting the needs of Congress.

At CRS, I am a Specialist in Drug Safety and Effectiveness. In that role I do both information research and policy analysis. My doctorate in epidemiology, work as a manager at New York City's Emergency Medical Service, research at hospitals, and, then in the Washington, D.C., research at the Department of Health and Human Services, and policy work for Congress and the Institute of Medicine all contribute to my ability to provide expert support to Members, committees, and their staff.

I testify today in another role: President of the Congressional Research Employees Association—CREA. We are a local of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers. In addition to CREA, IFPTE members include NASA scientists, Social Security and immigration administrative law judges, and GAO analysts.

At CRS, CREA represents all employees who are not managers or who serve in management-confidential positions. We represent about 500 of the 600 CRS employees. About 400 are analysts, attorneys, or librarians. Another 100 are administrative staff, editors, graphic designers, those who create bill summaries, communications and program specialists, and others who don't routinely have direct contact with Congress.

We are federal employees with a mission. We help individual Members and committees of Congress craft legislation and perform oversight supported by our work adding historical perspective, describing the opinions and advice of groups interested in your decisions, analyzing what you and other stakeholders see as problems and solutions, and perhaps offering other perspectives or an assessment of possible intended and unintended results of legislative proposals. We offer this information and analysis on a confidential basis, and maintain the CRS mandate to be non-partisan, objective, timely, and comprehensive in our work.

This is a time when there is such controversy about accuracy and the need for evidence in policy and political speech. At CRS our mission—both management and employees—is to make sure that regardless of Party, you have both.

So if you expect me, as a union president, to rail against management misdeeds, I may disappoint you. CREA seeks to realize the CRS mission by diminishing the obstacles to our work

in support of Congress. Sharing commitment to the CRS mission with the Librarian of Congress and CRS management, we must work together.

In my three years as CREA president, I have sought—successfully, I believe—to build relationships with CRS and Library leadership. I meet regularly with CRS Director Mary Mazanec, her legal counsel and associates, the Library’s labor relations team, and intermittently with Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden.

Dr. Mazanec and her senior staff have increasingly included bargaining unit employees and CREA officials on working groups. I, for example, now serve on a management-employee group looking at the CRS work product. That includes issues like staffing patterns and technology. CREA is glad to have that opportunity. But my employee colleagues and I see missed opportunities, as well.

In what follows I outline four such examples where we want CRS management and CREA to work together.

- Steps towards making CRS and the Library workforce more diverse and inclusive.
- Work-life balance, including telework.
- Staffing and scope of work, including ensuring a fair and hospitable work environment.
- Performance appraisal and promotion criteria and procedures.

#### **1. Steps towards making CRS and the Library workforce more diverse and inclusive.**

**A. CRS efforts.** The Federal Employees Viewpoint Survey in 2016 revealed dissatisfaction among CRS staff about agency attention to diversity and inclusion issues. Partly in response, the CRS Director formed an advisory group consisting of analysts, librarians, supervisors, and CREA representatives.

The group conducted the standard type of research that you expect from CRS. The research revealed a lack of diversity, especially in more senior positions, and a failure to retain minority staff. Based on its research, the group prepared a comprehensive report that laid out a plan to hire and retain a more diverse and inclusive workforce. But central office staff edited the group’s report extensively before submitting it to the Director in the group’s name. It changed so much of the analysis and recommendations that the group protested and asked that the report be withdrawn, returned to its original form, and resubmitted to the Director.

Eventually much of the content was restored and resubmitted. But the Operations staff that oversaw the work of the advisory group informed group members that the Director had declined to meet with them. When Management put the report online many of the working group’s key recommendations were missing.

CRS has since formed two other working groups to address diversity issues in recruitment and retention. Naturally, participants fear that management will dismiss their recommendations without discussion and true consideration. Meanwhile, we see few useful steps towards diversity within CRS.

**B. CREA contract dispute.** The collective bargaining agreement between CREA and CRS mandates that CRS supply CREA with certain data, including workforce demographic data, so CREA can effectively represent CRS employees. Unfortunately, it has taken a lengthy grievance process, a prod from the Librarian, and over a year of negotiations to reach an agreement that I think we will all finally sign this week.

**C. Library efforts.** There have been missed opportunities at the Library level as well. CREA, along with the other two Library unions that cover non-CRS employees, worked intensely as the Library revised its regulations on equal employment opportunity (EEO) and diversity activities.

Originally, management felt it was enough to simply count employees by racial and ethnic background. That's a good start but such aggregated statistics would not reveal, for example, whether one group was all GS-8s and another was GS-15s.

The three CREA unions insisted that the Library to go beyond reports with data too aggregated to be useful in identify areas for improvement. We also wanted a management commitment to seek to understand the barriers that different groups, including people with disabilities, face in applying for Library jobs, being selected for those jobs, and then thriving in the Library workplace.

Although we were unable to get those points included in either the Library's regulation or its EEO Plan for Diversity and Inclusion, the agreement between the Library and the unions included a pilot Diversity and Inclusion Working Group, with union participation. The Working Group *could* examine analysis of workforce demographics by position type, grade, promotion potential and history. We *could* consider and recommend job descriptions that encompass diverse routes of obtaining knowledge and experience and specific policies to deal with inclusion and retention issues. The Working Group *could* find ways to measure the value of a diverse and inclusive workforce to the institution, its clients, and its current and potential employees.

The Working Group has met four times. We have heard guest speakers present current Library policies on reporting discrimination and the aggregate data from the most recent FEVS survey—not, I note, broken down by Library service unit or CRS division or office. There have been no discussions about how to identify and address diversity and inclusion concerns. The unions have shared this concern with the Librarian and believe that we can help make this Working Group effort more focused on the goals we envisioned when bargaining for it.

## **2. Opportunities to improve work-life balance, including telework.**

CRS employees face many of the same obstacles as other public and private employees. How do we arrange, such as through episodic offsite work, to do our work during snow storms or when the Metro closes our stations for repair? How do we balance our work and our responsibilities to our families?

One useful tool has been telework. Unlike the Executive Branch and the Library of Congress, CRS was late in joining the national movement towards flexible work schedules. The 2010 telework agreement between the Library and CREA reflected CRS management caution about this issue. Now, after eight years of generally successful experience, we seek to clarify and somewhat expand the option to telework. CREA reopened bargaining on the telework agreement and, after multi-month delays with bargaining from both sides, operating in good faith, we hope for continued discussion and problem-solving.

We recognize that management has some valid reasons for refusing that option in some cases. CREA has submitted a proposal to management that would offer a few, limited, flexibilities that would be both a boon to efficiency and a welcome convenience without hurting the work product of teleworkers or their colleagues.



### **3. Need to explore staffing and scope of work, including ensuring a fair and hospitable work environment.**

I now move to issues that do not involve specific documents to negotiate. They relate to the very core of what CRS has been and can be. These issues have had a profound effect on morale within CRS and, consequently, effects on long-term productive contributions to the CRS mission.

**A. Experts.** Traditional staffing in CRS has involved experts in every field for which Congress might need support.

When I applied for a CRS specialist position back in 2002, the vacancy announcement listed such qualifications as “national expert” and the ability to apply “professional subject-area knowledge.”

CRS has gradually moved away, in part, from that model. CRS continues to hire a mix of people at mid-career and earlier career points, and CRS needs both cohorts in its staff mix. Mid-career hires provide key expertise and perspective, and earlier career hires are often more up to date on emerging academic and practitioner perspectives. However, there has been an increasing trend away from more experienced and mid-career hires who may have substantial experience in the industries, organizations, and agencies that are the focus of congressional actions.

One indication of this change: The last announcement of a job opening for a Specialist GS-15 analyst appeared in August 2018. Almost a year ago. Does Congress really want such a change? A first-line CRS supervisor typically manages 8 to 12 analysts, librarians, or attorneys. Some of those specialists were hired specifically because they were nationally recognized experts in their fields.

The move to hiring more junior staff, CRS leadership says, is have a more flexible workforce to meet the demand for short reports on many different issues. Such reports would have less in-depth analysis. The influx of new staff—while welcome—puts a burden on the more senior analysts whose time spent mentoring takes away from time spent on their own analytic work.

There is a need for short, primer-like products, but there is also a need for in-depth, longer analyses of complex, multi-disciplinary issues. In our view, the pendulum has swing too far, in part because CRS has not fully addressed Congress's diverse needs. Because CREA has not been a part of any conversation CRS management and those in Congress who oversee CRS may have had, we do not know how the complicated issues of staffing and work products may have been discussed.

We hear many complaints that supervisors care more about how many products we turn out than they do for the in-depth and trusted expertise that has distinguished CRS for decades.

I believe we need both. When I wrote the background paper for the Prescription Drug User Fee Act in 2007 it ran 55 single-spaced pages. But staffers told me they needed that information and they thanked me for providing such detailed and thorough information and analysis. They were able to navigate to the section of the report that was of most interest to them, often over the telephone in close consultation with me and CRS colleagues. Since then newer CRS analysts have capably updated the report. But without the original we would not have been able to offer Members and committees of Congress the substance you must have.

Members of this committee and your staff receive many sources of facts and opinion. They are often useful. But whether they come from the Alzheimer's Association or Big Pharma, they

support the goals of the sources. Seasoned CRS analysts can help sort through the facts and opinions and provide an unbiased overview. In the past, a CRS analyst could also provide analysis that went beyond synthesizing the recommendations and analysis of others. That is less likely, now.

Part of that results from tight budgets. The CRS budget was basically stagnant from 2012 to 2016. Much of the increase since then has gone to technology; staffing for analysts only recently seems to be coming back to the 2012 level.

That means CRS does not replace each analyst who leaves. For example, CRS was without an expert on U.S. relations with Russia for over a year because of budget constraints.

Individual analysts are being assigned broader subject portfolios. With so many topics to cover they cannot develop or maintain the same level of expertise as they had. And since we have fewer analysts responding to an increasing number of congressional requests they not only have less time to stay informed. They have less time to write in-depth reports. Regardless of CRS's level of resources, steps can be taken to re-balance CRS's service for Congress's varied needs.

**B. Increasing caution among senior staff.** And there is another constraint on the way analysts develop, maintain, and share expertise with Congress: what we see as an increasing caution among CRS leadership. Once in a while there are incidents where CRS withdraws a report because there were complaints from the Hill.

More often, we have seen instances which received no publicity. In those cases, management fear of Member objections overrode the nonpartisan, expert analysis and judgment of their analysts. Such constraint goes beyond whether or not to release a document. Authors see this trend and scale back analytically ambitious products on their own. In some cases, analysts are prevented in CRS's review process from synthesizing new perspectives on issues, and are told to instead focus only on what others have said. The chilling effect influences the design of new products and the review of draft products by peers, supervisors, division management, and the CRS Review Office.

Of course, rigorous review is essential and usually welcome—if not enjoyed—by analysts. Before CRS releases any report, it has gone through at least four different stages of review. But over the last few years, CRS management's aversion to possible criticism from the Hill has led some analysts and librarians to shy away from or avoid writing about controversial topics. CREA thinks that this does a disservice to Congress and those they represent. If *CRS* cannot discuss and point out flaws, contradictions, or key trade-offs in proposed policies, who can?

**C. Reports of problems in the American Law Division.** CRS has six research divisions. Four, including my Domestic Policy Division, are organized around subject areas. One, the Knowledge Services Group, focuses on information management CRS-wide.

Today I focus on concerns revolving around the sixth: the American Law Division. ALD.

CREA describes ALD's role as one that "provides objective, authoritative and non-partisan legal analysis and consultation to Members of Congress and their staff on issues of national importance that arise as part of the legislative process or that are otherwise of interest to Congress."

CREA has a few members from ALD, but none on our board. We have been told ALD attorneys are warned to avoid union activity. Turnover in that division is much higher than in other divisions. CREA's chief steward has assisted more ALD staff with problems with their

supervisors than in any other division. Some former and current ALD lawyers talk about an atmosphere of fear and distrust.

The attorneys leaving include new hires who came to CRS excited to join this well-respected icon on Capitol Hill. As they have told us, once here, they saw the atmosphere of fear and distrust in ALD even if they were not directly caught up in it. They may leave for better jobs or move across country for a spouse's job. But several have told us they soon looked for another job because they did not want to stay in CRS. Others felt they were being forced out after decades of outstanding, commendable, and fully successful service.

So while we are alarmed by the number and types of complaints we hear *from* ALD staff and *about* ALD from analysts and supervisors in the other research divisions, we hesitate to generalize about what might be the underlying reasons. Current practice of ALD management appears to have made collaboration between attorneys and analysts more difficult.

But we don't need individual testimony to see that multiple problems exist. With bargaining unit employee data available to us, we have looked at attrition rates in the research divisions. For Fiscal Years 2016, 2017, and 2018, attrition in the other research divisions was about 7.4% per year. For ALD, the annual attrition rate was about 19%. This represents a massive hemorrhaging of expertise that has had adverse effects on service to Congress.

In the research divisions other than ALD, 29% of current analysts have been at CRS for less than three-and-a-half years. For ALD that number is 54%. For CRS to serve Congress well, every division needs those who have been here long enough to understand the history of legislation. CREA urges the Members of this Committee to explore the reasons for this sharp difference and if you feel CREA can be helpful, please tell us how.

#### **4. Performance appraisal and promotion criteria and procedures.**

We have observed managerial shortcomings surrounding the handling of annual performance appraisals and promotion requests. There is great variation in how supervisors approach those evaluations. This is no surprise. The Evaluation criteria are unclear. The result, though, is often seemingly arbitrary decisions. CREA has handled cases where employees have received a commendable or outstanding performance evaluation one year, and have been warned they were at risk of receiving a minimally successful rating the next year, when there had not been a significant decline in their productivity. At CREA we believe that when employees perceive actions as unfair, management loses some of its moral authority. It creates low morale. The lack of information and the related lack of respect for the process is more than an annoyance to employees. It affects decisions to leave CRS.

When the value of CRS to Congress lies in large part in our expertise, failing to retain promising employees—reflected in attrition rates—is costly. Both to achieving our mission and in the staff time required to recruit, screen, hire, and train new people.

Here, there is hope. Over the years, CREA has raised these issues at all levels of management. When I raised the promotion process again with the CRS Director a month or so ago, she said that her office was interested in addressing this issue.

Dr. Mazanec, I hope you include bargaining unit employee and CREA participation in discussions on how to change—and improve—the promotion process. I hope we can review anonymized data on performance appraisals and promotions to help identify possible misuse or ineffective use of procedures that could be used to encourage excellent performance and to work towards efficient and effective service to Congress.

I also hope that when management is at the early stage of any change, they consult us.

First, involving staff and CREA in the development of important changes gives CRS the advantage of our expertise, insights, and recommendations. Second, it allows us to understand what managers are suggesting and offer ways to improve their proposals before we enter into formal negotiations. Third, it shows bargaining unit employees—and our supervisors and managers—that CRS leadership values our input, evidence, and opinions.

This inclusive, cooperative approach would help yield a plan more likely to succeed and give a boost to employee morale.

At the hearing on Thursday, I will see some congressional staff in the room. Earlier in my career I was a Hill staffer. I sought support from GAO, OTA, and CRS.

