

# CONGRESSIONAL MODERNIZATION: A ROADMAP FOR THE FUTURE

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## HEARING BEFORE THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE MODERNIZATION OF CONGRESS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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# CONGRESSIONAL MODERNIZATION: A ROADMAP FOR THE FUTURE

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2022

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE MODERNIZATION OF  
CONGRESS,  
*Washington, DC*

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:05 a.m., in Room 210, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Derek Kilmer [chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Kilmer, Cleaver, Lofgren, Perlmutter, Phillips, Williams, Timmons, Davis, Latta, Reschenthaler, Van Duyne, and Joyce.

The Chairman. Okay. The committee will come to order. Without objection, the chair is authorized to declare a recess of the committee at any time. I now recognize myself for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

So, back in March of 2019, this committee held its very first hearing. The hearing's focus was on past reform efforts, so it is only fitting that as we meet today for the committee's last hearing our focus is on future reform efforts. We have come full circle.

It is hard to believe that this committee will soon be one of those past reform efforts that we looked to for guidance and inspiration just 3.5 years ago. My hope is that we have given future reformers plenty to think about, not only in terms of the recommendations that we have passed, but in terms of how we have worked.

I can't emphasize enough how the processes and norms that we have developed along the way have been key to our success as a committee. I think that our work methods deserve just as much attention as our work product. And I really hope future reformers take note of that because more folks recognize that it is possible for Democrats and Republicans to find areas of agreement, to collaborate in good faith, and to produce results on behalf of the American people the better.

One of the biggest lessons I have learned over the past 3.5 years is that if we want things to work differently, we have to be willing to do things differently. I know it is hard to try new things in a tradition-bound institution like Congress, but experimenting is absolutely essential if we are going to change anything.

We didn't know if some of the things our committee tried would work. We were willing to experiment and find out. In fact, the reason that we are sitting here today in a roundtable format where we can all look each other in the eye and engage in substantive discussion is because the committee decided to try something new.

(1)

Over 1 year ago, when the committee held its first roundtable hearing, we had no idea how it would go, but we took a chance and we haven't returned to the dais since, except when we had technical difficulties one time.

Modernization requires the willingness to innovate, and that is what this committee has done from day one. I recall being at an Armed Forces Day dinner in my district a few years back and sitting with a senior naval officer. And he said, how is it going in Congress? And I said, man, it feels like trying to turn a battleship. He said, well, Derek, I used to captain a battleship. And he said, here is what I can tell you, targeted and strategic course correction over time make a really big difference.

I say that because change doesn't happen overnight, especially in a place like Congress, but I think that the small changes over time can lead to the kind of cultural shifts that make a big difference. What started as a 1-year sprint for this committee turned into a 4-year marathon, and I am grateful that we were given the time to do the work necessary to create long-term change. In fact, we are already seeing our hard work pay off as more than half of our recommendations have either been fully or partially implemented.

This success is due in no small part to the hard work of the committee's implementation partners, including the CAO, who is with us today. By working closely with the CAO, the House Clerk, the Architect of the Capitol, among others, the committee was able to draft workable recommendations that our partners could successfully implement. This unique approach to developing and implementing recommendations is another committee innovation.

While some of our successes are already apparent, there is a lot of work ahead, and it won't always be easy to determine whether some of our recommendations made a difference. Measuring success is tough when we lack the hard data we need to confidently claim that something actually did what it was supposed to do, but it is not impossible, and one of our witnesses today is going to help us think creatively about how to gauge the impact of our work over time.

I frequently made the point that modernization should happen as a matter of course. Businesses and organizations build innovation and process improvement into their operations because they understand that evolving with the times is necessary in order to remain relevant.

By relegating reform to something it does every few decades or so, Congress is consistently playing catchup. Outdated technology and processes slow the institution down, and that is a disservice to the American people. There are, however, ways Congress can make modernization an ongoing rather than occasional effort, and one of our witnesses today is going to present us with a few potential options for continuing the work that this committee started.

The committee will use its—this is the wonky part. The committee will use its rules that allow for a more flexible hearing format that encourages discussion and the civil exchange of ideas and opinions. So in accordance with clause 2(j) of House rule XI, we will allow up to 30 minutes of extended questioning per witness and, without objection, time will not be strictly segregated between the witnesses, which will allow for extended back and forth exchanges

between members and the witnesses. Vice Chair Timmons and I will manage the time to ensure that every member has a full opportunity to participate.

Additionally, members who wish to claim their individual 5 minutes to question each witness pursuant to clause 2(j)(2) of rule 11 will be permitted to do so following the period of—

Okay. With that out of the way, I would like to invite Vice Chair Timmons to share some opening remarks as well.

Mr. TIMMONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, and thank you all for being with us. It really has been a wild ride. Three and a half years ago, I was appointed as the freshman on this committee, and I remember how happy I was when Leader McCarthy's office called and told me that. And Tom Graves had been a friend and mentor, and I was so fortunate to spend a year and then 2 years under his leadership and under the chairman's leadership.

And I watched them work together. I watched them show me that Republicans and Democrats can be civil, can work together, and can try to make a positive impact on the institution that everyone loves. It has such a huge impact on the lives of the American people. It is so important that we do everything we can to make this place as functional as possible.

So I was very pleased when the leader told me that I was going to be the vice chair. He didn't really have a lot of options. Everybody that was on the committee that was Republican had left, and Rodney can't have more committee assignments. It would be ridiculous to have his fifth or sixth—I don't even know what number it would be. But I have done everything I can to step into the shoes of Tom Graves. You know, I always remark, his hair is so great that I knew I could never live up to that. He just has the best head of hair.

But, you know, I did my best to continue the leadership that this committee has had, and we were so fortunate to get a full 2 years. And I think we have made the most of it. And we have 4 months left, and we are going to continue to work hard. Obviously, this hearing is about what is next and how do we make sure that the recommendations that we have made and that we will make will be fully implemented. And while we will not be here in January, how can we maximize the likelihood that all of these recommendations get implemented.

I know that we all have some ideas on that, and that is what we will be talking about, but I definitely think that this shouldn't happen every couple decades, and I definitely think that we shouldn't stop in January. So I look forward to hearing you all's thoughts on that.

I will also remark, we just went on a congressional delegation trip to Brussels and to London. And, you know, we have—it was remarkable that—I actually think we are doing okay after that trip. Not that the EU and the U.K. are not doing a great job in their own way, but everyone has their dysfunction. Everyone has their challenges.

The EU takes a week a month and goes 4.5 hours away by train to a different location to conduct their business, and I just was like, wow. And I thought we had it tough in D.C.

But we learned a lot too. We learned a lot, and we are hopefully going to make some recommendations from what we learned from our parliaments in London and Brussels. So it was a very productive trip.

I just want to say how—since this is the last hearing, I just want to say that it has been an honor to work alongside the chair. We have become friends, and I feel like we have made an impact, and we are going to continue to work hard for the next 4 months. And I can assure, as long as I am in Congress, I will work until every one of these recommendations has been fully implemented, and I think we agree on that.

So, Mr. CHAIRMAN, I just say, it has been an honor. Look forward to the next 4 months, and I look forward to the hearing here today.

With that, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. And appreciate your remarks and appreciate the partnership. I will wait until we get to our final markup before I say any valedictory remarks.

I want to welcome our guests, but before I do, I want to welcome two particularly important guests today: Huck and Charlie are with us. They are the kids of one of our witnesses today. They are two of the most well-attired and well-behaved kids I have ever seen. So thank you for being with us, Huck and Charlie. And I told them, if things got boring, they should just like make a bird noise and I will try to pick it up a little bit. So—that was a joke though, Charlie, so don't actually make a bird noise, okay?

All right. She gave me the nod.

So I now would like to welcome our three witnesses who are here to share their thoughts on the future of modernization within this institution. Witnesses are reminded that your written statements will be made part of the record.

Our first witness is a frequent flyer with the committee. I think you have now qualified for the free latte as well. We are deeply grateful for her service and work with the committee.

Catherine Szpindor is the Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives. She has served in this role since 2020. Previously, she served as the CIO of the House.

In her role, Ms. Szpindor is responsible for providing support services and business solutions to a community of 10,000 House Members, officers, and staff.

Ms. Szpindor, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENTS OF THE HONORABLE CATHERINE SZPINDOR, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, DC; DR. CASEY BURGAT, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AND LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS PROGRAM DIRECTOR, THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY; AND MS. DIANE HILL, SENIOR MANAGER, GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS, PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE CATHERINE SZPINDOR**

Ms. SZPINDOR. All right. Thank you very much.

Chairman Kilmer, Vice Chair Timmons, and the members of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress, thank you for this opportunity today and many opportunities we have had pre-

viously to meet for the good of the institution. We thank you for trusting the CAO as a partner in making lasting positive changes so that Congress can run more effectively and efficiently.

The mission of the nearly 800 CAO staffers is actually very simple: It is to make it easier for Members and staff to do their job as they serve the American people. We refer to this as “Member Focused. Service Driven.” Our varied and highly skilled staff work as “One CAO” to perform our services so you, the Members of Congress, can focus on your constitutional duties.

Since January 2022, we have launched many new projects. I am highlighting a few of those today.

The very successful CAO Coach program is addressing the need for more relevant and efficient training for House staff by hosting in-person and virtual courses and providing one-on-one consultations to staff in Washington, D.C., and the district. In total, CAO Coach hosted 2,600 House staffers in these sessions.

The CAO coaches and customer advocates launched the first-ever bipartisan orientation program for new staff in February and developed the 2022 District Office Conference Program—also bipartisan—providing specialty training to over 800 district staff by position. We train staff on specific skills unique to the House and plan on continuing these offerings in the coming year. This team serves as an effective method in communicating CAO’s services and products and how to access them.

We continue to update and add new products to the House Human Resources Hub, which is quickly becoming an essential resource for managing office operations.

The House Resume Bank is providing offices an easier and quicker way to find job candidates. Effective use of the Resume Bank has led to requests from chiefs of staff for more effective methods to attract diverse and talented applicants, and we tend—we will deliver.

The House Digital Service team is committed to a “build with and not build for” philosophy for stakeholders to ensure products meet customer criteria. They are researching member committee office needs. This includes improvements to constituent services; legislative tools; office operational functions, such as a leave tracking software for Member offices; options for a legislative branchwide staff directory; and a common committee calendar portal to help reduce schedule conflicts.

The CAO is conducting research on replacement options and cost estimates for a new House payroll system since the current system is nearing end of life. Through this project, we will modernize antiquated processes, automate manual procedures, and improve the payroll experience. Also, this will be an opportunity to consider transitioning to a more frequent pay cycle for House employees, a recommendation by the select committee.

The Office of Finance is piloting an application employing electronic signatures to automate many of our administrative forms. The new system launches soon and provides House offices the ability to electronically prepare, approve, route, and submit payroll transactions. These transactions are validated in real time against House rules and regulations, providing considerable time savings to that office.

To keep our promise to be “Member focused, service driven,” the CAO adopted a new strategic plan that is focused on understanding the needs of the Members and the staff, continuously improving our services and processes to meet those needs, and effectively analyzing and prioritizing our budgeted funds and resources to provide quality solutions.

Additionally, the modernization account the select committee championed provides significant opportunity for the House to continue to transform services.

Chairman Kilmer and Vice Chairman Timmons, the modernization momentum you created propels us forward and our future is clear. The CAO has integrated modernization into our overall operations. We are enthusiastic and deliberate in our plan to continue to meet the evolving needs of the Members and staff.

I am grateful for your support, the great working relationship that we have with your staff, and look forward to responding to any questions you may have. Thank you.

