

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

GPO—A NETWORK READY FOR THE FUTURE

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 27, 1996

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the work conducted by a very important and often forgotten office which serves Congress each and every day. The Government Printing Office [GPO] has seen vast changes in its 136 years of service to the Congress and was recently acknowledged for its ability to reach toward the future in the much respected trade publication *In-Plant Graphics*.

I would like to share this article with my colleagues and the public, as I believe it aptly captures the breadth of the work conducted by the GPO and addresses the great resource the GPO is to the Government. The Government Printing Office and the employees who do the work stand ready and prepared to deal with the challenges they face ahead, but more importantly, the GPO stands ready to meet its mission of doing the Government's printing in a timely and cost-effective manner.

GPO: NETWORKED, MODERNIZED, AND READY FOR THE FUTURE

(As the king of all in-plants, the 136-year-old Government Printing Office is a slimmer, more modern version of its former self—but challenges still remain)

(By Bob Neubauer)

As darkness wraps itself tightly around the nation's capital, the keyboard operators at the Government Printing Office (GPO) glance anxiously from their computer terminals toward the U.S. Capitol dome, visible through their windows.

Atop the dome glows a light. When it's on, Congress is in session. When Congress is in session, every detail of its proceedings is being transcribed and delivered to the folks in this room to be input into the Congressional Record database.

When the light goes out, it means the end is in sight, and soon their frenzied keyboarding will be over for another day.

Sometimes the light stays on for a long, long time. That's the nature of life at the GPO. The 9-to-5 life is not part of the deal. Long after the dome light goes dark and the Record database has been compiled, prepress and press workers are wide awake, hustling to convert this digital data to plates and get the Record printed and delivered to Congress by 9 a.m.

And with the average Record comprising more than 200 pages—about the same amount of type as four to six metropolitan daily newspapers—this is a daunting task indeed.

The GPO has been handling congressional printing since 1860, after experiments with contract printing failed miserably. Much has changed.

Today, under the leadership of Public Printer Michael DiMario, up to 80 percent of the GPO's work is procured from the private sector, leaving only complex, time- and security-critical work like the Record to be

printed at the GPO's downtown Washington, D.C., headquarters.

With three buildings containing almost 35 acres of floor space, the GPO is a massive operation. It generates \$800 million a year and employs 3,830 people. In addition to printing for Congress, the GPO also handles most executive branch printing.

A HEAVY LOAD

Some examples of the GPO's workload are: The Federal Register, a daily publication that contains about 200 pages and has a press run of 23,000.

The U.S. Budget, which is produced under tight security and updated up until the last minute.

Daily business calendars for the House of Representatives and Senate. They are about 16 pages long at the beginning of a session and more than 200 pages by the end.

The President's annual economic report, a 400-page publication.

U.S. passports are also produced under tight security.

But with more than 10,000 copies required by 9 a.m. every morning that Congress is in session—even when sessions stretch through the night to the following day—the Congressional Record takes top priority among the jobs printed by the GPO.

The Record is also available online on the World Wide Web (<http://www.access.gpo.gov>) within an hour from the time the final page is sent to the pressroom. So far, users have downloaded an average of 2 million documents per month from 58 databases, which include the Record, the Register and other documents.

"We're able to make electronic products available to everyone," remarks DiMario. In addition to offering Web, modem and telnet availability of documents, he says, the GPO runs the Federal Depository Library program, making government publications available through a network of 1,400 libraries across the country.

Most of the work that goes into the Record, acknowledges Robert Schwenk, superintendent of the electronic photo-composition division, involves generating the electronic database. Tasks such as keyboarding, proofing, revising, assembling and electronic composing make up about two thirds of the cost of producing the Record.

Printing is done on a trio of new Rockwell web presses that were designed especially for the GPO. They can robotically handle all bundles and automatically strap them. When the webs aren't being used for the Record, the Register is keeping them busy.

There is always plenty of work to be done at the GPO to keep the equipment in action, and priorities change constantly throughout the day. Jobs are occasionally even pulled off of presses so that more important ones can be done.