One of the great pleasures of being at CRS has been meeting young legislative correspondents saying, "You work at CRS? I love CRS!" Actually, so do I.

While I have talked about missed opportunities, there have also been opportunities seized.

CRS analysts, attorneys, and librarians and all those who work behind the scenes do a lot. To remember that, all I have to do is to look the list of CRS reports to Congress—and now policy and law blogs, podcasts, maps—on our website. CRS has counts of inquiries filled. Even though I object counting a 5-minute phone call and a six-month immersion in a policy issue both as one unit, I must recognize that the large number of CRS contacts with congressional requesters is one indication that we are busy, needed, and useful.

I have offered here, today, ways I believe CRS could do better. Just as the work of CRS endeavors to discover and illuminate problems and solutions in our country, so must we turn that light inward and discover ways in which we can improve ourselves. The better we function, the better we can serve you.

The best way to do that? Find ways for CRS management, employees, and our oversight committees work together.

That's what I hoped would come when I saw you had scheduled this hearing. Seeing it actually happened today, makes me believe that when that 50th anniversary rolls around on October 26, 2020, the CRS Director and the CREA President will propose a toast at the party, shake hands, and say, "We did it! And Congress helped."

Thank you.

The CHAIRPERSON. Thanks to both of you for this testimony.

I would turn now to the Ranking Member, the gentleman from Illinois, for questions that he may have.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Thank you, Madam Chairperson, and thanks for having this hearing.

It is good to see my colleagues too.

Mr. Aguilar, how is baseball going?

Mr. AGUILAR. Good.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Pretty good? All right. I was hoping not to get that answer. I don't want to do a CRS report on the last 6 years of baseball victories at the Congressional Baseball Game. I am aware of the record, unfortunately.

Ms. Mazanec, what do you see as the largest challenge for CRS today?

Ms. MAZANEC. I believe our largest challenge is to make sure that we recruit and retain a diverse workforce with the skills and expertise that we need to support you at a very high level.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. All right.

Ms. Thaul, what do you think the biggest challenge is?

Ms. THAUL. I think we are a great group, and to keep us going and to try to work together to stop these kinds of internal frustrations, there is a lot we can do.

I think we need to figure out how to serve—at what level to serve Congress. There is a lot of need for short-term things that legislative correspondents and analysts need, and then there is also work that a committee staffer might need to really help develop a project.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Okay. Well, I am glad you brought up Congress.

Ms. Mazanec, how does CRS capture feedback from Members of Congress and their staff?

Ms. MAZANEC. Thank you.

So, several years ago, I believe in 2016, the Library was directed to do a survey of Congress about the products and services they receive from the Library but especially CRS. CRS took the lead on it. We contracted with Gallup. And we got very encouraging, very positive feedback. CRS plans to do another survey this fall to again try to capture feedback in a more formal way.

But we get a lot of informal feedback on a day-to-day, ongoing basis from your staff and directly from Members. I take advantage of when I informally meet with Members to try to get their input into how we are doing, what they would like to see from us, and what we could do better.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Okay.

What type of IT analytics are used to capture information about your work products?

Ms. MAZANEC. We have a customer management system where we basically put in requests, specific requests, that come from Members and their staff. It is a data set that we look at to try to spot trends.

Other things that we look at——

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. So you are talking about trends just on the——

Ms. MAZANEC. Number of requests that we——

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Number of requests. You know, is there a trend on the type of request being made, the issue areas?

Ms. MAZANEC. Yes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Are you guys using any of the IT data analytic tools—

Ms. MAZANEC. Yes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois [continuing]. Like Google has to look at how many people have actually opened the reports that you have put out there?

Ms. MAZANEC. Yes. We do that too. We do that in cooperation with OCIO. We capture how many times someone goes to a certain page, how many times a certain report has been viewed. We are doing that both on CRS.gov but we are also tracking Congress.gov, where our reports are being pushed out to the public.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Okay.

So, I mean, you have shown us that you get feedback from Members of Congress, our offices, our staffs, our committees; you use IT analytics.

How do you capture input from your employees that may influence your strategic plan?

Ms. MAZANEC. The strategic planning process that we embarked on—it was probably a couple of years ago now—was very inclusive. And we did that by design, and it was, I believe, a significant change from past practice.

We invited staff to sign up for work groups, and we also involved staff in a variety of venues, including focus groups, townhalls. I myself conduct all-hands meetings. The various divisions and offices will also have staff meetings. I have an open-door policy if someone wants to come in directly to me, to sit down with me and pitch an idea or to express a concern.

So I think we do this on a regular basis. There is always going to be room for improvement, though.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. I don't have much time left.

Ms. Thaul, do you agree?

Ms. THAUL. In large part, yes. I think the planning process this year did involve staff at many different levels.

What we don't—once all that information comes in, we are often not included in the discussions, though. And I think we can do that better.

Staff meetings are good. The problem is people don't always want to speak up. And we have to find a way to have that be a safe environment where, if someone wants to speak about a supervisor, that they are not immediately labeled a whiner. Some people might be whiners, but some people might have legitimate concerns.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Thank you.

I yield back.

The CHAIRPERSON. Thank you very much.

The gentleman from Maryland is recognized for five minutes.

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Chairperson, thank you so much.

I want to thank both Director Mazanec and Dr. Thaul for being with us today and sharing your insight. I have always thought that the Congressional Research Service is an enormous asset to our work in Congress and an international marvel when you think about it—the idea that you have one independent, objective re-

search authority for Members of Congress from whatever political persuasion and that they get us information, in fact, and we can rely on them.

I want to thank you both for the work that you are doing. We are grateful for your expertise.

Let me start with you, Madam Director. Can you explain what is the peer-review process at the Congressional Research Service? And are the CRS products ever peer-reviewed by externally entities?

Ms. MAZANEC. We have a multitiered review process. It begins with peer review, but then there is also section review, division review, and then there is final review in the front office. The review process is designed to ensure that the product is consistent with our core values of objectivity, authoritativeness, nonpartisanship, et cetera.

I think, for the most part, we do little external peer review. There may be certain parts of a report that we ask an outside expert to look at to make sure we get it right.

I feel, having written the policy reports, that the peer-review process is an asset. It helps us make sure that we have a comprehensive product that is of most help for Congress, and I always welcomed it. I think part of the challenge is we are working on very tight deadlines sometimes, and it takes time to move a product through the process and have a back-and-forth on the content.

Mr. RASKIN. Gotcha.

Dr. Thaul, let me come to you. A lot of my constituents work at the Congressional Research Service because I represent Maryland's Eighth Congressional District, which includes Montgomery, Frederick, and Carroll County. I definitely know a number of people who come down to work here for CRS.

You mention in your testimony the need to create a fairer, more hospitable work environment. That is something that is obviously of concern to me since I have constituents who work there. What are the obstacles to creating such a work environment, and what are the specific problems that you are identifying?

Ms. THAUL. Let me preface by saying I love working at CRS. I was excited to come here. I have been here 16 years. And there is most—that is wonderful. We are talking about things on the edge, and we are trying to fix them now or address them now before they spin out.

There are two—we want people to be treated—to be respected for our work and for who we are. And that means, if we are respected to advise Congress on Earth-changing issues, why are we not respected on things like how we organize our day. Or there are some flexibilities that Congress, the Library, and CRS grants us, but different supervisors apply those differently.

These are minor things compared to other things that your Committee deals with, but it is the everyday pressure that then affects how we might do our work.

Mr. RASKIN. Are you in a process where you feel that you can be heard and there is a collaborative, conciliatory framework for dealing with these?

Ms. THAUL. We are doing better. I think we have made some progress with that.

The one thing that I don't think we have figured out how to do yet is if—just as not all employees are ace perfect, not all supervisors are perfect. I mean, you have all seen that in your lives. And our impression is, if we want to bring that up, the reaction is that that is not a valid concern.

Mr. RASKIN. Okay, so—but this is normal workplace stuff that—

Ms. THAUL. Absolutely, yes.

Mr. RASKIN. Okay. And you are not dealing with problems of harassment or discrimination that are not being effectively addressed?

Ms. THAUL. There are ways we can address that through the Library process. Now, partly because of your Committee, we can also go to—they have new initials now—Office of Congressional Workforce Rights.

Mr. RASKIN. Okay.

Ms. THAUL. There are kinks along the way, but basically the process is there.

Mr. RASKIN. Okay.

Finally, Ms. Mazanec, did you want to respond to any of that?

Ms. MAZANEC. I certainly am willing to open a discussion about how we can communicate better. It seems like there is a communication issue raised by a number of concerns that Dr. Thaul raised and how to capture input and feedback.

I meet with Dr. Thaul on a regular basis. My management team meets with other representatives in CREA on a regular basis. Maybe some of their concerns can be brought up in those venues.

We also have other avenues where individuals can bring a concern directly to me anonymously through a Director's comment box. But if there are other ways that we can improve communication, I am open to discuss it.

Mr. RASKIN. Terrific. Thank you.

I yield back, Madam Chairperson.

The CHAIRPERSON. Thank you very much.

The gentleman from Georgia is recognized.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Thank you both for being here today.

Director, what is the mission of CRS?

Ms. MAZANEC. The mission of CRS is to provide information, research, and analysis on all legislative issues in front of Congress to aid them in carrying out their constitutional duties.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Thank you.

Do you agree with that, Dr. Thaul?

Ms. THAUL. I am sorry. I got a note and didn't—

Mr. LOUDERMILK. The mission of CRS.

Ms. THAUL. To serve Congress, to help you make better decisions so that it is better for everybody.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Thank you. I appreciate that—

Ms. THAUL. That is a summary.

Mr. LOUDERMILK [continuing]. Because that is the way I feel—

Ms. THAUL. Yeah.

Mr. LOUDERMILK [continuing]. And I have had some concerns about other aspects of the Library getting away from the idea that they are predominantly a library that exists for Congress. So it is refreshing to hear that.



And what you do is extremely important. As I am sure many of my colleagues here use CRS extensively, we do, and it is extremely important that—not that CRS be bipartisan but it be unbiased, you know, not taking one side or the other.

And when this hearing was announced, I met with all of our legislative staff, and I just asked them, what is your opinion of the service that we are getting from CRS? And it was, for the most part, very positive.

The only negative feedback we got was, on certain occasions, in certain departments, it may not be unbiased. There is some opinion put in, not in the reports but in the conversations that they have. But we can work through that.

The process, Director, for getting a report approved, is that process transparent to the employees? Do they know how that process works?

Ms. MAZANEC. Absolutely. They are actively engaged with the individuals reviewing their report. And there should be a dialogue or a back-and-forth. If you ask a peer to review your work and they take the time to do it and they submit comments, I would hope that that was the start of a conversation. That is the way it should work.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Yeah.

Dr. Thaul, do you agree that it is transparent?

Ms. THAUL. The process is transparent. Some people handle it better than others—

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Okay.

Ms. THAUL [continuing]. I mean, as in anywhere. I think part of the problem is the expectation of what a CRS report is has sort of varied over time, and there is a little confusion about that. I agree that there should not be personal opinions—

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Right.

Ms. THAUL [continuing]. In a report and probably not in conversation either. But I think that it serves Congress best if we, in addition to giving you a description of “this is what has happened before, this is what this bill would do, this is what this other bill would do,” if we could add an analysis to give it a framework of how it fits into what we have seen, those of us who have been hired as experts in our field.

I think, partly because of the volume of reports and requests, we don’t have time for that, and partly because we seem to be moving away from that.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Okay. Thank you.

Director, how do you guys advertise for positions? If you need to fill a position, where do you go and seek?

Ms. MAZANEC. Our positions are posted in USAJobs.gov, but we also send the descriptions or the announcements rather broadly. If we are seeking a particular set of skills, we may approach professional organizations, societies, academic institutions. We have sent announcements over here, to offices over here. And that is one of the ways we are trying to ensure that we have a diverse applicant pool.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. You steal our guys. Oh, I see.

When it comes to the hiring process, what is the process for hiring someone? You identify someone has a skill set. How do you

transition that person from being an applicant to being an employee? Or who makes that decision?

Ms. MAZANEC. The Library follows a merit selection process, and we follow that process. After we post a job and the position closes, the applications are reviewed to make sure that they meet the minimal requirements outlined in the position description.

Then those candidates are invited in for a structured interview where all applicants are asked the same questions. There may be a second—after the leading candidates are determined, there is usually one hiring manager.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Okay.

Ms. MAZANEC. There is a panel, a hiring panel, but one of the individuals on the panel is the hiring manager. We try to ensure that the members who are on the panel also are diverse.

Then an individual may be brought back to clarify responses or to meet other people that they will be working with.

Then a decision is made. We work through the Library's HR office. They extend the offer. After the offer is accepted, the person is scheduled to come on board. They are put through a Library orientation, and then CRS conducts its own orientation.

A lot of individuals who join CRS, especially analysts, they are assigned a mentor. And it is a lot of mentorship on the job, learning by doing.

I want to talk to a lot of the new people that we brought on board recently to ensure that the onboarding process is meeting their needs. And I have that planned to do, to meet with some of the new hires in the last 2 years.

So that pretty much is how we bring people on board.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Okay. Thank you.

I see my time has expired, so I will yield back the remaining time I don't have.

The CHAIRPERSON. Thank you very much.

The gentlelady from California is recognized.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson.

Thank you both for being here.

I know that you mentioned, Director, that CRS is the foremost resource for Members of Congress. I can tell you, by traveling around, we are kind of the envy of a number of other democratic bodies as well because of how well-performing and organized that is.

But I also know that the people are at the heart of that. And so that is why I wanted to follow up with a few questions around the people themselves.

And one of the things that I am hearing is that there are a number of policies, perhaps in more divisions than not, among relationships that are strained for whatever reason.

Ms. MAZANEC. Yes.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. I wonder if you could speak to that a little bit more and what you see. Clearly, communication is often at the heart of that, but are there some policies that are different and that people interpret differently, whether it is leave policies or checking in, making sure that, you know, they have to sign some-

thing if they are leaving? What is it that you think may be at the heart of some of those concerns?

Ms. MAZANEC. I think you have already identified it. I don't think there are different policies; I think it is the way the policies are implemented.

Several years ago, I set up a policy working group that is run out of my counselor's office. I tasked them to review all the policies in the Service and to clarify and update the policies and that was an attempt to have a more uniform application of the policy.

If there is still a need for clarification, my counselor's office will talk to managers, talk to staff to further clarify the policies.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Yes.

Dr. Thaul, how would you respond?

Ms. THAUL. Right. I think that at the top level there are some good flexibilities that CRS policies cover.

Dr. Mazanec has said that part of her management style is to let the managers make their own decisions, which, in general, I support because different offices have different flows and need different things. But sometimes within the same office there are different decisions made for different people, and that creates stress.

I mean, that is not unlike other workforces, but you are asking us about ours.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Yes. I think I was hearing that you are both interested in taking a look at that and seeing how can we—

Ms. THAUL. Yes.

Mrs. DAVIS of California [continuing]. We improve that, and I appreciate that.

The other issue really is a little bit—I think my colleague has raised it somewhat. I might do it a little bit differently. There has always been a policy of nonpartisanship, but now I think there seems to be a concern—maybe this is more in the Law Division—of one of neutrality, that providing facts, obviously, is critically important to CRS, but that there are some issues that are not even raised that should be.