[The statement of Ms. Szpindor follows:]

Catherine L. Szpindor  
Chief Administrative Officer

HB-28, The Capitol

Office of the  
Chief Administrative Officer  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-6860

September 9, 2022

The Honorable Derek Kilmer  
Chair  
Select Committee on the Modernization of  
Congress  
226 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable William Timmons  
Vice-Chair  
Select Committee on the Modernization of  
Congress  
226 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair and Vice-Chair:

Attached is the CAO's submission to the committee as our written statement for the hearing on Wednesday, September 14<sup>th</sup>. Please let me know if you have any concerns or questions regarding the statement. I look forward to speaking with the Committee and am excited to share the CAO's plans on the future of modernization.

Sincerely,



Catherine L. Szpindor  
Chief Administrative Officer

**Statement of  
The Honorable Catherine L. Szpindor  
Chief Administrative Officer  
United States House of Representatives Before the  
House Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress**



**September 14, 2022**

Chairman Kilmer, Vice Chair Timmons, and Members of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress, thank you for this opportunity today and the many opportunities we've had previously to meet for the good of the institution. Since 2019, the Select Committee has provided a needed focus on ways to make the House more efficient, effective, and transparent. We thank you for trusting the staff of the Chief Administrative Officer to be a partner in making lasting positive changes so that Congress can run more effectively and efficiently.

I recently received a note from a veteran Chief of Staff that speaks to the partnership and effectiveness of our work in the CAO along with the Select Committee on Modernization. The Chief wrote: "I have been incredibly impressed with the work and transformation of the CAO over the last few years. In the past, I felt that a lot of CAO departments seemed to view staff and offices as something to manage and to deal with - now I feel a strong sense of partnership and collaboration. There is a real effort to ask, understand and dig deep to see what services Members, offices, and staff need and then to provide those services. This has been even more important as we went through the pandemic and the aftermath of Jan. 6th. Whether it is improved food and drink offerings or help with Human Resources, CAO has become the partner and support we need."

The CAO is grateful to the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress for partnering with us, as we look forward, it is our plan to continue the work needed to meet the evolving needs of Members and staff.

#### **Our Mission to Modernize**

The mission of the nearly 800 CAO staffers is actually very simple, it is to make it easier for Members and staff to do their jobs as they serve the American people. We call that "Member Focused. Service Driven."

Our teams have worked collaboratively with the Modernization Committee to streamline and improve products and services. Internally, our varied and highly skilled staff work as "One CAO" to perform our services so you, the Members of Congress, can focus on your Constitutional duties.

Even as we celebrate our project implementations this year, we do so with an eye towards the future. We know there is more work to do. Since January 2022, we've launched and improved many new projects and programs to fix pain points, help modernize House operations and assist the House community.

#### **Helping the House Workforce**

##### **CAO Coach**

We have listened to the Modernization Committee and so many others who have expressed the need for more relevant and efficient training for House staff. The CAO Coach program, in collaboration with the Congressional Staff Academy and Customer Advocates, allows us to connect with staff on a personal level.

We train staff on the practical skills they need and can't learn anywhere else. We can also educate offices about CAO services. We leverage these relationships to listen and learn about offices evolving need and how the CAO needs to modernize to be more effective. The CAO Coach Program has received many positive comments and are expanding our

services with two new Coaches dedicated to supporting legislative staff.

The CAO Coaches and Customer Advocates launched the first ever bipartisan orientation program for new staff in February. The full-day program runs weekly and is quickly becoming a standard part of so many office's onboarding processes.

The same team developed the 2022 District Office Conference Program, providing specialty training to meet the needs of over 800 district office staff by position. The staff conferences have been so successful that we plan on developing similar training for every Member staff position in the next year. These trainings bring staff together, provide opportunities to share best practices and connect everyone with the CAO services they need at each level.

- *"I was so pumped after coming back from the Field Rep Conference, but now feel like I need more direction. Now that I chatted with you, I feel excited and with a plan of action! This has been so so helpful. Thank you!"*

More than 2,300 staff have visited a newly revamped CAO Coach website that features job-specific programming and resources, on-demand videos and staff role tutorials, best practice documents, templates and more. In total, CAO Coach hosted in-person and virtual courses attended by over 2,600 House staffers and provided one-on-one consultations to hundreds of staff in Washington, D.C., and the districts.

#### **Employee Assistance and Well-Being**

We recognize that a strong and effective workforce is made up of skilled staffers who can effectively manage their work-life balance. The bipartisan support for the expansion of services offered by the Office of Employee Assistance and the House Center for Well-being is meeting the needs of thousands of staffers.

The added emphasis on counseling and well-being has proven to be valuable for staff dealing with the pandemic and the trauma from January 6th. Even as the urgency of these events pass, staff continue to utilize these services as they have become mainstream.

#### **Innovating Our Services**

##### **My Expenses**

The new cloud-based travel and expense reimbursement tool, "My Expenses" is helping Members and staff more easily pay official expenses and request reimbursement. The tool gives staff more control by allowing them to enter their own expenses and permits tracking of the process through the system. Gone are the days of shuffling paper, losing receipts, scanning forms, and wondering where payment is.

Staff are pleased and forthcoming in their appreciation:

- *"In my 20 years of Hill finance experience, I have to say that the ease and quickness of this system is by far the best I have encountered. -Member Office Financial Manager*
- *"I'm having to file less paper since everything is now electronic filing. Staff really seem to like it for processing their reimbursements." -Member Office Financial Manager*

**Human Resources Hub**

We heard and understood the call from the Select Committee for a centralized HR program for Member offices. The House Human Resources Hub is quickly becoming an essential resource for managing office operations. Staff are downloading and offices are implementing best practice resources for their offices. This helps create common office standards and added efficiency to those employing offices.

**House Resume Bank**

The updated House Resume Bank is providing offices an easier and quicker way to find job candidates as well as a better experience for candidates. Thousands of job seekers created profiles and submitted resumes within weeks of the site's launch earlier this year. And it's proven effective. Employees have submitted their resumes through the Bank and have been hired at all levels – including senior positions. Effective use of the Resume Bank has led to requests from Chiefs of Staff about more effective recruiting methods to attract diverse and talented applicants.

**Improving Technology****House Digital Service**

The House Digital Service team was announced in January to identify, develop, and incubate products and services that solve the unique technology challenges faced in Member and Committee offices.

The team's makeup models that of a tech start-up by employing agile development practices to accelerate the delivery of new services to the House community. Recent additions of a Product Manager, User Experience Designer, and Software Engineer are filling the roles needed to move forward.

Currently, House Digital Service is researching Member and Committee office needs, including improvements to constituent services, legislative tools, and office operational functions. Specific examples include, leave tracking software for Member offices, options for a Legislative Branch-wide staff directory, and a common committee calendar portal to help reduce schedule conflicts – a recommendation of the Select Committee.

House Digital Service is committed to “build with and not build for” stakeholders to ensure products meet customer criteria.

**Quill**

The Quill digital signing platform, originally developed by the Senate, serves as an essential tool for the House community and has eliminated the time-consuming need for staff and interns to walk door-to-door to capture Member signatures on group support letters. Nearly every Member of Congress is enrolled to sign letters and over 300 offices have used the system to author or lead a letter. The system reached a new peak of usage during the FY2023 Appropriations cycle with more than 2,000 new letters created. This collaboration with the Senate serves as a model for future opportunities, when appropriate, to share code, lessons learned and best practices to more efficiently modernize both Chambers.

**Robotic Process Automation (RPA)**

Our expert technical teams established the Robotic Process Automation Program to automate manual and time-intensive tasks. The team collaborated across multiple CAO business units to deploy automations throughout the first six months of 2022.

Examples include a software “bot” that can read and record tax IDs off W-9 forms for the Office of Finance so that vendor payments are reported properly, and a bot that can read, log, and file District Office Leases for the Office of Administrative Counsel. Previously, both examples required that CAO staff manually open the files, read them, and record the information in the systems of record.

As we mature our approach to RPA, Digital Services will provide support to Member and Committee offices to help them automate some of their common repetitive tasks.

***Payroll Modernization & System Replacement***

Later this decade, the House on premise human resource and payroll system will near its end of life. The CAO has begun conducting market research on replacement options and costs estimates to share with the Committee on House Administration and the Legislative Branch Subcommittee.

Replacement of the House payroll system will require a substantial investment by the House. This will be the most significant project the CAO has undertaken since the deployment of the House’s financial system in 2009. Through this project we will modernize antiquated processes, automate manual procedures, and improve the payroll experience for both Members and staff. This project also presents an opportunity for the House to consider transitioning to a more frequent pay cycle for House employees – a recommendation of the Select Committee.

***Payroll and Benefits: Office of Finance eForms Application***

The Office of Finance is deploying an e-forms application that employs electronic signatures to automate many of our administrative forms. The new system provides Member, Committee, and Leadership offices the ability to electronically prepare, approve, route, and submit payroll transactions. These transactions are validated in real-time against House rules and regulations, providing considerable time savings to the office.

The new system:

- Replaces current time-intensive payroll transactions which must be prepared manually before they are approved with an authorized signature.
- Improves security as only authorized Payroll and Benefits points of contact can prepare or approve payroll forms or approve transactions.
- Reduces paper stock and costs for Employing Offices.
- Improves Business Continuity by eliminating paper processes
- The new platform is scheduled to launch this month with additional modules and functionality implemented after the 118th Congressional Transition.

***HouseNet Modernization***

The CAO is in the early stages of a project to completely revamp HouseNet, the House Intranet. The plan includes moving HouseNet from an on-premises hosting platform to a cloud-based platform designed from the ground up for organization intranets and includes interconnections with many of our existing software tools. The goal of the project is to make HouseNet the hub for all CAO services so Members can easily find, learn about and request the administrative services they require.

***Transition to the 118th Congress and Beyond***

The Congressional Transition is always a busy time, but it is also an exciting time. Chairman Kilmer and Vice Chair Timmons when you were Freshman, you came to this institution with new ideas based on your past experiences as a business consultant and a

small business owner. You also came with a desire to help Congress work more efficiently.

Every transition brings new Members. New staff. New Expectations. And if the House doesn't continuously modernize, both new Members and existing Members will become frustrated, and the effectiveness of the institution will be greatly diminished. As we look to the 118th Congress and beyond, it is our intention to continue the work of the Select Committee and build the modernization function into the governance and planning of the CAO.

The CAO's Member Focused, Service Driven promise is in many ways a commitment to modernization. It is a commitment to remain relentlessly focused on Members and evolving our services to meet their needs. To keep that promise, the CAO has adopted a new strategic plan that focuses on better understanding Member, Committee, and Leadership offices, continuously improving our services, and effectively prioritizing our projects.

You have already seen some of these efforts. We've ramped up our communication and outreach efforts and are reaping the benefits of increased surveying, Customer Advocate office visits, CAO Coach training, tours of our facilities, and targeted newsletters. Our use of focus groups and pilot programs helps ensure we are listening, learning, and implementing correctly. Our new Digital Services Team is building relationships across the House and learning where they can bring the most value to address long standing Member pain points.

Furthermore, we have begun an investment process that prioritizes our projects that best improve services to Members and the broader House. Through this prioritization process – we hope to invest in important modernization projects that we know bring high value to Members and we are confident we are ready to execute successfully. To think of this another way, the CAO has started to operationalize the modernization function that the Select Committee has pioneered – at least that part that is within the CAO's jurisdiction.

Finally, the new Modernization Account the Select Committee championed provides a significant opportunity for the House to maintain momentum. Modernization requires continued targeted funding and investments in the institution. Working closely with the Legislative Branch Subcommittee, the Committee on House Administration, and the other House officers, I recommend the House develop a transparent process to prioritize modernization projects funded through this account. I look forward to future discussions with my fellow Officers on the best way to implement such a process that our oversight Committee can be confident in.

### **Conclusion**

Chairman Kilmer and Vice Chairman Timmons, the modernization momentum you created propels us forward and our path is clear. The CAO has integrated modernization into our core outreach, prioritization, and investment planning functions. And the broader House is well positioned to continue your charge into the next Congress and beyond.

