

MARKUP OF H.R. 7593 AND H.R. 7592

MARKUP
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MODERNIZATION
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE
ADMINISTRATION
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

APRIL 11, 2024

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MARKUP OF H.R. 7593 AND H.R. 7592

April 11, 2024

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

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:02 a.m., in room 1310, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Stephanie Bice [Chair of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Bice, Carey, Kilmer, and Morelle.

Staff present: Annemarie Cake, Professional Staff and Deputy Clerk.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. STEPHANIE BICE, CHAIRWOMAN, A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM OKLAHOMA

Chairwoman BICE. The Modernization Subcommittee will come to order. I note that a quorum is present.

Without objection, the Chair is authorized to declare a recess at any time.

The Subcommittee meets today pursuant to notice to consider two bills, H.R. 7592 and H.R. 7593.

As required by House rules, copies of both measures have been made available to the Members and the public at least 24 hours in advance.

I now recognize myself for the purpose of making an opening statement.

A few weeks ago, on March 20, the Modernization Subcommittee held its first legislative hearing. Today, the Subcommittee is holding its first markup.

I would like to also note that this is the first markup that a Subcommittee on House Administration has held in 31 years. It is a lot of firsts in the span of a few weeks. I certainly want to thank Ranking Member Kilmer, Mr. Carey, Mr. Morelle for all of the time and effort they have put into getting us here today.

Subcommittees can play an important role in the legislative process, and we are demonstrating that through our work here. All four Members of this Subcommittee worked together to introduce the bills that we are marking up today. These measures will help streamline processes and improve the way the Congressional Research Service works on behalf of Congress.

By prioritizing a more efficient Congress, we are saving taxpayer dollars.

H.R. 7592 would eliminate the Constitution Annotated, or CONAN, printed requirement and replace it with a digitized

version. This will eliminate the cost associated with printing a hardbound version, which according to CRS and GPO, would save just over a million dollars. The digital version is regularly updated, and CRS is prepared to continue improving its user features.

For those that may be watching, this is what the Constitution Annotated looks like. It is printed every 10 years, and the minute it is printed, it is almost completely out of date because it is being updated so frequently. We are trying to move this online.

H.R. 7593 would modernize CRS' access to Federal agency data and information, also creating efficiencies.

In order to provide timely and accurate research and analysis to Congress, CRS needs quick and reliable access to data. While CRS' work is held up by bureaucratic processes and procedures, our work is held up. That is unacceptable, and our constituents deserve better.

CRS brought these costs and time-saving measures to the Subcommittee's attention, and we were happy to work with the agency to support their ongoing modernization efforts.

PREPARED STATEMENT FROM CHAIRWOMAN BICE

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At this time, I now recognize Ranking Member Kilmer for 5 minutes for the purpose of offering an opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. DEREK KILMER, RANKING MEMBER, A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM WASHINGTON

Mr. KILMER. Thank you, Madam Chair and my colleagues, for joining us here for our first Modernization Subcommittee markup. As the Chairwoman mentioned, we have not had a House Adminis-

tration Subcommittee markup in over 30 years. I know that we are now tearing it up on C-Span 8, The Ocho.

Today we are not focusing on the past. We are reviewing two bills that bring the Congressional Research Service and, by extension, this institution further into the future. Both bills we are considering tackle problems we identified on the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress. I want to thank everyone on the Subcommittee for partnering with Chair Bice and me and for co-sponsoring both bills.

As the Chairwoman mentioned, H.R. 7593, the Modernizing the Congressional Research Service's Access to Data Act, speaks to the Select Committee's recommendation that states that congressional support agencies should report on challenges and potential solutions for accessing Federal data.

CRS statute, developed in the 1970's, states that Federal agencies need to comply with data requests from Congress to serve Congressional Committees. However, given the lack of explicit statutory reference to personal offices, CRS leadership has indicated that they at times have struggled to access necessary information from Federal agencies to execute their mission.

CRS should be able to update reports on nationally significant issues proactively and respond to specific Member office requests, and their access should be on par with that provided to other leg branch support agencies, like the CBO, for example.

As I mentioned before at this Subcommittee previously, my team and I utilize CRS regularly. Thankfully, they have not put a restraining order out against my staff for how regularly. The legislative work that our office puts forward is better because CRS engages with us. It matters that they have access to the Federal data that they need to do their jobs.