Would you like to respond to that?

Ms. THAUL. May I go first? Okay.

Ms. MAZANEC. Sure.

Ms. THAUL. She is my boss.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. I know. I looked at—whoever is comfortable—

Ms. THAUL. But we coordinated our—

Ms. MAZANEC. Thank you. I am fine.

Ms. THAUL. The—now I have forgotten the question. I am sorry.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Well, it is nonpartisanship versus neutrality. How do you see that?

Ms. THAUL. Thank you.

Some issues need—they are so critical that there are—there are facts, but there is also talking about the ramifications of those. Sometimes that discussion can be unbiased and nonpartisan but it is not always neutral, in that an expert will have experience and a concept to put in. It is important that they identify that. I think the review process helps a lot.

But sometimes we are shying away from—several years ago—this had nothing to do with the current administration—I was

counseled that I could write a descriptive paper on something but not to get into the possible other ways to organize the program that they were talking about, and I was told, "Don't do that. It is too controversial."

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Yeah.

Ms. THAUL. And——

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Does that affect morale?

Ms. THAUL. Yeah. Well, it makes me feel——

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Yeah.

Dr. Mazanec.

Ms. THAUL [continuing]. You hired me for my——

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Sure. I am sorry. My time is limited. I just want to give her a chance.

Ms. MAZANEC. So I have a different point of view. It is really not neutrality. What we strive for is objectivity. It is one of our core values.

I would also assert—and maybe we have to reinforce this in communication—that analysts are supposed to be analytical and that not only should they present the facts but they should also be analytical. Where we draw as the line is we don't make recommendations, we don't advocate. We inform the debate, but we are not here to tell you what the best policy option is.

We do tackle controversial subjects. I would point you to reports on some of the topics that we have reports on and we also do that with our targeted research requests, which are confidential. We generate a lot of confidential memos that are on controversial issues.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Yes.

Thank you very much. I know my time is up.

The CHAIRPERSON. Thank you.

The gentlelady from Ohio is recognized.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Thank you both for being here today.

Let me just ask you, what is your policy, if any, on diversity? And talk to me about the diversity of your staff.

Ms. MAZANEC. Diversity in the workforce is a top priority of mine. I think it is important, it is critical to bring all perspectives to the issues that you are grappling with.

I can just give you a little bit of data because I have looked at it recently. We looked at basically three years—2009, 2013, and 2018. This is self-reported data. Twenty-eight percent of the staff identified themselves as being part of a minority group.

However, over the course of that time period, there have been some shifting among the various minority categories, and we have lost diversity at the most senior grades in the Service.

This is a high priority. We are trying to identify specific actions that we can do and put in place to make sure that our applicant pools are diverse. As Susan mentioned——

Ms. FUDGE. Excuse me just one—forgive me.

Ms. MAZANEC. Yes.

Ms. FUDGE. Do you have any people of color in your senior leadership?

Ms. MAZANEC. Yes. It depends on how you define "color." If it is African American, no. We lost two African American senior-level

leaders in my tenure at CRS. They left to pursue preferred opportunities. One told me she wasn't even looking. Her dream job dropped out of the sky, and she wanted to take the opportunity.

Ms. FUDGE. So there are no people of color in upper management?

I would just suggest to you that if you are having problems finding them, we know people everywhere, and we can make recommendations to you.

Ms. MAZANEC. Okay.

Ms. FUDGE. Not that I have any right now. I have no idea. But I think that we should not have an agency or a department as involved in what we do every day as you are that has no person of color in your leadership.

Ms. THAUL. We have started to look at some of the numbers. The numbers don't tell the whole story because I know there are efforts to recruit minorities.

But when we looked at the percentage of African American—I don't have the numbers in my head, but African Americans among the baby-boomer group in the Library, in CRS, that was a higher percentage of minorities in that group, my group, than in the millennials who are the more recent hires. And that is really concerning, because we are talking about diversity and inclusion but it is not showing. So there is work.

Ms. FUDGE. Okay. So tell me, then, how many people of color do you have amongst your ranks of analysts and attorneys.

Ms. THAUL. I would have to look that up and tell you.

Ms. MAZANEC. I can get back to you with those numbers, the percentages—

Ms. FUDGE. Let me just say that the Speaker of the House has made diversity one of her main issues.

Ms. MAZANEC. Yes.

Ms. FUDGE. I would certainly hope that every single person that has a role to play in hiring or promoting or including people of color would make sure that that is done on a consistent basis.

It is very difficult for me to understand that, as many young lawyers and people as are around this Hill, there are not people that you can find. They call my office looking for jobs every day.

Ms. MAZANEC. Yes.

Ms. FUDGE. There is something that is not quite right. But please let me know what your progress is on that. I will be waiting to hear how things progress.

Ms. THAUL. Thank you.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I yield back.

The CHAIRPERSON. Thank you.

The gentleman from California is recognized.

Mr. AGUILAR. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Dr. Thaul, you brought up concerns with the American Law Division and its high turnover rate. Can you talk a little bit about that division? Why is it different? And, in your opinion why do we have a higher turnover rate in that area?

Ms. THAUL. That is a very good question, and I would like to work towards finding that.

Some of that is normal. It is that people retire. Some of it is people who may be retirement-age who are fed up or who are feeling

unappreciated and they leave. So that looks like a normal retirement when we feel that it is not.

What is really concerning now is that the new people coming in are picking up on the tensions even if they are not affected by it and are looking for other jobs. And this could be such a great place to work.

I am not part of that division. We have trouble—people in that division are very wary about speaking to the union because they have gotten the message that they are not supposed to do that. And I am not saying that that comes—that anyone has said that, but it is clearly—it is passed on from person to person. We have to somehow break that and I think the Committee, by asking these questions, might be helping start that conversation.

Mr. AGUILAR. Is your leadership team within the union—do you have someone from that division? A shop steward or—

Ms. THAUL. No.

Mr. AGUILAR. How does it function?

Ms. THAUL. We have governors and stewards in almost all of the divisions. You know, it turns over. Sometimes there is no one from the American Law Division. I think they see that as a career-stopper. That may not be true, but I think they are right.

Mr. AGUILAR. Sure.

Ms. THAUL. So we get people meeting us for coffee offsite or stopping by my office after-hours. I mean, it is almost—it is really disturbing. And it is time to address it.

Mr. AGUILAR. From your position, what is something we can do to address the turnover rate? I hear what you are saying. There are a lot of different factors—

Ms. THAUL. Yes.

Mr. AGUILAR [continuing]. Including a snowball effect of folks leaving as well as general attrition that you indicated. What else can we do to blunt that turnover?

Ms. THAUL. I think that is a role of management. What people have reported to me is that there are real problems in the management and next-level supervisors in that division. And it seems from the outside, it looks like Dr. Mazanec is not engaging with that—not causing it, but not dealing with it.

I think we need to as you said, Representative Davis, this is not a time to talk about personnel issues, but it is time to talk about how we are going to talk about it. And I think—

Mr. AGUILAR. Sure.

Ms. THAUL [continuing]. If you asked us to do that, maybe that would help.

Mr. AGUILAR. Sure.

Director.

Ms. MAZANEC. I am aware of the concerns about the American Law Division. The American Law Division did have a bump-up in attrition rates. I think it was concurrent with a management initiative to rebalance portfolios over there. It was also at a time when our staff was decreasing in numbers.

Unequivocally, I will tell you that the American Law Division produces exceptional work that is held in very high regard. But it is a very difficult job. They are the smallest division, and they have 37 legislative attorneys. Not only do they do the legal analysis on

the legal infrastructure under policy issues, but they also tackle the purely legal issues.

I meet regularly with the management in ALD. I have brought the concerns to them. We have strategized as to how we can address the concerns.

Part of the problem is trying to pin down the root cause though. The head of the American Law Division has taken efforts to improve communications, both within the divisions and with the other divisions, because there is cross-collaboration across the Service.

Mr. AGUILAR. Sure. If I could interrupt and ask one last question, building off what my colleague from Ohio mentioned.

Director, if I define “person of color” as African American, Latino, Asian American, Pacific Islander—that would be my definition.

Let me get to the question. How many direct reports do you have?

Ms. MAZANEC. I think I have about 11 direct reports of which 10 are members of my Senior Management team. All the assistants and associate directors are direct reports to me, as is the Deputy Director of CRS.

Mr. AGUILAR. Okay. And out of those 12, how many people of color as I defined?

Ms. MAZANEC. So you broadened the definition—

Mr. AGUILAR. I did.

Ms. MAZANEC [continuing]. Of “color.” I am doing a quick count in my head. One.

Mr. AGUILAR. Okay. One in the Senior leadership team that reports to me, one who is not Senior level and one among five deputy assistant directors.

Ms. MAZANEC. One.

Mr. AGUILAR. Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

The CHAIRPERSON. Thank you.

Thanks to all the Members and both witnesses.

I think this has been an important hearing for a couple of reasons.

First, the attendance here shows that we have very strong interest in what is going on at CRS.

Two, although there are different viewpoints being presented by CREA and Dr. Mazanec, it is very clear that you are both committed to CRS and have an interest in making this work well. And that, actually, is—if you want to take a look and hope for the future, that is the bottom line that gives me hope for the future.

In terms of follow up, obviously we don’t want to have a public—it would not even be functional to have a public discussion of personnel items or anything of that nature. But I do think that it sounds like there are opportunities for improvement in certain areas.

The American Law Division is something I have run into in one of my other committee assignments, the Judiciary Committee. I will say, the members of the division have performed admirably and provided a great service to the Congress as they—you know, no one is questioning their motives; they are just the analysts.

But it is not the easiest thing in the world to manage a bunch of lawyers or to manage a bunch of Ph.D.s, for that matter, either.

I mean, these are highly talented people who have their own views on how things should work. It is a very different environment than certain other management challenges.

I am wondering if, at some future date—I don't want to set a timeline—we could have an update on progress being made in some of these divisions.

I will say, the idea that, of the 12 direct reports to you, only one is a person of color is a concern. We are strengthened as an organization if we have diverse viewpoints. All of us are products of our experience. And we know that academic analysis has shown that we will actually get better work product if we have different viewpoints approaching that work product. So let's take that very seriously.

I just want to ask a question, because I get complaints—you know, being the Chairperson of this Committee is an interesting experience because you get feedback from Members in a very different way.

The CRS provides experts for committees in analyzing very serious problems that are very complicated. But sometimes Members call over for something that really isn't that complicated. And I will give you an example from my own office recently.

There are a whole bunch of Medicare for All bills that have been introduced, and they are all different and I thought, wouldn't it be great if CRS could just do a quick and dirty, not how are they going to change society, not what they cost, just, here are five bills, and here is how they differ.

After substantial back-and-forth, CRS said they couldn't do that for me, which is fine. I mean, Vox News did it, and I posted Vox News instead. I could have had an intern provide the analysis in the time it took in the back-and-forth between my office and CRS.

Because some of these questions are simple. They are not really complex, sophisticated analysis that is being asked for by Members. And I do get complaints from other Members that they can't get, like, the dumb stuff done.

And I am wondering if there is a way to manage the office so that, not to the detriment of the more sophisticated analysis, which is the guts of your work, but the simple things could be answered for Members.

That is question number one. You don't have to answer now.

I think, to some extent, I remember being on the Hill as a staffer in the 1970s right after CRS was established, and the role played then was very different than today because we have Google now. We don't need to call CRS for some of these answers. And I think that has probably changed the whole nature of what you do.

And yet the authoritative nature of what CRS is, still might call on the Congress to ask you, because you are known to be objective, you know, what are the facts on this simple question, that we don't want to quote Google, we want to quote CRS.

Director Mazanec, can you address that at all?

Ms. MAZANEC. Well, you have identified one of the challenges that we have as a Service, that not only are we trying to balance the highly analytical work, we are also responding to a lot of basic informational questions.



What we try to do when we get a request is call back the requester and really identify what do they need from us, so that we try to meet your needs on your timeline.

I was aware of the request that your office put in. I am sorry that we didn't get you what you needed. The analyst did talk to your staffer——

The CHAIRPERSON. Multiple times.

Ms. MAZANEC [continuing]. Multiple times to try to clarify——

The CHAIRPERSON. And I have the email. I don't want to revisit that, because Vox News——

Ms. MAZANEC. Yes.

The CHAIRPERSON [continuing]. Did what we did, and we posted their report online. It is just a quick and dirty difference, what are the differences in the bills. I don't mean to revisit that.

But the question is, are you set up to deal with Members who have really simple questions that they want CRS to answer?

Ms. MAZANEC. We do have a cadre of research librarians that provide a lot of responses for purely informational requests. They are embedded with the analysts, and they work side-by-side.

We have tried to diversify our staffing structure. We introduced a position of a research assistant, which will hopefully also be able to work with the senior analyst to maybe unload the senior analyst by taking on some of the requests. Obviously, they would have to be reviewed by the senior analyst.

So we have tried different things.

The CHAIRPERSON. Right.

Let me just ask this, in closing the hearing. And without objection we will keep the record open for five legislative days for Members who wish to submit statements or additional questions.

The CHAIRPERSON. But when a toxic work environment develops anywhere, it is really hard to break that up, because sometimes it feeds on itself. It is almost independent.

Dr. Thaul, it sounds like your concern is that may have developed in some of these divisions. It is very difficult to unwind that. But it sounds like CREA is willing to be an ally in unwinding that——

Ms. THAUL. Yes.

The CHAIRPERSON [continuing]. Which is a very positive thing.

So, you know, given that we have challenges—the management challenge of managing people who are as educated and expert as you are is difficult in an environment where resources have not grown and the challenges have. It is all a big challenge and it is not going to be any easier if people don't feel good about the workplace.

I am thankful that you are willing to work together. I am looking forward to sometime in the near future where we can touch base with you as a Committee and kind of get an informal assessment of the growth that you have made.

I would thank you both for your important testimony and note that, you know, it is not every day that CRS makes front-page news.

So, with that, we will close this hearing and, without objection, adjourn. Thanks very much.

[Whereupon, at 11:05 a.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

HEARING  
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION  
“OVERSIGHT OF THE CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE”  
JUNE 20, 2019

MAJORITY QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD FOR THE  
CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE

**1. How many full-time employees are currently employed by CRS?**

**a. How many full-time employees were employed by CRS on this date in the previous fiscal year?**

As of the pay period ending July 6, 2019, CRS employed 595 full-time equivalents (FTEs). In the same pay period in 2018, CRS employed 565 FTEs. On average, CRS has six or fewer employees in a part-time status.

**2. How many contractors does CRS currently retain and what is their scope of work?**

CRS uses a number of contract options to accomplish mission support goals, including:

- CRS engages three contractors to perform internal mail sorting, delivery, priority courier services for congressional delivery, and set-up and breakdown of meeting facilities for programs.
- CRS funds a centralized IT contract that provides the services of 14 contractors for IT Help Desk user support and expert-level support services. CRS also transfers funds to the Office of the Chief Information Officer to support three contractors providing specialized SharePoint, quality assurance, and enterprise software administration support.
- The CRS IRIS IT modernization project employs an average of 12 contractors. They are currently engaged in developing a modern authoring, publishing, and content management system.
- CRS has time-limited contracts with six individuals to deliver specific report(s) or services to address needs that cannot be met using existing CRS staff resources.
- CRS contracts with two companies to provide professional development training to CRS staff.