I am grateful for the support of your Committee, the great working relationship we have with your staff, and look forward to responding to any questions you may have.

Thank you

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ms. Szpindor, for your testimony and for your partnership.

Our next witness is Dr. Casey Burgat. In addition to being the father of Huck and Charlie, Dr. Burgat is the director of the Legislative Affairs program and assistant professor in the Graduate School of Political Management at George Washington University. He previously served as a senior governance fellow at the R Street Institute, as well as an analyst with the Congressional Research Service, and executive branch operations in the Congress and judiciary sections.

Dr. Burgat, welcome. You are now recognized for 5 minutes.

#### STATEMENT OF DR. CASEY BURGAT

Mr. BURGAT. Chair Kilmer, Vice Chair Timmons, and members of the select committee, thank you for the invitation to testify this morning.

I like everyone here, I can imagine, followed the work of your committee closely since its inception. I know I speak for many in the reform community—Diane is going to echo this, I am sure—that we applaud all of your leadership on all of these topics, especially in these political circumstances. We applaud not only the committee's robust productivity, but maybe even more importantly, the example it has set about how it has gone about its work. It has been civil, it has been purposefully bipartisan, and it has been thorough. Thank you all for all setting this example.

Right, Huck and Charlie?

I was asked to focus my testimony on two primary questions: First, how my current and future congressional reform researchers measure the effectiveness of this committee's work, especially over time, and including the impacts of your nearly 200 recommendations; and second, given that I have regularly tasked my students to research and propose recommendations for the select committee to consider, what common themes typically have come up in their proposals.

Starting with the first question regarding your effectiveness. Some of your recommendations and resulting progress are quantifiable and, thus, can be studied as such. That part is easy. The impacts of increasing staff pay, diversity, internship accessibility, for example, can be measured and compared with Congresses that came before these changes.

Other recommendations, however, are much more difficult to quantify. Goals such as encouraging civility within Congress, modernizing technology, improving constituent service processes don't come with clear measures or—and this is the important part—publicly accessible data. On many issues, the causal chain between the committee's recommendations to tangible outcomes will be long and precise and conditional on an infinite number of variables. And academics are allergic to those qualities.

With that said, there are a host of types of measures that scholars may use to gauge the committee's effectiveness over time. Those who focus on legislative productivity and outcomes may look for changes in amendment and drafting activities. Does cosponsor action differ in numbers and networks, potentially cross-party counts, thanks to the electronic cosponsor recommendation and

your civility efforts? Are Members more able to insert legislative text into bills because of the collaborative legislative drafting recommendation? Do Members and offices seem to work together more often after attending bipartisan onboarding and new Member orientations?

These are things that we can kind of get at with proxy measures, though there aren't easily quantifiable data attached.

On the oversight front, enterprising researchers can study whether more bipartisan oversight efforts, including identifiers like letters signed by both the chair and ranking member, are undertaken. And then should certain panels follow the select committee's lead in deliberations, such as this roundtable format, the bipartisan seating, foregoing the 5-minute rule, studies can analyze differences and outcomes on a variety of deliberation measures. So things like what witnesses are called to testify; using text analysis of hearing transcripts to study what types of questions are asked, because there are infinite types of different questions to be asked; and how you all use your allotted time, will that change?

And precisely because Members will be hard—measures will be hard to come by, its key researchers do not discount the importance of qualitative study as well. To fully understand why certain outcomes differ, there is no substitute for hearing directly from the source, Member or staff, of your thinking, motivations, and observations. This does mean, though, that you will all make yourselves available, your staffs available, and your data as available as possible so that we annoying academics who work on these questions can get some answers without having to bug you too much.

Now, the second question about when assigning my students to submit reform proposals, what common themes have developed. Many students, unsurprisingly, want to focus on improving collaboration and civility between Members, staffers, and offices. Half want to use sticks, like fines and decrease resources for offenders; the other half want to use carrots, like access to the floor or maybe a civility plaque in the Capitol hallways. Almost all require Members to judge each other on their behaviors, which history has shown us over and over brings a whole host of challenges and implications.

Students also commonly submit proposals to reform the budget process. Their reform ideas attempt to lessen the reliance on continuing resolutions, reinvigorating authorizing committees, improving budgetary oversight, minimizing deficit spending, and doing away with high-drama debt ceiling hikes. I bet you all would sign on to all of those things as well.

But by far—and by far—the most common theme of student reform proposals speak to the overwhelming centralization of legislating power in leadership offices. It simply doesn't compute to my students that rank-and-file Members are commonly not involved in the legislative process and sometimes completely in the dark on policy negotiations and even legislative text until the final moments prior to votes. They can't understand why bills that would assuredly pass the Chamber won't get debated, let alone receive attention on the floor.

After much discussion, they begin to theoretically understand how the current balance of power serves enough interests of

enough Members, but they hate it. They don't understand it. They don't accept it. To them, many of the current processes are, in fact, antithetical to how a legislature is supposed to work.

Their solutions to the problem are unbelievably varied, though. From pie-in-the-sky pledges that every Member read every bill before granting access—to granting floor access to every Member at least once per session. Increasingly, student reform ideas attempt to tackle the doom loop felt by many Members, particularly within the minority party. They think, if I don't see a reasonable path as a Member to the floor for my issue, and if leadership decides everything anyway, why would I spend my time, my energy, my staff resources legislating? Aren't I better off messaging and performing constituent service? Their incentive structure is hard to argue with.

To address this, many proposals advance altering House rules and instituting automatic thresholds that guarantee subsequent actions, like a markup within committee or a vote on the floor. Ideas like reworking the discharge petition, identifying a certain magic number of cosponsors, of bipartisan cosponsors that would automatically trigger a definite path to the policymaking process, including access to the floor.

In nearly all of these thoughts, though, students are quick to point out that leadership cannot be given a veto, can't even give them access to it. If the specific threshold is met, the Member receives the reward.

I assume you have questions about this. I will save the rest for later, but thank you all again for the invitation to testify. And I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to implore you to do everything possible to make this committee, in whatever format it can take, permanent. It matters.

Thank you very much. I look forward to your questions.  
[The statement of Mr. Burgat follows:]

Written testimony of Casey Burgat  
Assistant Professor and Legislative Affairs Program Director, The George Washington University  
Before the United States House of Representatives,  
Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress  
September 14, 2022

Chairman Kilmer, Vice Chair Timmons, and members of the Select Committee:

Thank you for the invitation to testify before the select committee. My name is Casey Burgat, and I am an assistant professor and director of the legislative affairs program at George Washington University. There I teach masters level courses on all things Congress. My research at GW and elsewhere has revolved around congressional reforms: how to make the First Branch work better for the American people.

With this focus, I was thrilled that this select committee was established in early 2019 with a broad directive to make the US Congress more effective, efficient, and transparent. Since then, I have followed the work of the select committee closely. I know I speak for many in the reform community when I commend Chairman Kilmer and Vice Chair Timmons for their leadership of the committee in extremely trying circumstances. And we applaud not only the committee's robust productivity, but also the example it has set in how it has gone about its work. It has been civil; it has been purposefully bipartisan; and it has been thorough; characteristics not all that common in the modern Congress. Thank you all for your work.

I was asked to focus my testimony on two primary questions. First, how might current and future congressional reform researchers measure the effectiveness of the committee's work, including the nearly 200 recommendations? And second, given that I have regularly tasked my students to research and propose recommendations for the select committee to consider, what common themes typically come up in their proposals? What problems do students relatively new to learning about Congress find the most surprising and vexing?

I'll begin with the first question regarding measuring the committee's effectiveness. Some of the committee's recommendations and resulting progress are quantifiable, and thus, can be studied as such. The impacts of increasing staff pay, diversity, and internship accessibility, for example, can be measured and compared with congresses before the changes. Importantly, this work will be aided by the committee's recommendations involving staff surveys, collection of demographic data, and

modernizing disbursement records. These data will help researchers measure changes in important elements like staff tenure and diversity of congressional staff hires.

Other recommendations, however, are much more difficult to quantify. Goals such as encouraging civility within Congress, modernizing technology, and improving constituent service processes do not come with clear measures or publicly accessible data. Moreover, the causal chain between the committee's recommendations to tangible outcomes will be long, imprecise, and conditional on exogenous variables. Most academics are allergic to such qualities.

With that said, I will offer a non-exhaustive list of the types of measures scholars may use to gauge the committee's effectiveness. Those who focus on legislative productivity and outcomes may look for changes in amendment and drafting activities. Does cosponsor action differ, in numbers, networks, and potentially cross-party counts, thanks to the electronic cosponsor recommendation and civility efforts? Are more members able to insert legislative text into bills because of the collaborative legislative drafting recommendation? Do members and offices seem to work together more often after attending the bipartisan onboarding and new member orientations?

Because their work can be less structured and pre-arranged, I suspect that most researchers will look to committees to measure potential impacts of the select committee's work. On the oversight front, enterprising researchers can study whether more bipartisan oversight efforts—using identifiers like letters signed by both the Chair and Ranking Member—are undertaken. Should certain panels follow the select committee's lead in deliberations, such as the roundtable format, bipartisan seating, and forgoing the 5-minute rule, studies can analyze differences on a variety of deliberation measures. Researchers can continue to study what types of witnesses are called to testify, use text analysis of hearing transcripts to study what types of questions are asked, and if members use their allotted time differently.

Again, many outcomes will be difficult to explicitly link to the select committee's recommendations, and as a result, your role may even be discounted in studies of your success. This is why it's key that researchers not discount the importance of qualitative research as well. To fully understand and why certain outcomes differ, there is no substitute for hearing directly from the source—member or staffer—of their thinking, motivations, and observations. This means, though, that you all make yourselves, your staff, and your data as available as possible to the pesky academics who work to answer extremely difficult questions.

Now, I will turn to the second question: when assigning my students to submit reform proposals, what common themes have developed? Many students focus on improving collaboration and civility between members, though it is typically split between the adoption of punishments or penalties for wrongdoing and incentivizing civility through public recognition or a rewards system. Half want to use sticks like fines and decreased resources; the other half want to use carrots like access to the floor or a civility plaque in the Capitol hallways. Almost all require members to judge each other on their behaviors, which history has shown us over and over again, brings a whole host of challenges and implications.

Students also commonly submit proposals to reform the budget process. Their reform ideas attempt to lessen the reliance on continuing resolutions, reinvigorate authorizing committees, improve budgetary oversight, minimize deficit spending, and do away with high-drama debt ceiling fights.

But, by far, the most common theme of student reform proposals speak to the overwhelming centralization of legislating power in leadership offices. It simply doesn't compute to them that rank-and-file members are commonly not involved in the legislative process, and sometimes completely in the dark on policy negotiations and text until the final moments prior to votes. They can't understand why bills that would assuredly pass the chamber won't be debated, let alone receive a vote on the floor. After much discussion, they begin to theoretically understand how the current balance of power serves enough interests of enough members, but they hate it. To them, many of the current processes are antithetical to how a legislature is supposed to work. It's politics at its worst.

Their solutions are unbelievably varied, from pie-in-the-sky pledges that every member read every bill to granting floor access to every member for a bill at least once per session. Increasingly, student reform ideas attempt to tackle the doom-loop felt by many members, particularly within the minority party: if I don't see a reasonable path to the floor for my issue, and if leadership decides everything anyway, why would I spend time, energy, and staff resources legislating? Aren't I better off messaging and performing constituent service?

To address this, many proposals advocate altering House rules and instituting automatic thresholds that guarantee subsequent actions, like a markup within committee or a vote on the floor. Ideas like reworking the discharge petition, identifying a certain number of cosponsors or number of bipartisan cosponsors, or signed support from a committee chair and ranking member on a bill are just a few proposals that would provide members a definite path to policymaking progress. In nearly all of these thoughts, students are quick to point out that leadership cannot be given a veto; if the specific threshold is met, the member receives the reward.