Furthermore, the Select Committee recommended that Congressional Committees, including this one, should examine support agency authorities and determine if they need to be updated. In this spirit, CRS brought the CONAN issue to our attention. As the Chairwoman mentioned, under existing law, the Library of Congress is required to produce terrifically heavy hardbound copies of the Constitution with annotations, which is awesome for arms day if you are looking for a little exercise, not super for taxpayers.

That is why this bill, if it passes, can save valuable CRS staff capacity, as well as nearly a million dollars for taxpayers, continuing to ensure that the American people have access to the information that they need.

Thanks again to my colleagues, to the Subcommittee Chairwoman, and our Subcommittee colleagues. I look forward to moving these bills to modernize CRS forward and to continuing the Subcommittee's vital work to improve Congress' ability to serve the American people.

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With that, I yield back.

Chairwoman BICE. Thank you, Representative Kilmer.

Do either Mr. Carey, Rep. Carey, or Rep. Morelle wish to make an opening statement?

Representative Morelle, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOSEPH MORELLE, RANKING MEMBER, A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM NEW YORK

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Not so much an opening statement. Two things that occurred to me. First of all—not one of the two things, but I thought CONAN was just that you had to be Conan the Barbarian to be able to lift this thing.

Just two things I want to point out. First of all, these are substantive changes, and they may not set the world on fire, but making substantive, positive changes that make the place more efficient is something we should all be interested in.

Secondly, I just want to thank the Members, particularly the Chair and the Ranking Member. This is really the way we ought to be doing things in Congress; Subcommittees meeting, talking about substantive issues, trying to find common ground and commonsense solutions to challenges and moving along.

Just wanted to thank you both for your leadership and getting this to the Subcommittee and, hopefully, to the full Committee for consideration.

I yield back.

Chairwoman BICE. Thank you, Representative. I appreciate the comments.

First item on the agenda today is H.R. 7592. The clerk will please report the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 7592——

Chairwoman BICE. Without objection, the first reading of the bill is dispensed with.

Also, without objection, the bill shall be considered as read and open to amendment at any point.

[The House bill H.R. 7592 follows:]

I

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7592

To direct the Librarian of Congress to promote the more cost-effective, efficient, and expanded availability of the Annotated Constitution and pocket-part supplements by replacing the hardbound versions with digital versions.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 8, 2024

Mrs. BICE (for herself, Mr. CAREY, Mr. KILMER, and Mr. MORELLE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on House Administration

A BILL

To direct the Librarian of Congress to promote the more cost-effective, efficient, and expanded availability of the Annotated Constitution and pocket-part supplements by replacing the hardbound versions with digital versions.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. REPEAL REQUIREMENT FOR CONGRESSIONAL**
2 **RESEARCH SERVICE TO PREPARE ANNO-**
3 **TATED CONSTITUTION AND SUPPLEMENTS IN**
4 **HARDBOUND VERSION.**

5 (a) REPEAL.—The first section of Public Law 91–
6 589 (2 U.S.C. 168) is amended—

7 (1) by striking “the Librarian of Congress” and
8 inserting “(a) subject to subsection (b), the Librar-
9 ian of Congress”; and

10 (2) by adding at the end the following new sub-
11 section:

12 “(b)(1) Upon the completion of the October 2031
13 term of the Supreme Court and upon the completion of
14 each tenth October term of the Supreme Court thereafter,
15 the Librarian of Congress shall have prepared a digital
16 decennial revised edition of the Constitution Annotated,
17 which shall contain annotations of all decisions theretofore
18 rendered by the Supreme Court construing provisions of
19 the Constitution, in place of the hardbound decennial re-
20 vised edition of the Constitution Annotated described in
21 subsection (a)(3).

22 “(2) Upon the completion of the October 2023 term
23 of the Supreme Court and upon the completion of each
24 subsequent October term of the Supreme Court beginning
25 in an odd-numbered year (the final digit of which is not
26 a 1), the Librarian shall have prepared a digital cumu-

1 lative pocket-part supplement to the most recent decennial
2 revised edition of the Constitution Annotated, which shall
3 contain cumulative annotations of all such decisions ren-
4 dered by the Supreme Court which were not included in
5 the most recent revised edition of the Constitution Anno-
6 tated, in place of the hardbound editions of the cumulative
7 pocket-part supplement described in subsection (a)(4).”.

8 (b) ENSURING AVAILABILITY OF DIGITAL
9 VERSIONS.—Section 2 of Public Law 91–589 (2 U.S.C.
10 168a) is amended—

11 (1) by striking “All hardbound” and inserting
12 “(a) All hardbound”; and

13 (2) by adding at the end the following new sub-
14 section:

15 “(b)(1) The digital decennial revised editions of the
16 Constitution Annotated prepared under subsection (b)(1)
17 of the first section of this Joint Resolution and the digital
18 cumulative pocket-part supplements prepared under sub-
19 section (b)(2) of the first section of this Joint Resolution
20 shall be available at a public website of the Library of Con-
21 gress.