- CRS employs two editorial support contractors to assist in converting older documents into technically compatible versions that can be made available on the public CRS Reports website.
- At the direction of the House Committee on Appropriations, CRS contracted with the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) to study science and technology assessment requirements of Congress, including the feasibility of reinstating the Office of Technology Assessment. CRS also contracted with Gallup, Inc., to survey congressional customers and assess their satisfaction with our services.
- For many years, CRS has contracted with universities to conduct research projects, called capstones, under the supervision of permanent CRS staff, to supplement the Service's research capacity. Currently, CRS has two capstone projects: one with the University of Michigan to study and report on public and private sector best practices for building a diverse workforce; and, a second with Texas A&M University to study and report on the use of commemorative legislation in Congress.

**3. In 2018, CRS created two working groups-the Workplace Inclusion Working Group and the Diversity Recruitment and Retention Group-to better diversify its workforce.**

- a. Have these working groups reported any findings or made recommendations to CRS management yet? If so, what were they? If not, what is the estimated completion date for their project plans?**

In 2018, both working groups provided key input and direction for the development of initiatives and milestones for the CRS Directional Plan 2019-2023. Actions recommended by the working groups and incorporated into the CRS Operations Plan include:

- Research and identify best practices that can be adopted by CRS to further strengthen its efforts to achieve diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Implement these practices and evaluate their effectiveness.
- Recommend, implement, track, and evaluate the effectiveness of recruitment methods designed to improve the diversity of applicant pools.

- Recommend communication methods for promoting and supporting awareness of diversity and inclusion, and implement methods approved by the Director.
- Develop and deliver at least one diversity and inclusion awareness program or training each year.
- Develop method for gathering feedback from all new hires regarding the recruitment and hiring processes. Implement feedback mechanism and evaluate responses.
- Provide recommendations on training and development opportunities to ensure consideration of diversity and inclusion concerns.

Both groups intend to deliver initial project plans and recommendations by September 30, 2019. Additionally, CRS is implementing complementary activities to further improve diversity and inclusiveness within the organization, to include:

- Scheduling a training session on September 17, 2019, on “Unconscious Bias,” which is open to all staff.
- Contracting with the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan (an inaugural member of the Public Affairs Diversity Alliance) for a graduate-level capstone program to study and produce a report on public and private sector best practices for building a diverse workforce.
- Inviting members of minority bar associations in the DC area to meet with the CRS Director to discuss and solicit recommendations for recruitment and retention of minority attorneys.

**b. Who composes the working groups?**

The working groups are comprised of volunteers from across the CRS workforce, include a representative from the Congressional Research Employees Association (CREA), and are led by a member of the management team.

**c. How often do the working groups meet?**

The working groups generally meet every 30 to 45 days.

CRS also has a representative on the Library’s Diversity and Inclusion Working Group, which meets periodically to develop awareness of diversity best practices and to make recommendations to the Library’s Executive Committee.

4. Similarly, in Director Mazanec's testimony, there is reference to a working group charged with assessing the work model and organizational structure of CRS.

- a. Has this working group reported any findings or made recommendations to CRS management yet? If so, what were they? If not, what is the estimated completion date for its project plans?

This working group was charged with evaluating how CRS should determine and operationalize priorities in its work model, particularly in the research divisions, to ensure the most effective and efficient utilization of its resources to fulfill its statutory responsibilities and best meet the needs of Congress. The mandate and work of this group is intended to be a multi-year effort, with deliverables to be presented to the CRS Director in phases over the next five years, as part of the CRS Directional Plan.

To date, this working group has been engaged in three primary activities:

1. Conceptualizing the four components of the work model: people, work processes, specialized skills, and resources and tools;
2. Leading brown bag sessions with staff in each of the research divisions to solicit input, and priorities and recommendations for the group's work; and,
3. Developing proposals for evaluations (to re-examine past initiatives) and pilot studies (to test new models).

The working group has reported its progress to CRS management at meetings of the Research Policy Council, but has not yet reported any findings nor made recommendations to CRS management. The working group is completing a draft white paper/interim report, including identification of and recommendations for the first set of proposed Evaluations and Pilot Studies for the Director's consideration by September 30, 2019.

- b. Who composes the working group?

The working group has ten members, as follows:

1. Two members of CRS's senior leadership team serve as co-chairs – Michael Moodie, Assistant Director of the Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division (FDT) and Laura Shrestha, Assistant Director of the Domestic Social Policy Division (DSP).
2. Seven analysts and research librarians representing CRS's divisions – American Law Division; Foreign Affairs, Defense, and

Trade Division; Domestic Social Policy Division; Government and Finance Division; Knowledge Services Group; and Resources, Science, and Industry Division. The president of CREA is also a member.

**c. How often does the working group meet?**

Depending on competing congressional priorities, the working group has met, on average, approximately every two weeks. Meetings were more frequent when the working group was conducting brown bag sessions soliciting input from staff in all of the research divisions, but less frequent during holiday periods. With the September deadline in mind, the working group is currently meeting weekly (with a few breaks).

**5. Has CRS conducted any other formal or informal evaluations of the diversity of its workforce? If so, please share the findings.**

The CRS Director and the management team receive demographic data through the Library. CRS also has a representative on the Library's Diversity and Inclusion Working Group, which meets periodically to develop awareness of diversity best practices and to make recommendations to the Library's Executive Committee. Additionally, CREA sends two representatives to the Library's Diversity and Inclusion Working Group.

**6. An analysis of CRS products shows the number of new reports over the last eight years has doubled, from 566 to 1,063. Over the same period of time, the number of updated reports has decreased from 3,515 to 1,994. What's behind these trends?**

Eight years ago, the only published research products CRS produced were the traditional reports (R-series), which ranged in length generally from three to 100 pages, or more. These reports continue to be updated regularly, as needed, to reflect developments in legislation and relevant current events.

Since then, in response to congressional feedback, CRS has added more than a half dozen types of new published research products to its portfolio to meet the needs of Congress. For example, the Service introduced the 2-page "In Focus" and 1000-word "Insights," which contain hyperlinks to relevant source materials. As these new product types were introduced, the practice of updating existing traditional reports was partially supplanted by publication

of a greater number of newer, “shorter form” products. These shorter product lines have allowed CRS to provide Congress with more concise, up-to-date information and analyses on rapidly evolving legislation and domestic and international events.

**7. What is the process for selecting section heads? How long has this process been in place?**

CRS follows the Library of Congress’s Merit Selection Plan, which was issued in 2005, and relevant regulations for all hiring actions, including first-line supervisor positions, such as section heads.

**8. How does CRS evaluate employee performance and accordingly either reward or discipline employees?**

All CRS employees receive annual performance evaluations that conform to the Library’s regulations (LCRs) and directives (LCDs), as well as the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) for bargaining unit employees. Performance is evaluated against expectations for the position established in an employee’s annual performance plan. The supervisor and employee meet and discuss the performance plan before or at the time of the commencement of each evaluation period. Performance appraisal is a continuous process, including progress or midyear reviews, which are usually conducted at least midway through the appraisal period. High performing employees may receive monetary or non-monetary awards in accordance with the Library’s LCRs and/or the CBA. Procedures to address performance that is less than fully successful are found in the Library’s LCRs and the CBA.

**9. Does each research division follow the same editorial review process before dissemination of a CRS product?**

CRS products from all the research divisions generally receive rigorous, multi-layer review before they are published or disseminated. Depending on the product type, the timeline for its completion, and the originating research division, some products may receive additional layers of review, such as editorial review by the CRS Publishing and Editorial Resources Section (PUB), peer review, or design review. The standard review process in CRS requires managers or senior staff to review written products at the section,

division, and Review Office levels, which ensures that the products maintain the Service's high standards of quality, accuracy, and nonpartisanship.

In many instances, CRS authors provide their products to colleagues for peer review before review at the section, division, and Review Office levels. CRS staff conducting the peer review are often experts in the topic of the product – or related topics – and provide constructive feedback to the author, either for the whole product or for portions of the product that relate to the peer reviewer's area of expertise. On occasion, a CRS author may seek review by experts outside of CRS. Additionally, some CRS products are discussed in a preliminary design review at the outset of the writing process. In these instances, the author meets to discuss the proposed topic of the product with other analysts, attorneys, and supervisors, who are able to ask questions, suggest analytical approaches, and offer advice on methodology, format, and organization. Finally, PUB reviews all new CRS Reports before they are published in an effort to reduce any repetition in the product and improve readability.

**10. To what extent do divisions within CRS interact and collaborate with each other to provide comprehensive, authoritative service to Congress?**

CRS research divisions collaborate on products and responses to congressional requests on a regular basis in order to ensure service to Congress meets CRS's core values and to provide comprehensive research and analysis. Staff in separate divisions may co-author CRS published products and confidential memoranda, conduct joint briefings or programs, peer review one another's products, or consult with one another on complicated analyses. Collaborations may occur on a one-time basis in response to a specific request or for a particular product, or may be more regularized and ongoing in response to specific legislation, for example, the National Defense Authorization Act, which involves significant inter-divisional collaboration.

Additionally, ad hoc groups are developed to address issues of interest to Congress that often include participants from multiple research divisions. For example, CRS has a standing cross-divisional Appropriations Team, whose participants create the series of annual CRS reports on each of the 12 regular appropriations bills. There is also significant coordination at the senior management and first-line supervisor levels. Each Monday, the CRS



Director convenes a meeting with senior managers to discuss recent and upcoming work for Congress.

**11. To what extent does CRS interact with other service units to leverage the Library of Congress' existing resources and infrastructure?**

CRS regularly interacts with other service units and Library offices in order to achieve CRS's statutory mission, meet the Library's program goals, and maximize the Library's resources. For example, CRS periodically responds to congressional requests in collaboration with the Law Library, especially concerning questions of foreign law, and works with the Law Library to produce a series of programs for Congress designed to help congressional staff locate laws, regulations, and court decisions. CRS makes use of the Library's physical and digital collections in meeting the needs of Congress.

Additionally, CRS has provided support for ad hoc Library efforts that enhance our service to Congress, such as congressional outreach events and the Congressional Data Challenge. CRS and the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) engage in significant ongoing collaboration on both Congress.gov and CONAN (Constitution of the United States of America: Analysis and Interpretation).

CRS regularly consults with the Library's Office of the General Counsel on employee relations matters, ethics, regulations, and other legal issues. CRS also routinely confers with the Health Services Office, EEO & Diversity Programs, and the Human Capital Directorate on personnel matters, disability and reasonable accommodation or Family and Medical Leave Act issues, and dispute resolution.

CRS relies on the enabling infrastructure of the Library to meet its mission and service goals, including centralized information technology and cybersecurity through OCIO, as well as infrastructure services from the Office of the Chief Operating Officer (OCOO). OCOO also provides internal facility management and personnel security, financial services and contracts, and human resources services.

## MINORITY QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD

**Establishing CRS agency mission****12. How does CRS capture feedback from Congress on their work products?****a. How is that information used?**

CRS captures feedback from Congress primarily in three ways—on an ongoing basis through its daily work in support of Members and congressional committees; through annual hearings and periodic meetings conducted by relevant oversight and appropriations committees; and through periodic surveying of its congressional clients. Additionally, CRS uses web analytics to understand which products on CRS.gov are accessed and how often.

On a daily basis, during the course of interactions and communication with congressional clients, CRS staff convey feedback they receive from both Members and congressional staff to CRS management that is then used to inform decisions about the types of services and products that will best address their needs and preferences. A recent example of incorporating such feedback into CRS services includes assistance and support provided to Members and their staff as they sought to help constituents affected by the wind and flood damage from Tropical Storm Barry. CRS has assembled a suite of disaster-related background products explaining various federal and state programs available to congressional staff serving congressional district and state constituents and their Members, highlighting them on the homepage of CRS.gov.

Additionally, Members and congressional staff will occasionally take the initiative to advise CRS of their opinions on a specific CRS research product or seminar via personal communication to the CRS Director or senior management. Compliments and complaints are also tracked by the Congressional Services Section and reported to CRS management. Feedback offered by Members through the committee hearing process, which is often captured in an oversight and appropriations hearing report or bill language, is invaluable in annually documenting Congress's reaction to CRS products and services over the prior fiscal year and in helping guide and direct the nature and focus of our research programs moving forward.

**b. What are some specific examples of CRS incorporating that feedback into the way CRS operates?**

Recent examples of CRS incorporating feedback into its operations include:

- CRS's response to report language incorporated in the FY2010 appropriations bill (H. R. 111-160) where the Service contracted with the LMI consulting company to conduct a survey of over 1,650 congressional clients to identify both perceived strengths and weaknesses in CRS's research products and services. This survey's findings and recommendations helped inform both the subsequent legislative research planning agenda, as well as decisions about CRS's organizational structure and research product lines and services. For example, building on feedback from the LMI survey expressing congressional interest in more succinct products, CRS introduced in 2015 the "In Focus," which serves as an executive-level briefing document that is limited to two pages in length.
- CRS's response to report language accompanying the FY 2016 Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill (H. Rept. 114-110) wherein Gallup Inc., was contracted to conduct a survey of over 1,400 congressional clients – helping inform development of the CRS 2019-2023 Directional Plan. Results of the 2016 survey reinforced that congressional staff perceive that CRS "lives up" to its core values of confidentiality, objectivity, nonpartisanship, authoritativeness, and timeliness. The results also reinforced that CRS serves the various needs of differing types of clients. For example, CRS provides highly analytic support for committees of jurisdiction, as well as support for Congress's oversight responsibilities and Member's work in response to constituents. The results also specifically indicated a preference for scheduling seminars when Congress is out of session. Accordingly, CRS schedules more of the regularly offered classes and seminars when Congress is out of session. Additionally, results demonstrated client interest in access to events from a distance, so CRS has recorded more events and made them available on CRS.gov. CRS has contracted with Gallup to conduct a follow-up survey of congressional clients beginning in the fall of this year.

**13. What type of IT analytics are used to capture information about CRS work products?**

- a. For example, at GAO they use Google Analytics to see how often certain reports are opened and for how long they remain open. This can help identify what subjects or types of products are more popular than others.**

CRS uses a variety of IT analytics tools—both commercial off-the-shelf software and custom-built applications—to capture information about work products and how they are used. These metrics provide insight on customer interests, allowing the Service to plan work and tailor services to meet congressional needs. Key metrics are posted on the staff intranet, and additional data are available by request. CRS collects data in several main areas, including use of CRS.gov, use of the public CRS reports website, CRS publishing trends, and congressional requests. Tools include web analytics software, a customer relationship management system, an enterprise database for product and author data, and custom software and queries developed within the Service. Specific analytics tools and metrics by category include:

- **CRS.gov:**
  - **WebTrends:** This commercial web-analytics software provides overall data on use of CRS.gov, CRS's website for Congress. Metrics include overall page views, number of visits, time on page, and use of specific pages, content types, and areas of the website.
  - **In-house web-metrics application (product views):** CRS's central product and author database pulls data from web server logs to match CRS.gov website views to CRS product numbers, which allows the Service to analyze website views of products with other data, such as topics and product format. Metrics include total product views over time and views per product.
  - **In-house search logging tool:** The product and author database directly logs searches on CRS.gov, allowing CRS to analyze client interests. Metrics include number of searches over time and specific search terms. Search logs are analyzed to understand client interests and to improve search on the website.
- **CRSReports.congress.gov (public CRS Reports website):**
  - **Adobe Analytics:** This commercial web-analytics software provides data on use of the public site. Public CRS Reports

website metrics include number of page views and visitors; visitors' geographic locations, devices, browsers, and domains; congressional use of the site; and product downloads.