Thank you, again, for the invitation to testify before this select committee. Your work is critical to ensuring that the US Congress is the most effective legislature it can be. And I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to implore you to do everything you can to make this committee—or some version of it—permanent. As you all know better than anyone, there is much work to do, and we need it more than ever. Thank you, and I look forward to any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Our final witness is Diane Hill, who is a senior manager at the Partnership for Public Service. She previously served as a Presidential management fellow at the Department of Housing and Urban Development, as a program analyst at the Environmental Protection Agency, and as a legislative staffer for Congresswoman Lindy Boggs, Congressman Pat Williams, and Senator Bob Kerrey.

Ms. Hill, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

#### STATEMENT OF MS. DIANE HILL

Ms. HILL. Thank you, Chair Kilmer.

Chair Kilmer, Vice Chair Timmons, members of the committee, thank you for inviting me here today to testify. Determining a future for the modernization movement that this committee has created is necessary and important.

As Chair Kilmer said, my name is Diane Hill. I am a senior manager at the Partnership for Public Service, but I am privileged to be the coordinator for the Fix Congress Cohort, a community of 45 civil society organizations who align in a common purpose to strengthen Congress and make it more effective. We have been thankful and privileged to be able to work with this committee and want to thank you for all the hard work that you have done.

Now, as you can imagine, being the coordinator for 45 civil society organizations who want to make a significant change in the world and make a difference, it is not easy to come up with a consensus about where we should go next with the modernization effort. So our recommendations today have a framework.

Our first thing that we all do agree on is we want to make sure that the recommendations, almost 200 of them that you have worked so hard to put together, are implemented, while also identifying new areas for reform.

Second, we believe that we need to continue efforts to bring the Senate into the modernization work. What you will hear from me today—thank you. That is such a hard one, but we are committed to it.

With that in mind, we make the following recommendations, and as I stated, it is not easy to get consensus. So our first two recommendations are alternatives of where the modernization effort should be housed.

Recommendation number one is to place modernization work within the Committee on House Administration either by establishing a new subcommittee or a commission. Giving the work to House Administration makes a permanent home with a committee that has significant jurisdiction over most of the recommendations that have come out of this committee. It also provides a space where hearings can occur and we can find, explore, and develop new recommendations.

So there are two options we could do that within the Committee on House Administration. One is to create a subcommittee on modernization at the beginning of the next Congress. The makeup of that subcommittee would be all House Administration members. The second is to establish a modernization commission modeled on the structure of the Communications Standards Commission.

While both are strong options—and you will see all the disadvantages and advantages of both in my written testimony—the commission has the potential to be truly bipartisan. You could have Members of both party in equal numbers and also has the possibility of membership from the entire House of Representatives, as does the Communications Standards Commission.

The second recommendation—and you will remember that this is an alternative to the first—is that we reauthorize the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress. As I agree with my colleague, Dr. Burgat, this committee has done such stellar work; it would be nice to have a permanent organization just like it. It has provided a model, a pathway for other committees to see how thorny issues can be explored fully and respectfully by Members who don't necessarily agree but are seeking ways to find common solutions.

The makeup of this bipartisan committee brings together members of key committees who have direct jurisdiction over House operations: the Committee on House Administration, Appropriations, and the Rules Committee. The collaboration and communication between these three committees needs to continue and will fully support a modernization effort.

Our third recommendation is to create a permanent modernization task force in addition to a Member-based solution, so this would be an add-on. The task force would be formed using the data task force as a model, made up of nonpartisan professional staff from across legislative agencies, including the Government Accountability Office, the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the Clerk's Office, and the Sergeant at Arms.

By pulling together professional staff who are able to serve across Congresses, Members would have an expert resource on modernization to both implement existing recommendations and develop new recommendations on an ongoing basis.

And the fourth recommendation is to pursue a joint committee on the modernization of Congress. Ideally, modernization of Congress would include all of Congress. For that reason—

[Audio malfunction.]

Ms. HILL. Okay. No, I am still there. Okay. Sorry, I must have—my apologies.

For that reason, the cohort supports creation of a joint committee on the modernization of Congress.

While it appears that the Senate is not ready to take that step right now, we should be exploring that goal in the long term, and that way we can take on larger issues like budget reform which would help Congress regain its strength and footing as the first branch of government.

I want to thank you again for inviting me to testify, but I also want to thank you most sincerely for allowing this community of civil society organizations to be instrumental in the modernization effort. We applaud the strong leadership, service, and results of the work of this committee, and we are grateful that this committee has been willing to stand by Congress as an institution, and we wholeheartedly support that effort.

Thank you again, and I look forward to your questions.

[The statement of Ms. Hill follows:]



**Diane Hill**

**Senior Manager, Government Affairs**

**Partnership for Public Service**

**Written statement prepared for**

**The Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress**

**Hearing entitled,**

**“Congressional Modernization: A roadmap for the future”**

**September 14, 2022**

Chair Kilmer, Vice Chair Timmons, and members of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the importance of continuing the effort to modernize Congress.

My name is Diane Hill, and I serve as a Senior Manager for Government Affairs at the Partnership for Public Service. The Partnership is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring public service and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the federal government. The Partnership was founded on the premise that any organization's best asset is its people.

I am here today in my role as the coordinator of the Fix Congress Cohort, a group of 45 organizations with diverse expertise who align in a common purpose to strengthen Congress and help make it more effective.

We are a diverse Cohort with a variety of expertise and a range of political leanings, from the left to the right as well as nonpartisan. What you'll be hearing today is not one solution but a framework to continue the modernization work with viable options for you to consider in keeping the modernization effort moving forward and going strong.

We all agree that with 171 recommendations already put forth by the committee, many with unanimous consent, there is much implementation to be done. We propose that the framework to consider for the future of modernization should be two-fold. First, focus primarily on implementation for the next two years. Second, continue efforts to bring the Senate into the modernization work.

With that framework in mind, we make the following recommendations with a notation that recommendations one and two are member-based, only one of which needs to be carried out.

**Recommendation one: Place modernization work in the Committee on House Administration (CHA), either by establishing a new subcommittee or commission.**

The Members of this committee have done incredibly important work for this institution, and it is imperative that the committee's recommendations continue to be implemented after the 117th Congress. Providing a permanent home for the modernization work within the Committee on House Administration (CHA) puts it squarely in a committee that has jurisdiction for most of the recommendations that have already been passed by this committee. The Committee on House Administration is in the best position to ensure that the recommendations set forth by the Modernization Committee are put into practice. If adjustments are needed on the recommendations as they are implemented, CHA has the necessary jurisdiction and tools to make that happen.

We propose the following two options for continuation of the modernization work that would be housed within CHA:

**Option one:** Create a Modernization Subcommittee directly under the Committee on House Administration. To establish a Subcommittee on Modernization, the Chair of the Committee on House Administration would need to take that action as the committee forms early in the next Congress. There is precedent for having such a subcommittee. In the 102nd

Congress (1991-1992), CHA formed a bipartisan subcommittee, the Subcommittee on Administrative Oversight that existed through the 103rd Congress ending in 1994. The Chief Administrative Officer position was created in 1995, which took on much of the Subcommittee on Administrative Oversight's work.<sup>1</sup>

**Option two:** Establish a Modernization Commission, modeled after the Communications Standards Commission, the former Franking Commission. The commission would have six members, split evenly between parties with the Chair being named by the Chair and Ranking Member of the Committee on House Administration with the approval of the Speaker. Unlike the establishment of a Modernization Subcommittee, a Commission could engage members who are interested solely in modernization and are not already on the House Administration Committee. A majority vote would be required to pass recommendations.

Both options have similar advantages and disadvantages, with a few exceptions.

#### *Advantages*

- Provide a permanent home for the modernization work, which is the best way to have long-term success.
- Increase the ability to implement the Modernization Committee's work given CHA's direct jurisdiction over most of the recommendations. CHA has the ability to advance resolutions and has the legislative authority and original jurisdiction to conduct hearings.
- CHA has direct oversight of the relevant congressional entities and can put its directives into immediate effect through letters and oversight. CHA can ensure that recommendations are implemented in a way that is sustainable.
- House Administration staff have the expertise and longstanding commitment to modernization efforts.
- Subcommittee only: A CHA subcommittee on modernization would be able to hold regular public hearings on the implementation of recommendations and be in touch with stakeholders from support offices and agencies to hear updates on initiatives.
- Subcommittee only: A CHA subcommittee on modernization could provide regular and/or annual reports on the status of recommendations and their implementation, helping provide updates to stakeholders.
- Subcommittee only: Members who serve on CHA can have short tenures. This would serve to increase the number of members who gain expertise on the issues that need to be tended when addressing modernization.
- Commission only: The Modernization Commission can pull its members from the whole of the House, creating diversity and gaining members who express interest in modernization.

<sup>1</sup> See *A History on the Committee of House Administration: 1947-2012*, 2012. p: 55-56. Available at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CPRT-112HPRT72170/pdf/CPRT-112HPRT72170.pdf>.

*Disadvantages*

- CHA has jurisdiction over election-related issues. With the current focus on that important work, resource and time constraints may affect modernization work.
- The Committee on House Administration often has higher turnover than other committees. That could lead to having subcommittee members who are less invested in modernization.
- Subcommittee only: House Administration is understaffed and under-resourced. Creating a new subcommittee would require additional funds and staff that would need to be agreed upon by the leadership of both parties.
- Subcommittee only: Creating a Modernization Subcommittee under CHA's jurisdiction, if unevenly split between the majority and minority parties, could lead to politicization of the issues. We would advise having an even split of members.

**Recommendation two: Renew the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress.**

Continuation of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress as it stands today should be considered a worthy alternative to the first recommendation. There are several advantages that are gained in keeping the current structure.

*Advantages*

- The makeup of the committee brings together members of key committees who have direct jurisdiction over House operations. With representatives of each party from House Administration, Appropriations, Rules, along with those who are freshman and senior members, it has the depth and breadth of experience that allows for meaningful discussion on issues with a mission towards communication and collaboration that lead to much needed reform.
- The model set forth by the Select Committee has provided a pathway for others to see how thorny issues can be explored fully and respectfully by members who do not necessarily agree but are seeking information to find solutions in common, for example by:
  - moving beyond the 5-minute rule at hearings, giving members a chance to build on one another's questions and witnesses the opportunity to share more expertise;
  - conducting roundtables and listening sessions that give members and staff an opportunity to dig deeply into issues and jointly explore solutions with internal stakeholders and outside experts;
  - scheduling and attending Member dinners which allow members to learn more about each other's districts and develop common bonds; and
  - conducting bipartisan retreats to set the committee's agenda for an upcoming Congress.

*Disadvantages*

- The Select Committee lacks legislative authority.
- Implementation of recommendations is difficult and time-consuming for the committee because it lacks jurisdiction.

**Recommendation three: Create a permanent Modernization Task Force, in addition to a member-based solution.**

While support for congressional modernization can and must come from members, in addition to a member-based solution, it would serve Congress well to advance modernization at the professional staff level. We recommend establishing a Modernization Task Force, established by using the Data Task Force<sup>2</sup> as a model. The task force would be made up of non-partisan, professional staff from across legislative agencies, including the General Accounting Office, the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, the House Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the Clerk's Office and the Sergeant at Arms, each of which plays a key role in building a more modern and effective Congress. This staff-driven model would operate in tandem with member-level efforts and ensure that the work of the select committee continues and recommendations are followed up on in the hands of dedicated, professional staff, from prominent House offices.

**Recommendation four: Pursue a Joint Committee on the Modernization of Congress.**

Ideally, modernization of Congress would include all of Congress. For that reason, the Cohort supports the creation of a Joint Committee on the Modernization of Congress. While it appears that the Senate is not prepared to take that step right now, we should be exploring that outcome during the next two years. In that way we can take on larger issues such as budget reform, which would help Congress regain its strength as the first branch of government.