22 “(2) The Librarian of Congress shall ensure the con-
23 tinuing availability of the documents referred to in para-
24 graph (1) to Congress and the public.”.

1 (c) REPEAL OF ADDITIONAL PRINTING REQUIRE-
2 MENTS.—

3 (1) MANDATORY PRINTING OF ADDITIONAL
4 COPIES.—Section 3 of Public Law 91–589 (2 U.S.C.
5 168b) is amended—

6 (A) by striking “There shall be printed”
7 and inserting “(a) There shall be printed”; and

8 (B) by adding at the end the following new
9 subsection:

10 “(b) Subsection (a) does not apply after completion
11 of the October 2023 term of the Supreme Court, and the
12 Librarian of Congress shall provide the decennial revised
13 editions of the Constitution Annotated and the cumulative
14 pocket part supplements prepared under this Joint Reso-
15 lution exclusively in a digital format available at a public
16 website of the Library of Congress.”.

17 (2) PRINTING OF ADDITIONAL COPIES PURSU-
18 ANT TO CONCURRENT RESOLUTION.—Section 4 of
19 Public Law 91–589 (2 U.S.C. 168c) is repealed.

○

Chairwoman BICE. Do any Members seek recognition to offer amendments or speak on the bill?

Seeing none, if not, the question now occurs on reporting H.R. 7592 favorably to the full Committee.

All those in favor, say aye.

All those opposed, no.

In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it, and the bill is reported favorably to the full Committee.

The next item on our agenda is 7593. The clerk will please report the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 7593—

Chairwoman BICE. Without objection, the first reading of the bill is dispensed with.

Also, without objection, the bill shall be considered as read and open to amendment at any point.

[The House bill H.R. 7593 follows:]

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7593

To enhance the authority of the Director of the Congressional Research Service to obtain information directly from agencies of the Federal government.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 8, 2024

Mrs. BICE (for herself, Mr. CAREY, Mr. KILMER, and Mr. MORELLE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on House Administration

A BILL

To enhance the authority of the Director of the Congressional Research Service to obtain information directly from agencies of the Federal government.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Modernizing the Con-
5 gressional Research Service’s Access to Data Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. ACCESS OF CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE**
2 **TO GOVERNMENT INFORMATION.**

3 (a) DIRECT ACCESS TO INFORMATION.—Section 203
4 of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C.
5 166) is amended—

6 (1) by redesignating subsection (j) as sub-
7 section (k); and

8 (2) by inserting after subsection (i) the fol-
9 lowing new subsection:

10 “(j)(1) In carrying out the duties and functions of
11 the Congressional Research Service under subsection (d),
12 the Director is authorized to secure books, records, cor-
13 respondence, memoranda, papers, documents, secure in-
14 formation, and other data in all forms directly from the
15 various departments, agencies, and establishments of the
16 executive branch of the Government and the regulatory
17 agencies and commissions of the Government as the Direc-
18 tor determines to be necessary to carry out the request,
19 and all such departments, agencies, establishments, and
20 regulatory agencies and commissions shall furnish the Di-
21 rector with all such available material in a timely manner.

22 “(2) With respect to books, records, correspondence,
23 memoranda, papers, documents, secure information, and
24 other data in all forms obtained under paragraph (1), the
25 Director shall maintain the same level of confidentiality
26 as is required by law of the department, agency, establish-

1 ment, or regulatory agency or commission from which it
2 is obtained. Officers and employees of the Congressional
3 Research Service shall be subject to the same statutory
4 penalties for unauthorized disclosure or use as officers or
5 employees of the department, agency, establishment, or
6 regulatory agency or commission from which it is ob-
7 tained.”.

8 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 203(d)(1)
9 of such Act (2 U.S.C. 166(d)(1)) is amended in the matter
10 following subparagraph (C) by striking “and in the per-
11 formance of this duty” and all that follows through “com-
12 ply with such request;”.

○

Chairwoman BICE. Do any Members wish to seek recognition to offer amendments or speak on the bill?

Seeing none, the question now occurs on reporting H.R. 7593 favorably to the full Committee.

All those in favor, say aye.

Those opposed, no.

In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it, and the bill is favorably reported to the full Committee.

If there is no further business to come before this Subcommittee, without objection, the Subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:10 a.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