- **Kibana:** This commercial search analytics tool is used in conjunction with the public CRS Reports website to provide analytics on when and what search terms are used on the site and where they originate.

- **Publishing Activity:**

- **SQL queries against central database:** Based on data captured during the publishing process, CRS collects the overall number of new and updated reports and other products over time, including data on different content types (for example, In Focus and Legal Sidebars). These reports are created via SQL queries against the enterprise database and displayed via SharePoint and Excel analytics tools.

- **Congressional Requests:**

- **Client Relationship Management (CRM) system:** This system captures and manages requests from Congress, while ensuring the confidentiality of these requests. The CRM provides confidential data to CRS about custom requests from congressional clients and how those needs were met. It affords confidential data retrieval from the past decade if needed for a limited number of users, allowing analysis of general workflow trends and of service to individual requesters. CRS is available to brief the Committee on the data collected by this system and how it is used.

#### **14. How does CRS capture input from its employees that influences your strategic plan?**

CRS staff have been involved in every aspect of strategic planning, as well as the implementation of the plan. For example, staff engagement has been a critical component in the Service's recent efforts to develop and implement CRS's Directional Plan for 2019-2023, and CRS has provided a number of venues in which staff can contribute. At the beginning of the process, twelve working groups were established to examine a number of issues deemed important to the future direction of the Service. The working groups were comprised of a broad representation of staff from all CRS divisions and offices and were open to any employee wishing to participate. CREA representatives were also provided the opportunity to serve, in their representational capacity, on the working groups of their choice. Although the Directional Plan

has been finalized, the working groups continue to play an important role in the implementation of the various strategic initiatives that were developed.

In addition to the working groups, the Service has conducted numerous brown bag sessions, focus groups, and all-staff meetings to update staff on progress with the plan and to seek their input on proposed initiatives. The CRS Strategic Planning Site, located on the CRS intranet, provides staff with relevant resources related to the CRS Directional Plan, information on planning and implementation, and a place to provide comments and suggestions. Drafts of the plan were published on the site to provide staff an opportunity to review and comment, and the majority of the comments received were incorporated into the final version. Moreover, staff have direct access to all CRS senior management, including the Director, to convey suggestions or concerns regarding the strategic direction of the Service.

Finally, CRS leveraged staff feedback gained through efforts not specifically focused on strategic planning. For example, as part of a Library-wide effort, CRS participated in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). In 2018, more than 60% of CRS staff voluntarily participated in the FEVS. CRS management evaluated the 2018 FEVS data against the 2016 data as it conducted strategic planning efforts, as well as shared the survey results with CRS employees.

### **Strategic Workforce Planning**

#### **15. What process does CRS have in place to determine the critical skills and competences needed to achieve current and future goals?**

- a. When was the last time a workforce gap analysis was done?**
- b. What gaps did CRS identify?**
- c. What is the strategy to address those gaps?**

Workforce gap analysis is an ongoing function within the research divisions and infrastructure units. Divisions and offices prioritize hiring needs, which are vetted centrally by the CRS Director. For example, within the last year, the Foreign Affairs, Defense and Trade Division identified gaps in its capabilities relating to issues associated with emerging technologies, demographic analyses, and global governance issues. Hiring to fill each of these gaps has been completed since the beginning of the current fiscal

year. Other divisions and units have continuously engaged in a similar process. These specific division-level actions are currently supplemented by the efforts underway by the working group on the CRS Work Model, which has as part of its mandate the identification of new capabilities and skill sets that CRS could require moving into the future.

### **Workforce Training**

#### **16.What training is required of a CRS employee who has supervisory responsibilities?**

All supervisors at the Library are required to take the following training:

- Planning and Appraising Performance
- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Labor Relations
- Dealing with Performance Problems
- Tools for Dealing with Conduct Problems
- Structured Interview Training
- Telework Basics for Supervisors
- Web TA Training
- Equal Employment Opportunity Training

Two years ago, the Library's Human Resources Directorate initiated a program aimed primarily at new supervisors. The Supervisory Development Program (SDP) is completed in cohorts, with 18 days of training over the course of ten months. It is a competency-based development program with emphasis in the short term on the newest supervisors in the Library. The longer range goal is to have every supervisor in the Library complete this training.

Every manager and supervisor has an Individual Development Plan (IDP) that details specific developmental opportunities for the performance year.

#### **17.What opportunities for professional development are offered to CRS employees?**

CRS offers a number of internal training opportunities for staff including:

- Reviewing Other's Writing, Critical Thinking and Effective Writing, and Core Presentation Skills (contractor led)

- Congress: An Introduction to Process and Resources (staff led)
- Advanced Legislative Process Institute (staff led)
- Congressional Budget and Appropriations seminars (staff led)
- Writing and Presentations series (staff led)

In addition, CRS has a training budget that supports staff attendance at technical training, seminars, and conferences. Staff may also take advantage of seminars, conferences, and other programs in their area that have no cost.

The Library has special professional development programs that CRS takes advantage of – the Career Development Program (CDP) and the Leadership Development Program (LDP).

Lastly, CRS staff have access to a Library system, SkillPort. This system has thousands of self-paced on-line training courses covering everything from Microsoft skills to project management. The system also contains Books 24/7, a repository for thousands of books for training, leadership development, etc.

**a. How has that changed over time?**

Over time, the variety of CRS training has increased and been tailored to address more specific needs. For example, CRS originally offered only the Core Presentation Skills training, but based on an assessment of congressional and staff needs, the Service enhanced its presentations training to include four advanced courses. CRS also continually evaluates the training that it offers to add different types of training or to revise current training to make it more customized to CRS staff. In addition, increased funding from Congress has enabled the Service to train more staff and offer more in-depth training.

**18. What are some examples of training efforts contributing to improved performance of CRS?**

All training contributes to improved performance for employees, as well as supervisors and senior leaders. CRS continually evaluates training and solicits input from staff on courses and methods. A contract instructor leads one of CRS's most popular courses on writing skills, which has received praise from CRS employees and supervisors.



### **Performance Management**

#### **19. What is the current employee performance management process at CRS?**

All CRS employees receive annual performance evaluations that conform to the Library's established directives and regulations (LCR) and the collective bargaining agreement for bargaining unit employees. Performance is evaluated against expectations for the position established in an employee's annual performance plan. The supervisor and employee meet and discuss the performance plan before or at the time of the commencement of each evaluation period. Performance appraisal is a continuous process, including progress or midyear reviews, which are usually conducted at least midway through the appraisal period. High performing employees may receive monetary or non-monetary awards in accordance with the Library's LCR and/or the CBA. Procedures to address performance that is less than fully successful are found in the Library's regulations and collective bargaining agreement.

##### **a. What safeguards are in place to ensure transparency and fairness in the review process?**

Each CRS employee has a performance plan – which may be accessed online by each employee – that describes the employee's major areas of responsibility and gives detailed examples of the performance expectations that supervisors use to evaluate the employee. The performance plan also allows for supervisors to create specific goals for the employee for the upcoming evaluation period, in the event the employee is tasked with working on a special project. Employees have Individual Development Plans (IDPs) that detail specific developmental opportunities for the performance year. Throughout the evaluation period, supervisors and employees engage in regular interactions regarding performance, and supervisors provide mid-year evaluations to employees to ensure that they are aware of any deficiencies in their performance, which may be corrected before the end of the evaluation period. Supervisors provide written annual reviews for each employee based on the performance plan, as well as engage in a conversation with the employee about the review, and discuss goals and plans for the upcoming evaluation period. This performance management system includes the option for an employee to submit a written statement if the employee disagrees with the review.

Employees may also share concerns about their evaluation with management at higher levels of the organization or with CREA.

**b. Does the system capture feedback from employees about their supervisors and colleagues capturing a full 360-degree view or is it top down from management?**

The Library's performance management system does not call for 360-degree reviews.

**Recruitment and Hiring**

**20. Where does CRS advertise for job openings?**

CRS posts its vacancy announcements on USAjobs.gov, a website listing job opportunities with federal agencies. CRS also advertises vacancies in appropriate targeted media (print, digital, and social), depending on the position. Additionally, vacancy announcements are sent to a host of public policy and other schools, including those that historically serve specific minorities or an especially diverse community. Vacancy announcements are also circulated to all congressional caucuses and professional or subject expertise specific organizations that serve or represent minority communities.

**21. Who is on the hiring panels?**

Hiring panels include a selecting official (typically the supervisor of the posted position) and at least two other subject experts. Hiring panels conform to the Library's Merit Selection Plan, which includes a focus on ensuring that a diverse set of individuals are seated on each panel.

**22. How does your human capital gap analysis influence your recruitment strategy?**

**a. For example if CRS has identified they need more experts in a certain issues area or want to attract more diverse applicants do you engage with universities that are well-known for that particular issue area expertise or have a more diverse student-body?**

For almost two decades, CRS has regularly engaged with historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), and other minority education institutions for recruitment. Every summer, CRS employs a number of interns from these schools and others through the Student Diversity and Inclusion Intern Program (SDIIP). SDIIP allows students to experience and learn about a potential career at CRS – and public service generally – as well as enhancing CRS's visibility to students from HBCUs, HACU, and other institutions.

CRS also targets job vacancies to professional organizations and subject expertise specific groups when the Service is seeking to hire a position that requires such expertise. For example, CRS recently sought to fill a position requiring experience in environmental policy with a focus on Native American or Alaskan Native affairs and sent the vacancy notice to universities and organizations that have programs or members with such relevant expertise.

**23. Does CRS conduct regular surveys to gauge applicant and supervisor satisfaction with the hiring process and its results?**

At present there is no system in place to solicit feedback from job applicants, because applications are managed through OPM's USAjobs.gov website. Input from hiring panels is received on a routine basis.

**Diversity Management**

**24. How does CRS measure diversity?**

The Library provides CRS with self-reported demographic data, which is compared against data for public agencies and private sector entities having similar missions and workforce size.

**25. In what ways is diversity encouraged at CRS?**

CRS is committed to recruiting, developing, and retaining a diverse and inclusive workforce. To that end, the Service has incorporated several initiatives in its Directional Plan, as well as continuing practices, including:

- Utilize a diverse set of individuals on each hiring panel, including at least two subject matter experts, consistent with the Library's Merit Selection Plan.

- Broadly target and advertise job vacancy announcements to groups and organizations that represent affinity groups and universities that historically serve underrepresented populations.
- Research and identify best practices that can be adopted by CRS to further strengthen its efforts to achieve diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Implement these practices and evaluate their effectiveness.
- Recommend, implement, track, and evaluate the effectiveness of recruitment methods designed to improve the diversity of applicant pools.
- Recommend communications methods for promoting and supporting awareness of diversity and inclusion and implement those methods approved by the CRS Director.
- Develop and deliver at least one diversity and inclusion awareness program or training each year.
- Develop method for gathering feedback from all new hires regarding the recruitment and hiring processes. Implement feedback mechanism and evaluate responses.
- Provide recommendations on training and development opportunities to ensure consideration of diversity and inclusion concerns.

**26. Does CRS have mentoring programs for employees?**

For many years, CRS has operated a well-established mentoring program for all new employees. The CRS Mentoring Program matches new staff with experienced CRS colleagues to provide advice and guidance, at times to include “café sessions,” where new employees learn more about CRS operations. New CRS staff may also be provided with an informal mentor by management within the division or unit where the new employee is assigned.

**27. Does CRS have advisory groups made up of employees?**

CRS has several working groups aligned with various aspects of its strategic plan. The working groups include employee volunteers from across the Service. The CRS Director also meets on a regular basis with the president of CREA.

Congressional Research Employees Association

HEARING  
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION  
“OVERSIGHT OF THE CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE”  
JUNE 20, 2019

MAJORITY QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD FOR THE CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH  
EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

***Introduction: CREA Responses to Questions for the Record (QFRs)***

On behalf of Congressional Research Service (CRS) employees, the Congressional Research Employees Association (CREA) is grateful for the opportunity to share information with the Committee. This document provides written responses to questions for the record posed by the Committee following the oversight hearing on June 20, 2019.

CREA is a non-profit organization that officially represents nearly 500 CRS employees who provide direct and indirect service to Congress. CREA is led by elected employee volunteers. The organization is authorized to engage in collective bargaining with CRS and the Library regarding workplace conditions, focusing especially on the quality and fairness of our workplace and matters that may enhance or hinder efforts of employees to provide effective service to Congress. CREA seeks to ensure that the perspectives of employees are solicited, heard, and considered when administrators and managers evaluate how to serve Congress. Where CRS or the Library appear to fall short, CREA seeks to work constructively. In cases when CRS integrates employee input into its decision making, the agency enhances its likelihood of improving. If this feedback is disregarded or the agency's mission suffers, however, CREA is grateful for oversight by Congress and the guidance provided by CRS's congressional committees of jurisdiction to keep the agency on course.

CREA appreciates the important role of congressional oversight. In addition, CREA is grateful for efforts by all Members of this Committee to ensure that CRS operates as a high quality workplace, so that the agency's employees are effectively supported to pursue the agency's mission and to provide outstanding service to Congress. CREA looks forward to working with the Committee, its Members and their staff, CRS, and the Library of Congress to help CRS improve and realize its potential in serving Congress.

***1. Is CRS's employee evaluation process transparent to the employees?***

CRS employees are evaluated in several ways:

- annual performance appraisals, based on demonstrated performance at an employee's current grade level;
- promotion processes, when employees seek to advance along their career ladders of position grades, based on demonstrated performance at the next-higher grade level; and
- the CRS review process, which applies to written products authored by CRS's analysts, attorneys, and research librarians.

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These three venues for evaluating employee work involve distinct criteria and therefore must be discussed separately. Furthermore, for annual appraisals and promotions, the criteria for various kinds of CRS employees differ—for example, an analyst versus an editor or a professional who works in one of CRS’s mission-support offices. Because analysts and legislative attorneys comprise approximately 65% of the CRS workforce, many examples that are highlighted typically relate to these positions. It is important to note, however, that many of the issues discussed below apply broadly to CRS employees.

Unfortunately, CRS has no safe way for employees to raise concerns in these venues. Use of so-called “360-degree feedback” of supervisors and reviewers—that is, asking subordinate and peer colleagues to help identify performance improvement opportunities for managers and reviewers—is not generally undertaken at CRS.

**Annual Performance Appraisals.** Historically, CRS has used position descriptions as a basis for evaluating whether an employee’s performance is considered to be outstanding, commendable, fully successful, minimally successful, or unsatisfactory. Analysts, attorneys, and research librarians are given the opportunity to provide information about their work in the previous year in a “work file” to help supervisors assess performance. However, many of the position descriptions are “one-size-fits-all” in terms of how they apportion expectations for the typical distribution of written, consultative, and other work.