Thank you for inviting me here to testify on behalf of the Fix Congress Cohort. You've allowed us—a community of civil society organizations who care deeply about strengthening Congress—to be instrumental in the modernization effort. We applaud the strong leadership, service and results of the work of this committee, the Modernization Committee. Making Congress more effective is a tall order in the current environment. We are grateful that this committee has been willing to stand by Congress as an institution and we wholeheartedly support that effort. It has been an honor and a pleasure for us to be a part of this vitally important work.

Thank you again and I look forward to your questions.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on the Congressional Data Task Force, which was previously known as the Bulk Data Task Force, see [https://usgpo.github.io/innovation/leadership\\_support/](https://usgpo.github.io/innovation/leadership_support/).

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ms. Hill. And thank you not just for your testimony but for your partnership and for the partisanship of the cohort. Thank you for that.

I now recognize myself and Vice Chair Timmons to begin a period of extended questioning of the witnesses. Any member who wishes to speak should just signal their request to either me or Vice Chair Timmons.

And I am going to be here the whole time, so I am going to let you all go first, assuming folks may have to leave. I know Chairwoman Lofgren is on via Zoom as well. I don't know if she has been elevated to participant.

So I saw Rodney's hand go up first, so go ahead, Mr. Davis, and then I will go to you, Ms. Williams.

Mr. DAVIS. This right there, Chairman Kilmer, is just great leadership, because he is going to be here the entire time. We, of course, like to come in and out, which makes Congress very functional, of course. But you recognized that I raised my hand first, and I really appreciate your leadership on that. I really do.

The CHAIRMAN. I would like to appreciate your speed—

Mr. DAVIS. Yeah.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. Mr. Davis.

Mr. DAVIS. Hey, in all seriousness, as somebody who has been on this select committee since its inception and as somebody who also, you know, has the role on House Administration, what Derek has done over the last two Congresses is miraculous. He has been able to really drive a bipartisan message to success.

We have had tremendous successes last Congress and this Congress, recommendations being implemented through this process, and to have the leadership that Derek had in the majority to give then-Vice Chair Graves, now-Vice Chair Timmons somewhat equal status is unheard of. And this is the stuff that your students think Congress is about, and that is why it is great to use this select committee as an example. But as we all know, it is not the rest of Congress.

And that is really due to your leadership and your team's leadership, Derek, and it wouldn't have been driven. Exceptional job as the chair, and, again, William, you know, exceptionally mediocre job.

But I do want to say, I do want to say, in all seriousness, the list of recommendations that were implemented throughout this committee's process cannot be overstated. And I will say and argue that most of them happened before Perlmutter got on the committee, but, you know, we have slowly moved ahead. We can't stop that. And I am really interested in the recommendations of how to extend this process.

Chair Kilmer, Vice Chair Timmons, and everybody on this committee knows where I stand. As a Member of the House Administration Committee, we should be tasked with implementing a lot more of these recommendations, and that to me is the most logical place for a permanent subcommittee on the Committee on House Administration to focus solely on making this institution better. Because that is the standing committee in the House that should be focused on making this institution better.

We hear—when somebody says pie-in-the-sky discussions about how do we get the Senate to work, you know what, we could do that through joint interaction with the Senate Rules Committee. But let's make sure we highlight the fact that the discussions and the debates that we have here and the successes, they have got to continue. I am not going to continue. Ed is not going to continue. It is going to be up to those of you who are here in this institution to make sure that the great work these folks have put in and the staffers have put in isn't forgotten.

I would like to see—and, look, as we plan ahead to what we call our roadmap to the majority, I have laid out my priorities to my hopeful successors that would create a subcommittee on modernization within the Committee on House Administration. Certainly hope to be able to populate that subcommittee. We might be able to get some more members on House Administration. But then House Administration has got to do its job, and that means we have got to have a continued focus from members who are on this subcommittee who may want to engage and be Members of the House Administration Committee, because that is where you can actually get a lot of these recommendations that are sitting, waiting to be implemented done.

The low-hanging fruit is gone. It is going to be more contentious. But the committee process is the place to work it out, and I certainly hope it is done in a bipartisan way.

Catherine, I want to thank you and your team for implementing a lot of our recommendations over the last 3.5 years. I have worked with you as a staffer. I worked with your operation as a staffer years ago. You know I have my opinions on where things should be technologically, and I know you are moving in that direction, in spite of having John Clocker, who is sitting up in the corner as part of your team.

Hi, John.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. He is taking a shot at everybody.

Mr. DAVIS. I wouldn't say it if I didn't love you, buddy.

But in all seriousness, you know better than most how difficult it can be to have a ModCom and have a House Administration Committee pull you and your team in different directions.

I want to ask you, let's say there is a subcommittee on modernization on House Administration. Is it easier then to have a single point of contact through that committee to be able to focus on implementing recommendations or do you think a better setup could exist?

Ms. SZPINDOR. I think that certainly can be beneficial to us, as long as everyone is supporting the recommendations that are being made. I think that there has to be some type of structure there, I agree with you, because we have to know where to take our direction from overall. And I, you know, work closely with the House Committee on Administration, we have worked closely with you, but I think going forward, the most important thing that you have done, quite frankly, is given us an ability to get the information, get the direction that we need on some of these recommendations to be able to implement them.

One of the primary things in any type of project that you try to do is making sure that your stakeholders are actively engaged in

what you are doing. If you don't have that, it is very, very hard to get anything done. And quite frankly, I believe one of the reasons over the years we have sometimes not always proved successful in delivering solutions is because we didn't have that contact. We didn't have individuals there behind us helping us, championing us to move forward with that. And so however it is organized, we need that support going forward.

Mr. DAVIS. You need that support, and that is my point. I am going to end with this. This place is set up to have a structure for final decisions. And this committee is great at recommendations, but the problem is, there is a next step, because House Administration has to approve a lot of those recommendations. So to me, let's get that finality in place that allows you, your teams, and the other officers to be able to know what their final direction is.

We can have the discussions, the debates on what is going to work on that subcommittee on modernization. We can do the exact same things here, but we also, when it comes time for a vote and when that vote is had, a decision is final, and you and your team know what direction you have. That to me is the best way that we can move this institution forward and get some of these great ideas into House operations.

So I want to say thanks. It has been a pleasure to serve with each and every one of you. I am humbled by the opportunity to be able to play a small role in making this place better. And I certainly know that as we move on, there is going to be a tremendous amount of activity of folks who are more interested in making Congress work because of the work that all of you are doing, but even—I want to say to my colleagues who have been a part of this, you guys are the future. You are the ones who are going to have to continue what we started here. And I am always here to offer advice, but we are going to be watching. And I am proud of each and every one of you, and thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve with you.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I know we have got Chair Lofgren on via Zoom. Let me call on her next.

Ms. LOFGREN. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I just had a few comments.

First, I think the committee has performed a useful function for our democracy by suggesting ways to systematically improve the way Congress functions; and that we have done that in a collaborative fashion, in a bipartisan fashion makes it even better.

I would just also like to thank our staff. The staff of the House Administration Committee and the Modernization Committee have worked together very collaboratively. It has really been seamless throughout this process. And as the chair and the committee know, as we have made recommendations in the Modernization Committee, we have been able to implement them. We haven't waited for a final report. We have gone ahead to implement many of the recommendations; in fact, some of them were in the works as the Modernization Committee was looking at them.

Obviously, the House Administration Committee has the primary jurisdiction over the operations of the House, but it is not the only

committee that could have jurisdiction over some of the things that we are looking at. Obviously, the Budget Committee comes to mind. That is a very large challenge, to see how that might be improved, as well as the Appropriations Committee where the chairman serves.

I would just like to say that I am eager to work with you and all the members to make sure that the promising work that we have achieved this year doesn't get lost and that we continue in effort, whether it is either in the House Administration Committee or some other format. Obviously, we need to have a discussion not only on this committee but in the broader body about what is the best way to proceed, but it is valuable. And I think the leadership shown by yourself and the ranking member really stands out as helping the whole committee be successful.

With that, I don't have additional questions, Mr. Chairman, but I do thank you for recognizing me and for the service that you have provided, along with all of the other members.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Chair Lofgren.

Next up, Ms. Van Duynes.

Go for it, Ms. Williams. Thanks. Thank you.

Ms. WILLIAMS. See how cooperative we are on this committee?

Good morning, everyone.

And, Ms. Szpindor, I know that Mr. Timmons is probably going to talk with you a lot about this when he gets to his questions, but this calendar that you talked about rolling out, the digitized calendar that could deconflict the schedules of Congress—like right now, I have a Financial Services full committee hearing that I am sure my chairwoman is wondering why I am not there as well, but we also had this committee hearing. And it never fails, every week that we have committee hearings, I either have this hearing along with T&I or this hearing along with Financial Services. So it was music to my ears reading your remarks and seeing that there was a plan to roll out a calendar that could deconflict some of the committee's schedules.

And I am just wondering what that rollout looks like, and what is the timeline for something like that?

Ms. SZPINDOR. Well, I will tell you, it is on one of our to-do lists to do. Our digital service group, which is taking that over to develop, is looking into it. But they don't have their project plan together or what they think is going to be the way in which they will do that.

The digital service team was kicked off in February, and we have spent a number of months pulling together a team that can concentrate on having that one-on-one relationship with those individuals who are interested in that particular initiative, along with a number of others that they are looking into.

So I can certainly provide updates on an ongoing basis. We are excited about it. It is something that Mr. Davis—

Ms. WILLIAMS. So am I.

Ms. SZPINDOR [continuing]. Mr. Davis brought up to me some time ago, and we think there is an opportunity. We are using some new development tools and codebases that we believe will make this much easier to do, and—

[Audio malfunction.]

Ms. SZPINDOR [continuing]. Looking into what this means. And they are going to need to work with the Clerk's organization as well, so it gives us a chance to work with them to be able to get some of the information and everything that they need. And we have a very good working relationship with them, so—

Ms. WILLIAMS. So we are not quite at a rollout phase yet, is what I am hearing.

Ms. SZPINDOR. No. I wish I could say we were, but we are in the early stages of coming together with what that is going to look like, how it is going to work. And then we are using agile processes, which allows you to go in and start some early development on it and do some small steps to get something up and working, have individuals working with your staff and others to get individuals to look at what we are doing and then develop it. But we will get you a schedule as soon as we have one that we are prepared to tell you about it, but it is one of the ones that we are moving forward with.

Ms. WILLIAMS. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I am going to call on Ms. Van Duyne next, but I do know—I think it was the Bipartisan Policy Center had just sort of a draft example of what block scheduling could look like. I don't think that deconflicts everything if you go that direction, and inevitably some committees will balk at being told when they can and can't do their hearings. But I think it would be better, right? I think it is a start from—

Ms. SZPINDOR. Yeah.

The CHAIRMAN. Because right now everything conflicts with everything. So—

Ms. SZPINDOR. Yeah.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. You know, as your office looks into that, I commend you to look at that just as a starting point.

Ms. Van Duyne.

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Well, I appreciate the fact that you have freshmen on this committee, because we really kind of get thrown—you know, I don't want to say the leftovers because that sounds really bad, but you know what I mean. When we have the number of committees that we are on, the number of subcommittees, because, you know, very few of us are on a committee, so we are on multiple committees, select committees, caucuses. How many committees are there? And then how many subcommittees are there?

I am asking you because I have no clue. I mean, we have counted, but there seems to be ones that we don't know about. Do we have like an official number of committees and subcommittees?

Ms. SZPINDOR. I am sure there is an official number. I don't know. I look through the CAO website all the time and house.gov and looking at all the—the listing of all the committees and everything. But with the subcommittees, I can't tell you.

Ms. VAN DUYNE. That is how far off we are from actually rolling this out. I mean, I look at it from a college perspective and, you know, if we can have colleges that have tens of thousands of students and probably equal number of classes to be able to figure out so there is not overlap, we should be able to do it in Congress.