In particular, congressional requesters may need mixes of products and services that differ considerably across diverse subject areas such as transportation, public finance, social policy, and defense. For example, in-person briefings may be more prevalent in some subject areas, while written information may be requested more in others. Furthermore, an analyst who receives many more requests than the average across CRS will typically have less time available for written products that are developed in anticipation of congressional needs and requests (i.e., “anticipatory writing”). Consequently, some level of customization and reasonableness is necessary in the annual performance appraisal process for research staff, so that the criteria for performance in each individual case are informed by workload considerations as well as the product and service mix that Congress requests and needs.

Many CRS managers make necessary adjustments to the appraisal process, and they discuss these matters in advance with employees. These conversations are supposed to occur continuously over the course of a year and more formally at an employee’s midyear review. However, some managers do not discuss these parameters and expectations ahead of time, if at all, with staff. Furthermore, some managers establish idiosyncratic or unreasonable criteria for performance that are independent of the product and service mix that Congress is requesting and needing. The appraisal process also may be inconsistently applied across CRS, when comparing analysts’ subject area portfolios that behave similarly in different parts of CRS. Consequently, many staff are surprised at the lack of transparency into how they will be evaluated. In addition, CREA has received reports that some managers develop quotas or a “check-the-box” approach to performance appraisals (e.g., expecting a minimum number of memoranda or reports to be written). Situations like this are regrettable, because they may misattribute poor performance to well-performing staff and establish perverse incentives for staff to engage in work that is not a priority for Congress. Good management practice would hold that the inter-relationship between employee annual “Performance Plans,” “Individual Development Plans,” and Position Descriptions—and the roles these documents play in employee evaluations—should be made explicit through regular conversation with employees and feedback in advance of annual appraisals. In addition,

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CRS should ensure that these expectations are fair across all parts of CRS. CRS should work with CREA to develop a transparent and fair performance appraisal process.

**Promotion Processes.** Many of the issues that create uncertainty in the context of annual performance appraisals also apply in the CRS promotion process. Despite widespread confusion about the promotion process, CRS has provided almost no written documentation or guidance on the process, nor has it offered substantial information about the criteria for promotion. A search for “promotion” on the relevant CRS intranet site—the “OPS Portal”—yields no hits. A prominent link on the CRS intranet titled “Promotions” is nonfunctional.

In the past, employees’ position descriptions and, for analysts, the *Policy Analysis Grade-Evaluation Guide* (“*Blue Book*”), have played roles in establishing some level of transparency into how staff will be evaluated for promotion. CRS no longer appears to provide written guidelines to staff, however, apart from position descriptions. Unfortunately, the ways in which CRS managers apply position descriptions to particular portfolios and patterns of work are highly opaque to CRS staff. CREA also has received reports that, in effect, the criteria for promotion may vary widely across organizational units and individual managers for what are otherwise similar patterns of work. This has fed widespread perceptions of inconsistency and unfairness.

CRS also in recent years unilaterally changed the criteria for employee promotions without notifying affected CRS staff and CREA, as CRS is required to do by the current collective bargaining agreement. CREA and CRS are currently discussing a grievance that CREA filed in response. CREA hopes to use this opportunity to work with and persuade CRS management to create a more transparent and fair promotion process, so that CRS staff can advance in their expertise and careers, thereby providing enhanced service to Congress.

**CRS Review Process for Written Products.** CRS’s core values of nonpartisanship, objectivity, authoritativeness, timeliness, and confidentiality provide basic parameters for the review of written products for Congress. Because of the frequency with which CRS writes for Congress and the visibility of CRS products, the CRS review process is easier to monitor for potential dysfunction than the CRS appraisal and promotion processes, which are visible only to a small group of CRS employees.

That said, criteria for the CRS review process and the role of each level of review are not generally transparent to CRS analysts, attorneys, and research librarians, and reportedly vary across sections and divisions. For years, CRS’s written guide on the review process, published in 2003, was issued to managers but, inexplicably, not given systematically to analysts, attorneys, and research librarians. CRS has taken a few positive steps in issuing formal policies on particular aspects of the review process, including policies on confidentiality (see discussion in QFR #3) and objectivity (see discussion in QFR #4). However, many problems of inconsistency and lack of transparency remain in the review of written products, in part because of increased caution among some CRS managers and reviewers (see discussion in QFR #4).

2. *In your written testimony, you mention the “increasing caution” among senior staff. Can you elaborate on this?*
  - a. *What impact does this have on the quality and authoritativeness of CRS products?*

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[Please see QFR #4, regarding “impartiality”, for a response that also addresses this question, QFR #2, related to increasing caution. These issues are closely related.]

### ***3. What is your assessment of how Library of Congress and CRS policies are formulated, designed, and implemented?***

Library and CRS policies are aimed at a range of topics. These include, for example, policies that CRS’s work must be nonpartisan, timely, objective, authoritative, and confidential. Other policies outline codes of professional conduct and prohibit harassment and discrimination. Some Library and CRS policies were formally issued after discussion or bargaining between the Library and one or more of the three unions that represent Library employees. Nevertheless, CREA has concerns about how the Library and CRS formulate, design, and implement policies. CREA highlights some examples here.

**Formulation and Design.** Historically, CRS and the Library have frequently formulated and decided to implement policy changes with little or no advance consultation with front-line staff or the Library’s three employee unions, beyond pro-forma announcements. These have constituted lost opportunities. CREA embraces the wisdom of former Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, who in 2006, before he took his position at the Pentagon, reportedly said “I have long believed that the secret to successful leadership of public institutions—especially in leading change—is the involvement in decision-making of those who carry out the institution’s mission: involvement in setting the agenda, involvement in shaping options, involvement in decisions, and involvement in implementation.”<sup>1</sup> In this regard, CRS and the Library have room to improve.

- **CRS Confidentiality Policy.** In 2015, CRS established a detailed policy on confidentiality complete with many “frequently asked questions.” CRS staff and CREA strongly support protecting the confidentiality of CRS’s work with congressional requesters. Nevertheless, CRS executives and managers developed the policy without any input from front-line analysts, attorneys, and research librarians who have insights into situations that managers may not contemplate. As a consequence, some of the policy’s provisions and illustrations seemed naive or misguided. CRS management held two brown-bag sessions with staff to clarify ambiguities, where many of these issues for the first time were heard by the policy’s authors. CRS management said it would revisit the policy with revisions and clarifications, but no revisions or follow-up discussions have been forthcoming in the past four years, notwithstanding an oral commitment to do so.
- **CRS Staff Email Archives.** The Library and CRS also sometimes have taken actions that made employees’ work more difficult and less efficient. One recent example was when the Library decided this past year, with no input from bargaining unit employees and only pro-forma consideration of concerns from CREA, to permanently limit CRS employees’ email archives to only seven years of emails. The Library had the ability to extend the limit beyond seven years for mission-related reasons for specific service units and sub-groups of employees, but chose not to do so in the case of CRS and further chose not to ask employees for input before implementing this policy. The Library appears not to have taken into consideration the wide variety of ongoing uses that email archives play in CRS analysis or the value and uniqueness of the material at issue, particularly given that CRS research employees typically stay at CRS for decades. This is

<sup>1</sup> “How (Not) to Run the Pentagon,” *Washingtonpost.com*, November 12, 2006, at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/10/AR2006111001368.html>.



ironic, given the Library's information preservation mission, and given that computer memory is inexpensive. As a consequence of this new policy, CRS staff must expend and waste considerable time sorting and manually archiving emails that are of continuing usefulness in supporting service to Congress, or else permanently lose access to materials that enhance service to Congress. CREA believes that this Library decision can and should be reversed with respect to CRS, and would appreciate congressional oversight regarding this issue.

- **CRS Solicits Comments on Some Draft Policies.** In 2016, on the suggestion of CREA, CRS began to take steps to publish policies in draft form for staff input before final publication and implementation. From CREA's perspective, this was a positive step, as now CRS management can benefit from staff expertise while retaining its management rights. This approach also obviated the need in many cases for CREA to formally request to bargain on the impact and implementation of the policies, because many staff perspectives had already informed policy formulation and design. The Library could look to CRS for ideas on how to productively engage the workforce while appropriately retaining management rights and discretion. However, CRS has not been consistent in this regard. For example, CRS changed the criteria for employee promotions without notifying affected CRS staff or CREA, as CRS is required to do by the current collective bargaining agreement (see discussion in QFR #2).

**Implementation.** Even when CRS and Library policies are well-designed, they can be implemented inconsistently and, in some cases, unfairly or unevenly, with no safe way for employees to bring concerns to CRS management.

- **CRS Review of Written Products.** CREA has been told that some CRS reviewers and managers act inconsistently with CRS policies and core values, for example, by constraining CRS staff written analysis to what third parties have said about a particular program or policy, rather than allowing more comprehensive and nuanced analysis of issues and trade-offs. CREA is concerned that these management behaviors are limiting the ability of CRS to live up to the agency's mission of providing expert research and analyses according to CRS's core values of being nonpartisan, authoritative, objective, confidential, and timely. (For discussion, see QFR #4.)
- **CRS Policies on Workplace Flexibility.** CREA is aware that CRS historically opposed numerous policies focused on workplace flexibility and staff retention, such as telework, until Congress ultimately weighed in. Despite CREA's efforts in the bargaining process, policies such as telework and credit hours are more limited for CRS than for the rest of the Library of Congress with, in our view, no reasonable justification. Policies like these have important benefits for Congress in terms of CRS's ability to attract and retain skilled staff, as well as staff flexibility to provide timely analysis. CREA and CRS currently are bargaining on a revision to the 2010 telework side agreement.
- **Inconsistent Application of Episodic Offsite Work.** CREA also seeks consistency and fairness in the application of Episodic Offsite Work (EOW), a term CRS uses to refer to unscheduled telework for health, emergency, or certain other reasons. Although CRS has a stated EOW policy, implementation of that policy has not been consistent across the agency. CREA has received several reports of EOW for health reasons or Metro renovations being denied for ad hoc reasons that have differed from division to division and from section to section. CREA believes that CRS can and should use EOW to enable staff to reduce excessive commute times due to planned Metro disruptions, including months-long service shutdowns. CRS has allowed EOW for such reasons in a few cases but, as with EOW for health, CRS's application of this policy has been inconsistently applied across the CRS divisions and offices.

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CREA can play a positive role in these conversations and also encourages CRS and Library management to proactively initiate discussions with the workforce when considering changes to policies. There is a constructive and salutary role for congressional oversight and lawmaking in looking at how CRS and Library of Congress develop and implement policies. Some culture change in this regard at the Library level, in particular, would be a welcome development. CREA would welcome further discussion in this regard with the Committee, CRS, and the Library.

**4. *CRS's mission is to provide "nonpartisan" analysis though we have heard concerns that nonpartisanship is being conflated with "impartiality," to the detriment of CRS products. Do you agree? If so, can you expand on this?***

[Note: this response also addresses QFR #2, relating to "increasing caution" and the potential for adverse effects on the quality and authoritativeness of CRS written products.]

The nonpartisan foundation for CRS's mission is established in law. This foundation is paired with the agency's duty to provide analysis and research for all Members and committees of Congress. Among other things, CRS shall, "without partisan bias" (2 U.S.C. 166(d)),

- advise and assist committees in their analysis, appraisal, and evaluation of legislative proposals, including the advisability of enacting the proposals, estimating their probable results, and evaluating alternative options; and
- upon request, and on CRS's own initiative in anticipation of requests, prepare analyses and research for Members and committees for use in their lawmaking, oversight, and representational work.

CRS has interpreted this and other provisions to call for the agency's work to be *nonpartisan*, and also to be *objective*, *authoritative*, *timely*, and *confidential*. CRS refers to these five italicized terms as its "core values." Accordingly, CRS identifies and evaluates policy options for Congress along with the options' strengths and weaknesses but does not make recommendations. CRS employees and CREA strongly support these values, which have stood the test of time.

CRS management performs an important and legitimate role to ensure these values carry through in CRS's work for Congress. This occurs, for example, in a multi-step review process for reports, memoranda, and other written products by CRS analysts, attorneys, and librarians. CRS analysts and attorneys are in career ladder positions up to GS-15. At upper grade levels, they are recognized experts in their diverse fields and are expected to work independently. The design behind this staffing structure is that Congress should have timely, ready access to subject matter experts, policy analysis, and research in every major area in which Congress works.

A few times in the not-so-recent past, CRS management used other terms to describe CRS work—such as "neutral" and "impartial"—in policy statements, albeit rarely and inconsistently. These two terms generally have been discarded from official policy statements by CRS in the last 10-15 years, however, because the terms can be misinterpreted by CRS staff to imply that all arguments and justifications should be given equal weight independent of facts, logic, and the weight of evidence.

CRS's core values and explicit policy on objectivity are appropriate guides to CRS staff, including its managers and researchers. The CRS policy on objectivity, issued in 2018, states, among other things, that

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CRS communications must avoid bias and the appearance of bias, whether by omission, unstated assumptions, selective issue and data inclusion, methodology, or arrangement of information or analysis, including graphic display. This obligation is not satisfied by presenting "pro" and "con" views or by restating the assertions of particular interest groups; rather, it is CRS's duty to provide clients with data and analytic insights such that they can understand the range of potential ramifications of particular policy choices.

Furthermore, the official position descriptions for upper-graded analysts and attorneys establish the agency's expectation that CRS staff will provide "probing and innovative written analysis" regarding the "development, interpretation, or implementation of sensitive public policies that have long-range national or international significance." These CRS staff also are expected to "apply new hypotheses and concepts to intractable problems; define or clarify issues; synthesize complex variables from several disciplines; assess political and institutional constraints; organize and present policy options and analyze their consequences; and anticipate the direction of policy questions."

CREA has noted in recent years that CRS leadership is increasingly expressing an aversion to *possible* criticism, which has led some CRS managers and reviewers to discourage analysts, attorneys, and librarians from writing about controversial topics and presenting original analyses. CREA believes that this does a disservice to the CRS mission, Members of Congress, and those whom Members represent. When CRS staff attempt to carry out their duties—particularly within written products—CREA has seen increasing caution among some CRS managers and reviewers in ways that sometimes do not uphold CRS's core values of providing objective and authoritative analysis, much less demonstrate responsiveness to the needs of Congress and consistency with CRS position descriptions.

This tendency manifests itself when management perceives an issue to be too controversial to address analytically, or at all. Some CRS managers who review written products prevent analysts from synthesizing new or comprehensive perspectives on issues, and tell them to instead focus only on what others have said. Sometimes when staff outline options, they are told that they are being "prescriptive" when staff provide, without advocacy, a variety of options, analyses of these options' possible consequences, and rationales and explanations of why such options are relevant to Congress. This may particularly occur when CRS staff present options that depart from current practice, conventions, or an individual reviewer's assumptions. In addition, when CRS staff engage in synthesis—for example, review trends on a policy matter or current developments—they are often instructed to exhaustively footnote and attribute to third parties what is supposed to allow for original and multi-disciplinary examination.

This trend is creating a chilling effect that is influencing the design of new products and the review of draft products by peers, supervisors, division management, and the CRS Review Office. Taken in the aggregate, tendencies like these are detrimental to the authoritativeness, objectivity, and quality of CRS written products, because they constrain what CRS analysts feel they can include in the materials they prepare without putting themselves at personal risk in the CRS appraisal, promotion, and review processes. Over time, instead of laying out new hypotheses and concepts or engaging in original syntheses drawing from many fields, analysts and attorneys may face incentives to essentially restate what is in the literature or other sources (e.g., testimony or think tank policy papers). Instead of laying out new policy options, some simply describe existing policies. When analysts take these approaches, they may do so primarily to avoid managerial criticism. The net effect, however, is that Congress is denied access to complex analysis (e.g., original synthesis of multiple points of view and the marriage of contrasting information); policy innovation; new and original approaches to complex policy problems; or new ways of looking at issues before Congress.

Compounding these problems, CRS provides no safe way for staff to bring these concerns to light or to provide feedback on efforts by managers in the review process. Nevertheless, with some creativity, CRS could create a safe means for collecting and using feedback about managers and reviewers as a

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complement to its review process for written products. CREA would be grateful to discuss these matters with the Committee and CRS, identify opportunities to improve, and to develop related processes.

**5. *We understand that CRS management has refused to provide CREA with division-level data from the 2016 and 2018 Federal Employee Viewpoint Surveys. What would you hope to learn from those data?***

A core concern for CREA related to the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) is CRS management's unwillingness to share survey results at the division level with the CRS workforce. This census-type survey is structured to protect anonymity of participating staff. Employee surveys provide a means for identifying potential problem areas and a basis for discussing ways to improve.

By way of background, after many years with no surveys of its own staff, the Library eventually chose in 2016 and 2018 to participate in the FEVS under contract with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). To preserve anonymity and incentivize candid feedback, OPM provided the results to the Library in various levels of aggregation for the Library's analysis and use. OPM did not provide individual responses to the Library. The 2016 survey furthermore allowed staff to provide open-ended responses. In both years, data were collected at the division level. CRS, for example, has 10 divisions and offices that range in size up to 80+ staff. The Library told CREA that its service units, including CRS, could decide how to present results to their staff, including whether to reveal data at the level of CRS divisions and offices.

CREA has repeatedly asked CRS management to make the division/office-level data available so that both managers and staff can look for patterns in responses and constructively discuss how CRS can improve. The reason is simple. If staff believe supervisors listen to concerns in only four of the six research divisions, then CRS's management and employees can together explore reasons why employees do not feel heard. They can seek to understand the perceptions and corresponding opportunities to make CRS a better workplace, in order to better support the agency's mission to serve Congress.

CRS has chosen to not provide this division-level data for reasons that CREA does not understand. When CREA asked why CRS management was not interested in sharing division-level data, CRS management indicated this was according to Library practice, even though the Library told CREA the opposite. CRS management also mentioned purported statistical issues that are not relevant to census-type surveys as justification for not sharing survey results with staff (e.g., concerns about statistical significance, which apply to sample surveys as opposed to census surveys). Failure to share data about staff perceptions certainly raises suspicions and distrust, however.

The survey asked questions that go to the heart of how employees perceive their agencies. Examples include:

1. *I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills in my service/support unit.*
4. *My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment.*
15. *My performance appraisal is a fair reflection of my performance.*
19. *In my most recent performance appraisal, I understood what I had to do to be rated at different performance levels (for example, Fully Successful, Outstanding).*
22. *Promotions in my work unit are based on merit.*

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*34. Policies and programs promote diversity in the workplace (for example, recruiting minorities and women, training in awareness of diversity issues, mentoring).*

*41. I believe the results of this survey will be used to make the Library a better place to work.*

*51. I have trust and confidence in my supervisor.*

*53. In my service/support unit, senior leaders generate high levels of motivation and commitment in the workforce.*

The 2016 data revealed high dissatisfaction among CRS staff about, among other things, agency attention to diversity and inclusion, performance by senior leadership, and quality of internal communications. In response, the CRS Director set up advisory groups to recommend ways to address the first and third of those concerns. In CREA's view, that is insufficient for improving the quality of CRS as a workplace and enhancing the agency's mission effectiveness.

The FEVS data alone will not diagnose problems and provide solutions. Survey data are one tool to identify possible problems and opportunities to explore them. The next steps would be for CRS employees and CREA to work with management to understand the underlying concerns and work to find solutions that would better support employees, managers, and the CRS mission. CREA sees no reasonable justification for the Library and CRS to hide this data from their own staff. Furthermore, CREA believes the Committee could benefit by looking at this data at the division level and be better positioned to assess its legislative and oversight options.

CREA respectfully suggests that the Committee direct the Library and CRS to provide to the Committee all documents received from the Office of Personnel Management covering the two iterations of the FEVS, administered in 2016 and 2018. These documents should include but not be limited to data at the Library, CRS, and CRS division levels and, additionally, the 2016 survey's open-ended responses. Furthermore, CREA respectfully requests that the Committee direct the Library and CRS to share division-level data for the 2016 and 2018 surveys with all Library employees, so that employees and their union representatives may constructively engage with the Library's service units about potential improvement opportunities.

***6. In your written testimony, you mention the need to create a "fair and hospitable work environment." In what ways is CRS currently not fostering a "fair and hospitable work environment?"***

CREA seeks to ensure that CRS is a quality and fair workplace, so that staff can devote their full attention to serving Congress. These aims should be just as important for CRS leadership. A fair and hospitable work environment has multiple dimensions, including but not limited to the topics identified below. Across dimensions like these, CREA hopes to work with CRS and the Library to address areas where problems surface and improvements are possible. CREA believes that Congress and this Committee can play an important role in helping CRS to seize these opportunities and make many improvements.

***Workforce Flexibilities.*** A fair and hospitable work environment is one in which CRS employees are effectively supported to pursue the agency's mission, including with workforce flexibilities that promote employee recruitment and retention. For example, policies such as telework and episodic offsite work (EOW) help attract and retain CRS's staff, because they reduce wasteful commute times, facilitate family-friendly work schedules, provide flexibility to respond to short congressional deadlines, and ease employees through unforeseen health challenges.

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- The current telework agreement between CRS and CREA requires that staff be available to leave their telework site and come to Capitol Hill within two hours if required (e.g., for a briefing). The agreement also incorporates flexibility that provides for staff or management to shift a given employee's telework day if work needs so require. Today, the wider Library permits many of its employees to telework twice a week. Staff at CRS's sister legislative branch agency, the Government Accountability Office (GAO), have far greater telework options. CREA believes—for the reasons set out in the CREA-CRS telework agreement, and given the nature of CRS work—that it would be beneficial to CRS staff, Congress, CRS, and the Library to permit CRS staff to telework up to two days a week. CREA and CRS are currently bargaining on a revision to the 2010 telework side agreement.
- Part of fairness is having transparent policies and procedures and applying them in an impartial and equitable manner. Unfortunately, this is not always the case at CRS, notably in the application of EOW and telework policies. CREA has received multiple reports that implementation has not been consistent across CRS. Some staff believe they are being unfairly penalized compared to the rest of their CRS colleagues, because some managers dislike these flexibilities. (See also QFR #3.)

**Performance and Promotion Expectations.** A fair and hospitable work environment is one in which employees and managers have a shared understanding of performance and promotion expectations. As discussed in QFR #1, CREA has substantial concerns about CRS's attention to fairness, transparency, and consistency associated with annual performance appraisals, promotion processes, and the CRS review process for written products. If employees believe that some CRS managers, reviewers, and offices allow or actively promote inequities in application of these processes, employees' morale suffers, and many choose to leave CRS. Clearly, not every employee deserves an outstanding performance appraisal or a promotion every time an employee would like one. That is not the issue, however. The issue is that CRS has devoted insufficient attention to establishing a fair work environment and has allowed poor management to continue, with no way for employees to safely raise concerns about these practices.

**Safely Identifying Problems and Avoiding Toxic Work Environments.** A fair and hospitable work environment is one in which concerns can be raised safely, are welcomed, and are taken seriously, because the concerns may represent opportunities to improve service to Congress. CRS has considerable room to improve along these lines.

- As discussed in QFR #5, CRS has decided that its employees should not see division-level results of the employees' own perceptions of CRS as a workplace. Failure to share data about staff perceptions certainly raises suspicions and distrust, and it is not conducive to deliberations and problem solving.
- Failure to establish a fair and hospitable work environment has had negative implications for CRS's ability to deliver on its mission. Unnecessarily high attrition rates, including extreme attrition rates in CRS's American Law Division (ALD; see QFR #7), serve as an indicator in this regard. CREA has heard CRS leadership argue that an absence of formal grievances indicates an absence of problems. As it happens, poor management practice is frequently not legally grievable. In cases where management behavior may be grievable, employees fear management retaliation and frequently do not come forward.
- Furthermore, CRS's poorly-developed capacity to safely identify and seriously look into reports of problems exposes the agency to risks of bullying, favoritism, retaliation, and discrimination. At times, CREA has received credible reports of these phenomena very late in the process, long after CRS should have detected them. Inhospitable or hostile conditions lower morale, make it

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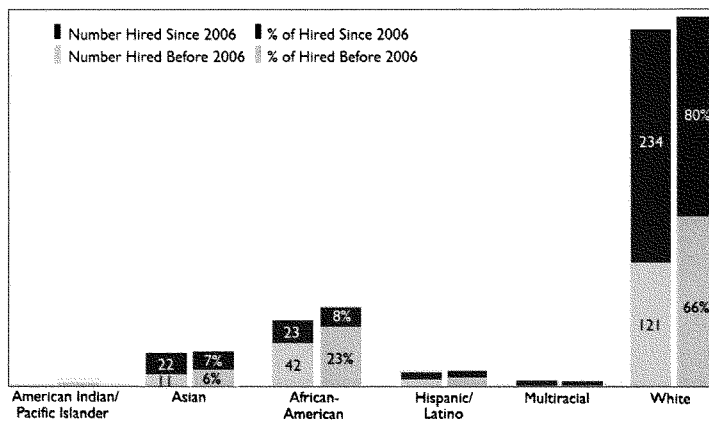
difficult to retain highly qualified experts, and can affect the independence and quality of CRS analysis and research. Moreover, staff can be vulnerable, in part, because CRS's review process can be used as a weapon against disfavored employees who suddenly are cited for having "writing problems" notwithstanding years of prior successful service.

**Diverse and Inclusive Workforce.** A fair and hospitable work environment is one in which an agency makes efforts to recruit and retain a diverse workforce. It also is one in which employees have genuine opportunities to advance their expertise and careers, so that CRS may more effectively serve Congress. As noted in CREA's written testimony, CRS has no strategy to pursue a diverse and inclusive workforce, including for employees who are from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups and those with disabilities. There have been no fruitful discussions between the Library, CRS, and CREA about how to identify and address diversity and inclusion concerns. The Library's three employee unions have shared these concern with the Librarian and believe that we can help make the Library's efforts more focused.

CRS is becoming less diverse, despite having shifted to a Merit Selection Plan for hiring personnel. The Library launched this plan in June 2005 following the settlement of the Cook class action racial discrimination lawsuit, with an objective to "promote fairness, diversity, and integrity." Since 2006, 80% (234) of those hired in CRS were White, up from 66% (121) of all people hired in CRS before the Merit Selection Plan was established (Figure 1). In contrast, 8% (23) of those hired since 2006 were African-American, down from 23% (42) of all people who joined CRS before 2006. Hiring rates among other racial groups remain low, but have nominally improved. Since 2006, for example, Asians represented 7% (22) of those hired, up from 6% (11) of those hired before 2006. Factors that limit the effectiveness of the merit selection plan include:

- a lack of a diversity and inclusion plan,
- insufficient relationships with minority-serving professional organizations and institutions,
- inadequate and incoherent use of diversity programs, and
- a lack of diversity within leadership positions and on employee hiring panels.

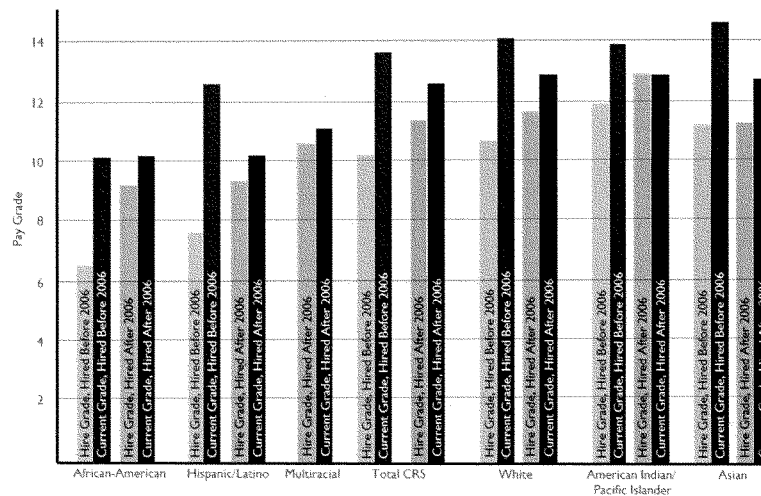
**Figure 1: CRS Workforce by Race and Hiring Date, as of 2018**



Source: Created by CREA from data provided by the Library Office of General Counsel, December 3, 2018.

There are significant disparities in CRS among racial groups, particularly regarding upward mobility (Figure 2). Since 2006, the average CRS staff member was hired at GS-11 (\$68,036), and the average CRS employee is at GS-13 (\$96,970). Starting and ending salaries varied, however, according to race and year hired. On average, those with greater seniority (hired before 2006), were earning higher wages than their highest paid counterparts hired after them. This phenomenon was true for all racial groups except African-Americans. Irrespective of when African-Americans joined CRS, their average salary peaked at \$61,926 (GS-10). On average, African-Americans hired after 2006 entered CRS at a higher grade (GS-9, \$56,233) than their predecessors (GS-7, \$45,972) but their peak salaries still remained below the average entering salary of all CRS employees. Peak salaries for Hispanics also lie below the average entering salary of all CRS employees. Insufficient opportunities for upward mobility, and related limits to increases in compensation, were key reasons for the original filing of the Cook class action lawsuit.

**Figure 2: Average Grade of CRS Employees by Racial Group and Year Hired**



Source: Created by CREA from data provided by the Library Office of General Counsel, December 3, 2018.

Salaries are strongly correlated by job type. Analysts and attorneys, for example, are among the highest paid employees in CRS and accounted for 65% of the total workforce at the end of 2018. Whites comprised the vast majority (85%) of employees in this job category, followed by Asians (7%), African-Americans (4%), Hispanics/Latinos (2%), American Indians/Pacific Islanders (1%), and those belonging to more than one racial group (1%). Disparities among the racial categories also existed according to age within these prominent positions. Whereas the number of younger (44 years and younger) analysts and attorneys outnumbered their older counterparts (45 years and older) among Whites and Asians, the inverse is true for African-Americans and Hispanics/Latinos. This phenomenon reinforces the data illustrating a sluggish hiring rate for African-Americans and Hispanics/Latinos who also face lower earning capacity.



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- 7. The abnormally high turnover rate in the American Law Division relative to other CRS sections is concerning. What explains it?**
- a. How can the Committee on House Administration address it?**
- b. Does the American Law Division have representation among CREA's officers, governors, or stewards?**

The American Law Division (ALD) is one of CRS's major research divisions. The staff in ALD who directly serve Congress include legislative attorneys and legal librarians. CRS employees have historically remained at CRS for many years and even decades, amassing expertise and earning the trust of committees and Member offices to deliver on the CRS mission. The situation in ALD has been very different, however.