Not only, I think, are we fighting with scheduling, but orientation I think is also really important. We are somewhat fresh off of that. I know it has been a year and a half, but we have got another class that is going to be coming. We came in a unique year. It was COVID. We were separated. Everybody wore masks. We didn't have events. But we also were separated from the beginning.

You know, you had your Republican orientation, you had your Democrat orientation. It would have been nice, I think, if we could have actually have met all Members that were coming in and all of our class and have done events together. I think that would have been really great.

Your point on not having bills and being rank-and-file and not knowing what we are voting on, it is not just rank-and-file. A lot of times we are not getting bills until literally hours before we are expected to vote on them, and they are multiple hundred pages bills. I don't think—a business could definitely not work that way. A government should absolutely not work that way. You are going to have fights with leadership on that, because a lot of times they are adding details up until the very moment that they come out.

How we can fix that, I don't know. I know that we have tried to have fixes in the past, you know, 24-hour, 48-hour, 72-hour mark, but it takes very small handful to be able to kind of override those rules. So having potentially not just suggestions or ideas but hard, fast rules that we can count on, regardless of what party that you are in, or majority or minority, would be very helpful.

I have got a question on CAO. How many resumes are we getting? Have you seen a decrease in the number of resumes over the last couple of years or have you seen an increase? How is that working?

Ms. SZPINDOR. For—

Ms. VAN DUYNE. For staff, for Capitol Hill staff.

Ms. SZPINDOR. Well, you know, we have just started the Resume Bank that would allow staffers and anyone interested in a staff position to be sent to us to be added or added to the Resume Bank. Within the CAO, most of all of our recruiting is within the CAO, and for the Sergeant at Arms we assess our HR department, and also for the Clerk, if they need any assistance. But I really—I know for the CAO the number of resumes we get in, but for the Member offices, I could not tell you.

I can tell you—

Ms. VAN DUYNE. And I am asking that question because from across the board and pretty much every single sector, labor shortages have been an issue. Talking with my colleagues, it hasn't been an issue getting resumes into the office.

So to your point that, you know, you have to pay more and you can, you know, keep people, the fact is that we will never, nor should we ever strive to compete with the private sector on pay. I think what we are able to give in experience and on being a market differentiator on a resume is incredibly valuable. But when we look at everything as being how much are you paying, I think we start running into problems.

But have my colleagues had problems with people applying for positions in their office? District, without a doubt, but, I mean, on Capitol Hill.

Ms. SZPINDOR. When we started the Resume Bank, which was our opportunity to give the Member offices a chance to review resumes of people who may be interested in staff positions within the offices, within the first week we had over 2,000 submitted.

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Yeah.

Ms. SZPINDOR. And I know that subsequent weeks we got more thousands of resumes. So we hope that that is at least an opportunity for people to provide resumes that they can go through, have access to the Resume Bank and look at to see if there is someone there that would be a really good candidate for their office.

Ms. VAN DUYNE. All right. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Due to scheduling conflicts, I know Mr. Cleaver is in a markup right now so I am going to call on him next.

Mr. CLEAVER. Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have Financial Services, Homeland Security, and Modernization right now. I left Homeland Security, which is one floor up, to run down here and gave some staff members my phone number so they could text me when they need me to come upstairs for a vote. And I think that is absolutely embarrassing for the United States of America to have a political body where all of the committees can literally be scheduled at the same time, and so I want to add my comments with those that were made earlier.

But the college analogy may make some sense. Well, it does make sense. I don't mean to say "may make." But the difference—because in the college system you enroll and you go there to make sure that you don't enroll in two classes that meet at the same time. And maybe—it is going to take a lot more time, but maybe that is what we need to do.

I mean, during a certain period of time we ought to—I mean, the leadership and the bodies that make the recommendations on which committee we sit on, maybe that needs to be done early, early on, like the first couple of days when we are here because, you know, we just accept the fact.

And I think it is bad for our image, because people, for example, they see Rodney Davis leaving and—well, but, I mean, they could—I mean, somebody in the public, well, he just doesn't want to be here at the meeting and he is leaving. You know, or when we leave, I mean, have to leave early; you know, people watching C-SPAN or in the committee hearing room, they don't know. They don't know how dumb this joint is.

And so, you know, I think one of the things we need to flirt with with the brainpower, like you have, in the history, you know, there ought to be some kind of period when we first—

[Audio malfunction.]

Mr. Cleaver [continuing]. Where we enroll or, I mean, you can figure that out. You know, I can do that part. But I do know that that part needs to be done.

And my final comment, Mr. Davis left, because I think—it may have been luck, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it may have been luck that they put a group of people on here who actually want to make the place run better and smoothly and who—I mean, I don't know if we could have gotten better than Graves or Timmons, you know, as vice chairs. And I have said to the chairman publicly and behind his back that I thought this has been amazing. And I am

upset even that Mr. Perlmutter is leaving. But I can get over that, but the other parts of this are really troublesome.

So anyway, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will go back to Homeland.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Cleaver.

And for those watching on C-SPAN, when Mr. Cleaver leaves, it is not that he doesn't care about the work of our committee; it is that he has to go vote in Homeland Security. So I hope you are watching and understand.

I know Vice Chair Timmons wants to weigh in here, and then I will go to Mr. Phillips.

Mr. TIMMONS. Before Mr. Cleaver leaves, I want to point something out real quick. He has three hearings right now because it is likely that we will not be here on Friday, and because of that, that makes tomorrow the fly-out day. We flew in last night. We got here at 6:30. We very well could be leaving tomorrow—who knows?—might, might not, but the committees know that, so they are scheduling everything right now.

I always talk about the 2019 calendar. We were here for 65 full days and 66 travel days. Sixty-five full days over 32 weeks, so an average of 2 days a week. When you are here 2 days a week, then you might be losing a day because something happens on a calendar and fly-out is early, you are just going to have conflict.

So while we are thinking about the calendar and the schedule and deconflicting everything, having a—having more days here and having a more predictable schedule as far as when we are here is a very important part, if not the most important part of the equation. I have more thoughts on everything else, but I will yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Phillips. And then I got Mr. Perlmutter.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And it only takes a few days of joining this institution to recognize that there is a distinct bias against both cooperation and improvement. And I will offer that I believe that is not just a competitive risk to the United States of America but a national security risk, and that is why I believe that this group, this work that we are doing is the most important work in the United States Congress. I believe this committee is the most important. And, frankly, it saddens me that it is somewhat of a metaphor for what is going on more broadly in our country and around the world, in that the most important work is ignored or dismissed, underappreciated, and some of the most trivial, unimportant is elevated in inappropriate ways.

And I just want to celebrate both our chairs, my colleagues, the staff of this extraordinary committee, and our individual staffs who have made this possible and have actually made some meaningful change in an institution that surely needs it and, frankly, has restored some of my own faith in the U.S. Congress and our country. And I want to celebrate all of us for a minute. That is my thank you.

My proposition is to somehow encourage us to work together and make some propositions for the next House rules package. And some of this can go through regular order, but we know how complicated that is, and we also know there is an absence of regular order in this institution.

I would argue that we should put together some recommendations to whomever might lead the House in the next session of Congress and actually revise our House rules to implement some of these and try to embed culture of modernization. And I say that as someone who has great appreciation for conserving, conservation of what works and progressing on the issues and areas that we can do better, and I think that starts with changing the House rules package.

I also encourage all of us to speak with leadership on both sides of the aisle to ensure that we elevate the very people that are mindful and bring that ethos to the institution, because without leadership, I don't think any of this will become successful.

But my question to you, Doctor, and to you, Ms. Hill, just a simple one: If you could wave a magic wand—you both made recommendations, but if you could wave a magic wand, based on this conversation and your own recommendations, what is your most important of all your propositions—especially you, Ms. Hill, with a variety of them—what do you think we should do singularly to take the next step? I will start with you, Doctor.

Mr. BURGAT. I have wanted that wand for a long time.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Me too.

Mr. BURGAT. And your lead-up is exactly where I would start, and in this discussion about how this committee can continue in whatever format it could is important, and there is pros and cons to each. House rules package is the ticket. I mean, it is a singular vote at the beginning of Congress that not many people pay attention to, which for a lot of you is an opportunity. And you can make serious institutional, lasting, substantive changes with a singular vote at the beginning of a Congress. That is super important and a very attractive vehicle for this committee in particular.

And so going back to the idea of House Administration, I get the logic of using that as the most logical place for these recommendations. I urge you to think about, though, the substantive changes that you will be limited in putting it in a place like that, including the things that you are frustrated with on a leadership centralization basis, right.

So the downsize of House Admin is that you are still subject to the limitations and leadership prerogatives that it is. The access to the floor will be completely limited the same way it is in a lot of your other subcommittees and committees. And so, to me, it seems like the House Administration idea is to implement what has already been recommended. Great place to work. That is obviously where the jurisdiction lies. It makes sense there is going to be a turf war for it anyway. That is implementation of already passed recommendations.

For the big, substantive, calendar-specific, all of the things that you—the non-low-hanging fruit, to Mr. Davis' point, those big institutional changes, I am a huge fan of using the rules package to create something bigger. And, again, the lack of attention to something like that in a rules package that big, I think it is an opportunity that not many people take advantage of. There is a way that you can set this up, probably in the mold of something like the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence where you create this independence, right. And that is the key point: funding independ-

ence, staff independence, procedural independence that you won't get in a typical standing subcommittee. It just won't be available to you.

So the magic wand there opens up just the opportunity for institutional change, and then it comes down to Members. It just does. And it always will in an institution like this. A lot of these things are Member-led decisions.

The idea that Chairman Kilmer can take a step back and recognize someone four seats down, not only of the Republican Party, of the minority party, that is a decision. You can't write that into House rules. You can't write that into procedure. You can't legislate behavior. There is leadership by example that is all too often forgotten in just simple, small things, something he remembered and pointed out, the feedback loop of that is infinite.

So rules package is my magic wand. I think it opens the most opportunity for big institutional change, not to discount the recommendations that have already been made. There is plenty more left to do. That is the best place to do it.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Thank you, Doctor.

Ms. Hill.

Ms. HILL. I have to say that I am grateful that Dr. Burgat is a member of the cohort that I am the coordinator of, because he certainly has the expertise in the issues that I don't have.

If I had a magic wand, what I would do is I would start with that—probably the last point that he would make. I would renew this select committee, and I would renew it with the spirit which it started with 4 years ago, to provide the energy, the drive, take all the things that have been done so far now, have the recommendations be implemented. I would give the select committee more teeth, and I would open the ears of the Senate, quite honestly.

You know, the work that we have to do over there for modernization of the whole Congress and the difference that we could make, if both Chambers could work together, would go a long ways, I think, in renewing Congress and giving us a stronger footing.

I don't pretend to be an expert on all of the rules. My goal is bringing people together. But I do know this: People matter and how they behave matter. And this committee works well in part—what a treat to see all the members here today, everyone working together. Chair Kilmer, Vice Chair Timmons, you both bring such a strong leadership to this effort, and you open the door across committees. We need to see more of that, and if we could have a committee that exactly kind of modeled and continued to model this behavior.

One of the reasons that that is so important is that committees don't have that option now. They don't see that model. They don't have anywhere else to go to know that it works.

You can see from my bio that I started years ago, right. In the eighties I was on the Hill. I started in 1989 with Congresswoman Boggs. So from that time, she would not allow us to have computers. We had electronic typewriters until today when we are looking at how we can live stream events and town hall meetings, incredible difference. We need some Members that can lean into that, love it, and embrace it in the way that you do.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Thank you. And as a freshman in 2019, when I was handed a pager, I kept that on my credenza as a nice metaphor, and I no longer have it, so we are making progress.

I want to thank you. And let me just close by thanking our chairs and our staff and my colleagues again, because it is not just the work that we are doing, but I think, most importantly, it is how we are doing it, and that starts with leadership, and I am grateful to all of you. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I want to call on Mr. Perlmutter, but before I do, you said add more teeth. Can you just double-click on that real quick before I call on Mr. Perlmutter?

Ms. HILL. Yes. I think one of the things that you have done admirably and worked so hard on is rolling out recommendations to have them available and then implementing them. If this select committee had more teeth and a stronger way to do some of the implementation and the jurisdiction, I am thinking of some kind of mechanism.

I listened to Ms. Szpindor talk about needing strong direction in terms of what they can accomplish at the CAO's office, and the strong direction can come from select committee working hand-in-hand with the Committee on House Administration if there is a mechanism built in to help do that. And I think the energy to make the change has come from the select committee. That has been my view, right, because I know the excellent professional staff on House Administration and the members. It is not that they don't want to make change; it is that sometimes other issues that are—they are having to deal with overshadow that. So if there is a way to influx those two, I would think that would be a really good idea.

The CHAIRMAN. Thanks.

Mr. Perlmutter.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. First, I want to thank the committee and you, Derek, for allowing us to visit the European Union and parliament last week. Mr. Timmons, Mr. DeSaulnier, and I had a fantastic trip that I think will bring a lot of fruit to bear in terms of suggestions that we had and have about modernizing and improving the way this place functions by looking at other contrasting parliaments and legislative bodies.

You know, a legislature is a—there is a tension between sort of norms and traditions that you had from the beginning of time, and we met with parliament, which basically is from the beginning of time. Then there is—then we sort of come into existence, the EU much later sort of on the spectrum. And we learned a lot. And what we learned was that we are not doing things too badly, but we can do a lot better by taking some of their ideas and suggestions.

And to your point, Doctor, the rules package is the place you start. Probably in 2020, for me, the three most important votes I have ever taken in my career—and I have been doing this 28 years now between the State legislature and Congress—was the election of the Speaker, the passage of the rule package, and the certification of the Presidential election. Those are the three votes I have taken, out of thousands of votes, that I consider to be the most important votes. But that rule package piece of this thing is key to how we manage our affairs, at least for 2 years coming.

As you said, administration has to implement it, but the rules package really can establish where you are going with it. Luckily, you had the vice chair sort of leading this trip, we had a member of the Rules Committee, and we had staff from the House Administration to be able to really look what things can be done.

And so, you know, this committee has been looking really in four areas: technology, personnel, campus, and member kind of relationships and how we relate to the institution.

Because I agree with Mr. Phillips—and I disagree—I agree with Ms. Van Duyne on a lot of things, but I disagree with her on a couple things. We need to make sure that this House is as equal to the other branches of government, if not more equal, and to the private sector and to other countries, that we don't need to just hamstring ourselves for whatever reason.

And one other place I disagree, and then I want to talk about one recommendation. I gave you 14 from my trip. But one other place I disagree with her, and I think that it is very important, that as a body, that we are competitive with the private sector; that just because I can go hire somebody doesn't mean that they provide services to the community that need to be done. And people learn that.

If you were working for Lindy Boggs in 1989 to start off, you don't know anything, but you were there, you were hired, but then you learn. And then if you stay, you provide good services to the people that you represent.

So I think retention is key, and we have—and I want to thank the vice chair here because he knew Ms. Szpindor had been so focused on making sure that we have good personnel and good staff and we retain good staff.

Last thing I will say where I do agree, and it was Beth Van Duyne that sort of—along with Aubrey from House Admin that gave me an idea about orientation. All right. So one of the things that we are talking about, that you talked about, Doctor, is rank-and-file Members, we feel a little disenfranchised or we have lost—we want to be more empowered, you know, that the individual Member wants to be more empowered. We have some ideas about that.

But one of the places, as a freshman coming in, you just won an election, you have got a million things going on, people coming at you from all directions. And you go to orientation, and even if they—we had had a joint orientation, it lasts for 3 days, and you don't know half the questions to ask. So then you split into the parties, you don't operate really as a class again, you know, other than that 3-day orientation or 2 days or whatever it is.

The suggestion that I am going to make that I think is a good one is that, later on, maybe 9 months out, a year out as a freshman class has gotten their feet under them and start having an idea of the questions to ask, that there be a second kind of orientation where, again, it sort of builds across the party lines kind of a class identity, as well as being able to ask—answer questions. You know, you didn't know what questions to ask in the first place, now you have got a better idea.

And that came from Beth, from Aubrey, but then also the woman who runs the House of Commons, that they suffered under COVID

just as we did and their new members coming in couldn't really be oriented in a way that allowed them to really understand when votes were going to be and all that.

So we have made improvements, I think, a lot on the technology side. We have got a lot more to do. We have made a lot of improvements on personnel. Dean should have been on this trip because he could have seen some changes to the campus that would have made things more Member and user friendly that these other—that the parliament and you had.

Member colleagues, scheduling thing, all of that and empowering Members, I will leave that to smarter people than me. And I want to just thank you, Derek, for allowing me to be part of this committee.

The CHAIRMAN. And thanks for all you contribute to our committee.

Vice Chair Timmons.

Mr. TIMMONS. Thanks, Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I will point out, Vice Chair Timmons is going to hit all the questions that I want to ask you too or most of them, so—

Mr. TIMMONS. Like I said, we have been working together too long, too long.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. And I am not leaving.

Mr. TIMMONS. Oh, sure you are not. We spent too much time together last week, so probably sick and tired of me.

So while I would—I can see arguments to try to extend the select committee, but I think we were extremely fortunate to get 4 years. We were only supposed to get 12 months, which was really only like 8 months, given the fact that in the calendar and we didn't really get up and running until March. So, you know, I think we have made a lot of great recommendations, made a lot of progress.

So I do think that there is a lot of consensus around the Subcommittee on House Administration, and I do—I am not sure there is consensus on this idea. I am going to run through a couple things and ask for your feedback.

You know, right now, there is only one Republican on each of the subcommittees, and, you know, I don't think that this subcommittee should have disparate numbers. I think if two Republicans, two Democrats, three Republicans, three Democrats, I think that would be good. It will ultimately be focused on implementation of previous recommendations from the select committee in preparation for the next select committee, and it would work closely with partners, cohort and such.

So, I mean, the question then becomes, how often do we need a select committee? I think everybody agrees it is not every 30 years. So then, is it every three, is it every four, is it every five Congresses? You know, I am not sure the answer for that, but I think we can probably find some consensus for it.

And I think the beauty of the structure, the subcommittee would be focusing on implementation and on preparation, so when the next select committee comes around we hit the ground running. The select committee is just ready to go, most of the staff is already hired, there has already been a lot of pseudo hear—I am not sure if you would call it a hearing, but, I mean, they are readying mate-

rial for the select committee and so it could ideally operate within 2 years and, you know, that's—this is another weird idea. Space shows value, so, I mean, if this is something we are serious about, I think it should have its own office space, and it should go from a subcommittee to the select committee, and it could just be its own space and we could actually maybe get a roundtable.

In the EU and the U.K., literally everybody is—well, the EU had roundtables and the U.K. had a much better setup than this. That was a much more productive setup.

But, again, I mean, if this is something that is important, and I think it is, I think finding a way to create continuity has value. Yeah, I really do think that having that setup going from a subcommittee to a select committee back and forth with three or four, five Congresses in between would allow planning to occur prior to the select committee to—the select committee can really just hit the ground running and maximize its use of time.

So I will just put that back to you all. What thoughts do you have on all of that? Ms. Szpindor, what do you think?

Ms. SZPINDOR. I think you have some very good ideas about that. From my perspective, I just want to make sure that for myself and my staff we are able to work through however this committee will evolve to be able to do our job based on what you are asking us, understanding what you ask us. Having the ability to sit down and talk with you about options, about how we are going to move forward with things, that is what is a need that my department has.

So however it is structured, as long—whether it is going through the House Committee on Administration to someone or some other away, we have to be able to sit down and have constructive conversations with whomever is making recommendations and whomever is going to help us prioritize the work that we do, or at least review our suggestions for prioritization, because we do a lot of the prioritization ourselves. We have been traditionally sitting down with both sides of the House Committee on Administration, after talking to you, and reviewing those initiatives that we are going to be moving forward with.

So we just need the assistance and the information. And I do agree that to make it a full recommendation that we can understand, having the bipartisan perspectives of having enough of the bipartisan individuals providing us information from a data-gathering perspective and planning of our projects is extremely beneficial. So thank you.

Mr. TIMMONS. Dr. Burgat.

Mr. BURGAT. As with almost everything here, I think it is important to start to answer your question with a question of depends on what your goals are. What are your goals for this select committee? Historically, there has been several types, from minimally successful to overwhelmingly successful, and their goals differed from the outset, and I think that is important.

Your point about the membership being important, particularly on the minority side, just to have one minority representative on the subcommittee, you can imagine, let alone if they are not even present, how overrun they could be. But even then you are still subject to the full committee's limitations and access to the floor and things like that. It will still be limiting what you can do.

In terms of the question of how often a select committee or some version of this committee is necessary, I think it is important to point out that this committee started kind of behind the eight ball in a couple of different ways. It had been a long time since the previous one, and that previous one was one of those minimally successful ones, right. So you had a bunch of legwork to do to catch up to what that had been missing then.

And then just the time period, the subject of the time period since that previous select committee and now has been the most biggest change we have ever seen across almost every single variable you can think of, technology included. So you had more to do because more had changed, and that pace of change isn't slowing down anytime soon either. So to try to systematize in five Congresses from now, those—each period of those five Congresses, those 10-year periods are not going to be equal. You are going to basically try to fix what the last committee left behind and try to make up for.

So if your goal is to proactively change the institution, you have got to be permanent. If your goal is to retroactively change what went wrong or what was leftover, then the systematized every so often can serve that purpose.

Just as you mentioned the space equals value, that is absolutely true, from parking spaces to committee room space. So does permanence. So does permanence. It sets a tone, it sets a message—it sends a message that this is not interally important to us, that we can just wait for the next one.

I think we are at a point now with some of the most important institutional questions in a way that we haven't been in a long, long time that permanence speaks to the moment of now, that only then can you start to talk about the non-low-hanging fruit, the civility, the ones that are tearing us out at our seams, the permanence of a committee like that, to say nothing of the independence that you can set up to make those changes, the teeth that you talk about, access to the floor, permanence in stature, that we don't just have to wait you out or wait your recommendations out, your independent funding streams, your permanent office space, all of those speak to the importance of the moment. And I think there is no more important moment than now to get at the types of questions that I think you all are trying to get at.

Mr. TIMMONS. Ms. Hill.

Ms. HILL. I would agree with Dr. Burgat again, no surprise on that. And what I have heard from you today, from members here, is that just modernization as a matter of course over time, waiting for extended periods isn't an option, right. That is one thing. And that this is the most important work going on in Congress today, making sure that everything—you are up to date, you are modernized, you have got the best staff. It will lead everything else.

My organization, the Partnership for Public Service, our genesis and the reason we came about was to help the executive branch. The reason that we are here today is because we understand how vitally important Congress is to making the executive branch healthy. And that is why I have spent the last 4 years at the partnership working on this very issue.

I don't think—and I speak for myself, I have not put this question out to the cohort or received any kind of how often it should be, but if you think it is a periodic time, every 2 years, every 4 years, I can see a cycle, Vice Chair Timmons, where we now have almost 200 recommendations, right. So to take—and that is why we—I framed my testimony in the way that I did.

To take the next 2 years and put a primary focus on implementing those recommendations makes a good deal of sense, but in that timeframe, you need to still be looking at what needs to be changed next. We look at all the changes that can occur in a 2-year period, and you guys have worked through the most difficult of those times. There is just so much more coming at us today than ever before. I think we need to be prepared for the change.

So I think we might cycle in that way to implement for a couple of years, while still looking at possible modernization ways—things that we need to do, and then 2 years after that we go hard at making new recommendations—

Mr. TIMMONS. [Inaudible.]