Under current ALD management and CRS leadership, the division has suffered in the last few years from a toxic work environment that has resulted in extremely high rates of attrition (Table 1). There has been a massive hemorrhaging of expertise that has had adverse effects on service to Congress, both in terms of legal analysis and in ALD's collaboration with other research divisions. While ALD's annual attrition ranged from 2% to 6% from FY2013-FY2015, it skyrocketed to 20% in FY2016, 20% FY2017, and 17% in FY2018. For FY2019, the attrition rate through the first seven months of the fiscal year (April 2019) was already 17%. With further separations having occurred from April 2019 through mid-July 2019, the ALD attrition rate for FY2019 now exceeds 24%, and the fiscal year is not yet over.

**Table 1: Year-on-Year Attrition Rates for CRS Legislative Attorneys and Analysts**

CRS Research Division	Year-on-Year Attrition Rate for CRS Legislative Attorneys and Analysts							
	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019 (April, partial-year)	Average FY2016-FY2019 (partial)
American Law Division (ALD)	5.6%	2.5%	5.1%	20.0%	20.0%	17.1%	17.1%	18.6%
Domestic Social Policy Division (DSP)	14.3%	6.3%	7.9%	9.7%	15.3%	7.4%	-1.7%	7.7%
Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division (FDT)	5.6%	1.5%	8.7%	10.4%	6.3%	4.7%	0.0%	5.4%
Government & Finance Division (G&F)	11.5%	3.6%	3.5%	6.8%	10.2%	-1.8%	1.7%	4.5%
Resources, Science, and Industry Division (RSI)	6.3%	8.2%	6.9%	9.1%	11.1%	0.0%	6.3%	6.6%

Source: CREA calculations from data provided by CRS management.

Notes: A negative attrition rate may occur when a bargaining unit employee temporarily exits the bargaining unit to become an acting manager and then returns the following year to the bargaining unit. The table excludes CRS's sixth research division, the Knowledge Services Group, which comprises mostly librarians.

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This loss of legal expertise for Congress is alarming. As of April 2019, 54.1% of ALD's legislative attorneys have worked at CRS 3.5 or fewer years. That rate was far higher in absolute terms than any of CRS's five research divisions. Furthermore, in financial terms, the attrition is hugely wasteful, particularly given the time and effort that is invested in recruiting and hiring employees and building their expertise. ALD's attrition rate markedly contrasts with CRS's other research divisions. While a CRS division might expect an occasional retirement wave, the pattern in ALD has been persistent year-over-year.

The toxic work environment in ALD appears to stem from numerous manifestations of mismanagement that adversely affect legislative attorneys and their ability to serve Congress. However, it has been difficult for CREA to discern the full picture. CREA has a few members from ALD, but none serve on CREA's Board of Governors or among our stewards or officers. CREA has been told that ALD attorneys are warned to avoid union activity. CREA's chief steward has assisted more ALD staff with problems with their supervisors than in any other division. Many former and current ALD lawyers talk about an atmosphere of fear and distrust. It is perceived as dangerous to come forward with concerns through normal management channels and through CREA. CREA has received numerous reports that ALD's managers have used the review process for CRS written products and the annual performance appraisal process to target and push out certain staff, even after these staff have provided years of outstanding, commendable, and fully successful service to Congress.

Pervasive mismanagement affects more than ALD's provision of legal analysis for Congress; it also inhibits multidisciplinary, crosscutting analysis and collaboration between ALD's legislative attorneys and other divisions' analysts. CREA has heard a number of accounts where ALD management discouraged such multidisciplinary teamwork, especially including written products, and was not responsive to needs for timely review to meet congressional deadlines.

This work environment has had clear adverse effects on fulfilling the CRS mission. Despite repeated outreach by employees and CREA, CRS management has refused to recognize a problem. CREA would welcome the opportunity to share further information with the Committee about what we know of this situation. CREA also respectfully urges the Committee to engage an unbiased body, such as the Library of Congress Office of the Inspector General (OIG), to corroborate ALD's rate of attrition, assess ALD's work environment, and evaluate the consequences of ALD's dysfunctional work environment on CRS's service to Congress. The OIG should evaluate and recommend actions that would halt corrosive and harmful management practices in ALD, as well as recommend processes and safeguards to prevent such dysfunction from occurring in the future. Importantly, the OIG can request and examine documents that might be otherwise privileged (i.e., attorney-client) or confidential, and provide the Committee information in redacted or summarized form. CREA also respectfully suggests that the FEVS data at the division level, including open-ended responses from the 2016 survey, could shed light on organizational problems in certain divisions such as ALD and help the OIG to formulate recommendations.

**8. Congress asks that CRS provide both detailed and sophisticated analysis of complex issues but also quick and distilled examinations of other issues that are easily understandable. How could Congress and the Committee on House Administration better communicate with the analysts, librarians, and staff of CRS on the desired mix of these types of services?**

**a. Is CRS sufficiently resourced and correctly organized to handle this mix of services and products?**

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Congress and the Committee have a variety of means to communicate with the analysts, attorneys, research librarians, and other CRS staff about the mix of services that is desired in specific circumstances and provided by CRS more generally. As described below, the specific mix that CRS develops in a given policy area is driven by requested and anticipated needs for a wide variety of actual and potential congressional clients.

CRS assists all congressional requesters—committees, Members, and their staff—with nonpartisan, objective, authoritative, timely, and confidential research and analysis. CRS analysts, attorneys, and research librarians do this work across the full spectrum of Congress’s lawmaking, oversight, and representational responsibilities. Some CRS work is done in direct response to specific requests, and other work is anticipatory of congressional needs and requests. These two categories of work relate closely to each other. Anticipatory products may generate requests, while ongoing and potential future developments—in Congress, the federal government, Nation, and world—may generate related requests and prompt CRS to develop anticipatory products.

In general, responses to individual requests are customized; that is, tailored to meet the particular needs of a requester. The brevity or depth of a response typically is determined by the nature of the congressional request, the time available before a deadline, and CRS resources. Much of CRS’s work comes by way of requests, in which CRS analysts, attorneys, and librarians discuss directly with congressional requesters the parameters and focus of a particular query, the type and format of the response to be provided by CRS, and a timeline for a CRS response. While many request responses are negotiated within a single interaction with congressional staff, this process sometimes requires a series of conversations, particularly when the staffer making the request is acting on behalf of a more senior staffer or a Member of Congress. The position descriptions for these CRS staff establish an expectation that they routinely work without close managerial supervision throughout these interactions. In practice, the precise ways in which CRS responses are negotiated may vary by subject area and CRS division.

Time-sensitive requests are very frequent. Many of these requests require in-depth expertise on the part of CRS staff in order to provide timely, expert, and responsive research and analysis. Often, CRS staff must respond on the spot or within hours. In such instances, the response may take the form of telephone consultations, impromptu meetings, emails, and provision of selected CRS and third-party materials. CRS management may become involved in certain circumstances; for example, if the request involves substantial cross-divisional work, if CRS staff and managers feel an initial request cannot be undertaken under CRS policy (e.g., research on other Members); or if the initial request is too extensive given the time available. Current CRS policy generally holds that constituent inquiries cannot be “rush” congressional requests.

CRS also has designed a variety of formally published products to cater to topics of ongoing or anticipatory interest to Congress. These range from “Insights”—brief 1,000 word products on a focal topic—to two-page “In Focus” products, to CRS reports. CRS reports include “In Brief” reports of 12 or fewer pages and longer pieces known simply as CRS Reports. CRS reports are available in PDF and as html files, where links in the table of contents take a requester immediately to the relevant section. These products are designed to provide both brief and more in-depth or comprehensive treatment of topics. CRS also offers a variety of digital products, including podcasts, videos, and a growing number of graphical, stand-alone products.

These resources are facilitated by the services of a variety of CRS staff who operate behind the scenes to ensure the production, availability, quality, and reliability of CRS products. These personnel range from editors, to graphics and mapping experts, to information technology experts, to legislative analysis

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specialists (including the staff who run [crs.gov](http://crs.gov) and [congress.gov](http://congress.gov)), as well as procurement and human resources staff.

CRS has a functionally diverse and highly skilled staff. Analysts, attorneys, and librarians operate with substantial independence, and the bulk of their work involves direct interaction with congressional clients. As noted in QFR #4, CRS analysts and attorneys are in career ladder positions up to GS-15. At upper grade levels, they are recognized experts in their diverse fields. The intent behind this staffing structure is that Congress should have timely, ready access to subject matter experts in every major area in which Congress works. Simultaneous requests from multiple congressional requesters may at times exceed the capacity of a CRS researcher to immediately provide substantive responses. In such instances, CRS staff might negotiate deadlines and assess how to balance workload.

CRS staff produce a mix of products and services based on constant engagement with congressional clients and contacts inside and outside of government. In addition, CRS occasionally surveys Members and congressional staff about how CRS can address their needs for nonpartisan research and analysis. Sometimes, these surveys are undertaken pursuant to directives from CRS's committees of jurisdiction.

These varied information sources make clear that (1) Congress needs a breadth of products and services, including direct contacts and both longer and shorter written pieces; and (2) the precise needs may vary across subject areas, among requesters, and over time. Nevertheless, as noted in response to QFR #4, CREA has seen increasing caution among CRS leadership and some of its management in ways that do not uphold CRS's core values.

In light of these considerations, CREA sees a role for Congress and the Committee to reiterate expectations that CRS shall: (1) be responsive to the breadth of congressional needs; (2) continue to operate in a nimble, decentralized way that allows CRS staff to be responsive to congressional needs while adhering to core values of nonpartisanship, objectivity, authoritativeness, timeliness, and confidentiality; and (3) establish safe mechanisms for staff to raise concerns about CRS management's practices in following these guidelines.

With regard to CRS organization and resources, CREA is grateful for continued interest in CRS's capacity. CRS experienced a gradual draw-down in the number of analysts and librarians up through the end of FY2017. Since then, CRS has gradually staffed up to FY2012 levels, more or less.

**Resources:** CREA takes no position on the proper resource level for CRS or other legislative branch support capacities. That is Congress's prerogative and sole decision to make. At the same time, we note that CRS is frequently only "one person deep" in many subject areas, and in some subject areas has no staff. This means, for example, that when CRS experiences attrition, the agency may experience gaps in subject matter coverage. This also means that some individual CRS staff may become chronically overworked, and the responsiveness of CRS may suffer compared to situations where resource levels for research staff are higher.

**Organization:** CREA believes that the way in which CRS organizes itself and its activities is worthy of oversight and examination, and that some current aspects of its organization should be reconsidered. Many of these topics relate to how efficiently CRS is operating and using its resources.

- **Section Research Manager (SRM) Positions.** Analysts and attorneys are supervised by Section Research Managers (SRMs). The SRM position description replaced the previous Section Head position. Under the prior Section Head model, this immediate supervisory level of management was filled by senior analysts (usually specialists) on a sometimes-rotating, but often long-term basis. The value of this model was that section supervisors had real applied work experience in directly responding to congressional requests and in authoring CRS products. Many current

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SRMs do not have such experience, and are hired on the basis of their managerial experience and general issue expertise. SRMs also are assigned a variety of tasks that are not related to reviewing the writing of analysts and attorneys. CREA is concerned that some of these additional tasks compete for managers' time with respect to reviewing the writing of staff and otherwise supporting responses to Congress, in some cases by affecting the timeliness of review and responsiveness to congressional requests for written memoranda and reports. CREA is also concerned that the time required for these tasks may crowd out other duties, such as working with first-year, probationary staff to position them to succeed at CRS.

- **Staff Composition.** CRS sometimes makes presentations about the composition of its staffing, including categories of executives and managers, analysts and attorneys, librarians, research assistants, and mission-support staff. CREA suggests that the Committee ask for information from CRS to see how resources have been allocated internally and over time. Specifically, the Committee could ask for data in these categories, broken down by CRS division or office, across a number of fiscal years. Notably, CRS's organic authorizing statute provides for senior specialist and specialist positions at the senior level (2 U.S.C. 166(c) and 166(e)), to provide the highest levels of expertise to Congress in a variety of specialist fields. Over a decade ago, CRS discontinued hiring and promoting congressional client-facing analysts and attorneys to these positions. Only a few of these staff remain with CRS, and they are not being replaced. Rather, these senior level positions have been reserved for CRS executives, including the heads of CRS mission support functions, none of whom generally write reports or provide direct service to Congress.
- **Review Process for Written Products.** Until the mid-2000s, the CRS review process for written products had five stages that applied in most cases: (1) at the option of a CRS author, a "peer review" by a CRS colleague; (2) review at the level of a CRS section ("section review"); (3) review at the level of a CRS division ("division review"); (4) final substantive review by the CRS Review Office; and (5) a round of minor edits before a product was posted on the CRS.gov website. Since then, CRS management gradually has added multiple additional layers. These include mandatory "editorial review" at some point during certain products' drafting or writing, where CRS editors consult with authors about written CRS reports; "design review" in advance of a product's writing, where division managers convene a meeting to discuss a potential product; and even "pre-design review review" to discuss what manner of design review is desired by managers. These processes have substantially increased workload for CRS staff. Unfortunately, CRS management generally has not consulted with employees before deciding to introduce these additional layers and make them mandatory. Furthermore, CRS management does not seek any systematic feedback from employees on these processes to identify opportunities for improvement, streamlining, or making some of the newer processes optional in certain cases. CREA has received many reports that the added processes add little or no value in some cases while adversely affecting the agency's productivity.
- **Information Technology (IT) Support.** CRS used to have an organizational unit focused on information technology (IT), but that unit was transferred to the Library as part of "centralization" under the Library's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO). The former CRS unit reportedly was far advanced in capacity compared to the rest of the Library. Many CRS staff, including former CRS IT staff, feared that the transfer might adversely affect CRS's operations, by siphoning resources away from CRS's IT and reducing the pace of innovation at CRS. In addition, centralization has made the relationship between CRS employees and CRS's IT more distant, and the Library appears to have no formal means of incorporating the "voice of the internal customer" into its priorities and decision making. Little is known at the CRS employee level about this topic, but CREA has been told anecdotally that some resources have

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been reallocated away from CRS with potential adverse effects for CRS staff and thereby CRS service to Congress. The Committee may receive more systematic information about IT support for CRS than is available to CREA. Nevertheless, addressing several questions to CRS and the Library might facilitate further oversight options for the Committee.

- Has the Library's OCIO lived up to all of its service level agreement (SLA) commitments? How is this reported to CRS?
- Has the reorganization had any unintended consequences?
- Has the reorganization resulted in the need for remaining CRS staff to allocate more time to IT and project management, such as with the IRIS project (i.e., including replacement for CRS's authoring and publishing system)?
- What issues related to CRS's IT projects has the new senior advisor to the CRS Director been tasked to address? Has creation of this position and the reallocation of other managers' time to IT-related tasks undermined some of the original rationale for the centralization?
- Do CRS and the Library have plans to more systematically include the voice of the internal customer in their problem-definition, analysis of alternatives, and priority-setting for IT initiatives?