The CHAIRMAN. I think there is a country song that uses the lyric “how can I miss you when you won't go away,” and I am conscious that there is a little bit of that dynamic with this committee in that it was established for a year and here we still are. If you had asked me prior to this hearing sort of what I would do, I think I would set up a subcommittee on House Admin. Haven't checked with the leaders of House Admin about how they feel about that yet, but that is probably what I would do, and I would probably make it equal members and have them focus on implementation. And I would probably have our committee make a recommendation in that regard, and I would probably have us make a recommendation to say every three or four Congresses there ought to be something established to look at ongoing institutional improvement. I think it would make a decent point for just keeping it rolling.

Having said that, though, you know, I think it begs the question, other than focusing on implementation, which is probably where House Admin and House Rules, the bulk of the work is going to happen through them, what other—you know, Dr. Burgat, you said your students want us to focus on how do you empower rank-and-file Members. I would argue, some of the recommendations we have made have been in that spirit, but—so let me ask you, you know, if you were setting the work plan for a select committee that got renewed next Congress, what would you have it work on?

Mr. BURGAT. Incentivizing legislating, almost—and with legislating, incentivizing bipartisan oversight. The problem there is that now you are involving incentive structures fully outside the Chamber, right, from how elections are run to how districts are drawn to the types of Members that you are going to get here, including this next freshman class. There is going to be one that ran diametrically opposed to the institution and won because of it. And not only are you going to be trying to welcome them into the conversation, they are going to be incentivized to stay out of it. That is impossible. That is sincerely impossible, and better you than me to try to—to help with that.

But in terms of getting the ones—not everyone is like that. Not everyone is the flamethrower, and I think that you—in conversa-

tions you can kind of discern who has some sort of issue that they want to get advanced. The problem is is that if they are told from the day they get here that access is only through a very few types of ways to get implemented, your legislative text, not every Member cares about every bill nor should they, but there should be a reasonable path, including on the minority side, a reasonable path that you know that your work will pay off. It may not include a lobbying pass, but just a vote, just a markup, just a debate, just an amendment. Those are ways that you will think twice about burning the bridge that you might have otherwise done.

And I think that anything that you can do to incentivize that through rules, through—and it is always committees, always has been committees, and it always starts with the chair and ranking member setting those standards, offering those paths to legislative productivity is the be-all/end-all for me.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Hill.

Ms. HILL. Am I on now?

Thank you for your question. I think one of the things that I would look at, I would look at—continue to look at the staffing issues that we are currently looking at. As I was listening to Dr. Burgat's testimony, I think those students that are in his classes that want those changes are our future, right. And they are not just our future as staffers and staffing, but they are our future as Members. And when they enter the institution—as we know, it is going to have to happen, right. Demographics are on their side—we need to be prepared for that.

And those are some of the issues that we need to be considering. How do we make sure that as Members enter, they are prepared to serve their constituents, they are prepared to reach out in ways that they need to be able to do that, right.

And, again, I think one of the recommendations I would urge you to make is that we do begin to have talks with the Senate, not even begin but before a joint select committee so that we know and send a signal to our friends in the other Chamber, we need to do something here.

So I think the work is still yet to be done. I too, Chair Kilmer, agree with you about the Committee on House Administration may be a very good place to be doing that now. And I have to say that I speak for myself individually, because it seems like the timing is right. My fear in that is that we don't come back to these serious modernization issues in a real manner quickly.

The CHAIRMAN. Would you do every three Congresses?

Ms. HILL. I would do it every other. Every other.

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Burgat, do you agree with that?

Mr. BURGAT. I am fine with that. I think you can set the floor, a minimum of every X number, and then as necessary conditions arise jump to it and necessary conditions arise.

The CHAIRMAN. Yeah. It is funny, I have thought a lot about this, right. And Chris, from Roll Call, thank you for being here. He asked, you know, so what did the committee not take up that you wish it had? And so I spent a lot of time thinking about this, and a lot of it is either things outside of our jurisdiction or things where it is tricky to get a two-thirds vote, right.

I mean, if you asked me some of the things that are broken in Congress, I would say, you know, role of money, the way district boundaries are drawn, and the way Members are selected through primaries probably drive a lot of the kind of conflict entrepreneurship we see within the institution.

I am not sure a select committee now, next year, or in the future is likely to take up those issues. Probably argue cable news and social media also contribute. I don't even know where to start on that, and I am not certain it is something that a committee like this could work on, but maybe it could. I don't know. It is certainly something I have been chewing on as this, you know, at least as we sprint to the last 4 months of this.

I actually also think that one of the things that makes tricky this issue around schedule is the difference between where we are and where a college is. People are already enrolled in their class, right. You have got Members who are already on committee, and so deconflicting—even the challenge of block scheduling is you are either putting someone in a position of having conflict or having to give something up. Nobody wants to give something up when they have accrued seniority, so that does make it a little bit tricky.

I think we could deconflict it more than it is right now, and so I am really pleased to hear that the CAO is working on that. I think we need some help, and the sooner the better, because as we roll into the next Congress, we are just going to have the exact same dynamic as you saw in this committee where members are in three hearings at the same time. So I think that is really important.

I also, Ms. Szpindor, I wanted to get at just getting a sense of how you and your office tracks implementation of the recommendations that fall under your jurisdiction. You know, do you kind of have a checklist that you work off of or is it more ad hoc based on what members of your team have sort of prioritized and front burnered?

And give us direction—I mean, I actually think we—I am going to make a statement and you may disagree with it. Like, I think we got better at working with your office over time just trying to vet things in terms of, okay, here is what we are actually thinking about, how could we word this in a way that is more implementable. But give us some direction as we make recommendations to future reform efforts, how might we best work with you on implementation going forward?

Ms. SZPINDOR. Well, the answer is, yes, I have many lists, and those of my staff that are watching know I am a very old project manager from many days back, and I believe in planning and then executing the plan and having the expectations that you meet. So we do have a list. We use a product called ClickUp to track our projects, and we have regular meetings on a monthly basis where I sit down with my staff and others to review the projects and the status of the projects that we have.

The modernization initiatives that we are working on are part of that. I ask questions about where we are. It tracks—this tool tracks any issues that we are finding with that particular initiative. It tracks who the primary support person is for that initiative. So it is built into me to have tools that I can use to understand

at any point in time where initiative may not be doing too well, and maybe we need to talk about it, maybe we need to add additional resources, maybe we need to look at what the funds are that we are actually allowing that individual to use to bring in some additional help.

So we have a list, it is maintained, it is reviewed. It is the list that I review with the chiefs of staff and other members of the CHA. So we have all of your projects that you have requested that I have talked about in my testimony listed there.

Do you mind if I ask you a question?

The CHAIRMAN. Sure. We are a weird committee, so sure.

Ms. SZPINDOR. I mean, we are trying to be more informal here. But I am listening to a lot of the things about the timing and how often some type of committee in some form should meet and everything.

Being in technology, I know how rapidly everything changes, and I just want to make sure that—and it is things nobody—we all know how things have changed in the past couple of years. Okay. So how do we really maintain this momentum?

I mean, we have got all of these initiatives that you all have brilliantly come up with, and we are working with you on, but it could be tomorrow, next week, or next month that something significant could come up that would require us to focus on that and maybe have to push some of these things to the background. So, you know, it is almost like every month there is something else coming out.

So how do we stay current, I think, is the question I am asking, given the rapid change in our environment, in technology, in staffing, in everything going on in this world without there being some consistency along the road if we are looking at extending anything with this committee?

The CHAIRMAN. I think each of you testified to the value of having these topics sit somewhere permanently, right. And I think the Subcommittee on House Admin, particularly in terms of the engagement with your office, is probably a good place to do it. I, again, say that without having talked to Chair Lofgren about that, but I have talked to Ranking Member Davis of the House Admin Committee, and he thinks that is a good idea. He has been pretty vocal about that.

But I do think there is value in having some subcommittee or committee going to bed every night thinking about how are we working on implementation and waking up every morning focused on implementation.

I also take to heart the comments that have been made about, you know, the need to continue engaging on these issues as issues come up. I just, my sense is, particularly since this select committee was extended four times the length it was initially envisioned, I am just not sure it is a likely outcome that it be made permanent. And so to me the next best thing is our committee making a recommendation, say, no more than, you know—or no less frequently than every three or four Congresses.

The other thing I have thought about, and I don't know, Ms. Hill, I am actually kind of curious what the future of the cohort looks like, particularly if this committee expires. You know, one thought that I have had also—we haven't talked about this. Again, we are

informal—you could establish a Fix Congress Caucus, right. And so people will self-select, getting back to the people proposition. It is a lot easier to engage on these issues with people who actually want to improve the institution. So you could set up something—you know, there is caucuses dealing with all sorts of issues. In the interim between the expiration of this committee and a new committee popping up, you could do that.

Now, the challenge is, you know, that is only as good as the members of the caucus are committed to the work of the caucus, right. So you almost want to make sure that there is—you don't want to staff it, you know, you don't want to have Members actually put some dough up to hire someone to run the show or dedicate a certain amount of their staff time to the work of that.

I don't know your reaction to that. And, again, I am curious, if we set up something like that, does that make more likely the continued engagement of the cohort?

Ms. HILL. I think—let me just take a step back from it, because the cohort is an interesting mix. Of the 45 organizations, there are some who can lobby, there are some who can't. So some of those who can't provide—I want to give you this background. Some of those who can't provide expertise and guidance, and they feel very strongly that it is—and we all do—I think it is important to keep the cohort strong, right. And so we are in the process of determining how best to do that as this committee sunsets.

But my impression as we have gone through this year, because we have started to talk about it early on in the year, just like my testimony today, we started to talk about this process way back in February, at which point we went through some discussions. And thank you to Vice Chair Timmons and your stated purpose of we are going to run to the wire, we put that on the back shelf.

However, we haven't put on the back shelf the idea of do we stay together. Four years ago, there were members who were a smaller cohort. You know, they came together 2 years ago when we weren't sure that the select committee was going to be extended. It was a wonderful moment, I think, for the entire cohort as we were then able to sit around the table to gauge the closeness that we had and the trust that we had in each other and how we have grown, and that only has increased over the last 2 years.

And what happened for us is, you have witnessed with the civility and collaboration working group that we had and the civic engagement working group. We not only pull members of the cohort to work on those issues to come up with recommendations for this committee, but we also pulled from other groups outside of the cohort, whether that is the bridging community or others who are extremely interested in the same issue.

So I don't see the cohort going away. I see the cohort as continuing, and I am not sure what that—you know, how we will set that up. We are working on that now. But I think it is important that you know, whoever is working on this issue on modernization, that there is a strong contingent outside of Congress that is very engaged on these issues—

The CHAIRMAN. Yeah.

Ms. HILL [continuing]. And they care deeply about them.

The CHAIRMAN. I really appreciate that. And that is probably a good point on which to end this discussion, unless anyone has anything burning that they didn't share that they want to.

Okay. With that, I would like to thank our witnesses for their testimony today, and I would like to thank our committee members for their participation.

I would like to thank C-SPAN for being here. Thank you.

And for—Chris, thank you for showing up and following the work of our committee. We are clearly a viral phenomenon at this point.

I also just want to shout out the staff of our committee for the great work that they do setting up amazing hearings, this being our last one. I want to just applaud their excellent work in setting this up. We can literally applaud them if you are up for it.

We are not done. We have got a bunch of recommendations we still have to make, and so I am going to save my vicious attacks on Rodney Davis until we get through that markup. And my gratitude to the rest of the committee too, I intend to reserve for that.

So, without objection, all members will have 5 legislative days within which to submit additional written questions for the witnesses to the chair which will be forwarded to the witnesses for their response. I ask our witnesses to please respond as promptly as you are able.

Without objection, all members will have 5 legislative days within which to submit extraneous materials to the chair for inclusion in the record.

With that, this hearing is adjourned. Thanks, everybody.

[Whereupon, at 11:48 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]