"The work has to be done to meet, first and foremost, legislative, congressional priorities," notes GPO Staff Assistant Andrew Sherman—even if that means wasting part of a job and throwing the schedule off.

GPO employees, DiMario observes, have adapted well to this environment and are a hard-working lot.

"They really do believe they're doing important work to serve the public," he says. "They're very proud of the products they produce."

The GPO employs a vast assortment of digital and traditional graphic arts tech-

nologies—an intriguing mix of old and new. Hand binding and page-end marbling of some books, along with hand-set type for gold stamping, contrast sharply with the GPO's fiber-optic connections to Capitol Hill, CD recorders and computers numbering into the hundreds.

The GPO receives Senate proceedings via fiber-optic transmission from Capitol Hill for up to half of the Senate portion of the Record. Drafts of new legislation are received digitally from the House and Senate Legislative Counsel's office. About 80 percent of the Register is transmitted to the GPO by laser beam from the Office of the Federal Register.

"We're a 20th-century agency moving into the 21st," comments DiMario. The GPO is constantly exploring alternate methods of document dissemination, like CD-ROM and multi-media, depending on the needs of customers.

"We're attempting to be the multimedia producer of government publications, and we're restructuring the agency along those lines," DiMario continues. "That does not diminish the value of in-plant production of paper products, although we recognize that in time that need is going to go down."

THE PUSH TO PRIVATIZE

Though the GPO's high-tech capabilities may be impressive, certain government factions, caught up in the privatization fervor, see them as extravagant and are gunning to close the GPO, calling it wasteful. They believe that government printing should be contracted out to the private sector, supposedly saving the government millions.

It's not that easy, Sherman cautions.

"We have expressed skepticism that a similar capability exists in the private sector," he notes.

First of all, the GPO already outsources up to 80 percent of its printing. What is retained could not easily be handled by an outside supplier. Producing the Record, for example—with page counts fluctuating from 10 to a record 1,912 pages, and source material arriving in many different forms, including handwritten notes—by 9 a.m. every day, would be a challenge for even the largest printer.

The GPO is staffed to handle those heavy workloads but has enough other work, such as bills or hearings, to keep employees busy when the Record is smaller. Could a private printer keep a sizable staff on hand just to be prepared for the busy times?

If the Record were contracted out, the printer would also be responsible for converting the data and making it available on the Web each day. And with so much data coming in from Congress via fiber-optic connections, private sector printers would have to equip themselves with the same technologies and be provided with access to Congress' network.

In fact, with so much sharing of information between the Record and various bills, reports and other government databases, private contractors would require access to numerous currently secure government networks. The security of other documents, such as the Budget of the United States and the President's annual Economic Report, would also be put to a test.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

Sherman points out that the GPO has already been busy scrutinizing itself and cutting back on printing to save money. Between 10,000 and 12,000 copies of the Record are now being produced, compared with 18,000 a year ago. Many GPO regional plants have been or are about to be closed. Since February 1993 the GPO has slashed its work force by about 900 positions, saving \$45 million annually.

SERVICE STILL TAKES PRIORITY

Though the GPO continues to be a target of well-meaning legislators, Sherman stresses that the organization's main interest is serving the public, not merely fighting for survival.

"Our job is to help everyone perform the mission of getting printing requirements performed as cost effectively and in as timely a manner as possible—and granting public access," he notes. "If people have got ways to do that mission better, we want to cooperate with them."

"In some cases legislation is offered without a great deal of research being put into what the possible consequences will be," he continues. "Our job is to point out those consequences."

Sherman advises government in-plant managers who are facing similar scrutiny to be open and cooperative with their challengers. Make sure to be recognized as a knowledgeable printing authority, not merely a scared manager fighting for his or her job. Carefully analyze all proposals.

"If something looks good and looks like it's going to work, than get behind it," he advises. On the other hand, if the proposal is flawed, "don't be afraid to characterize the effects as you really see them." Still, he adds, be prepared to make changes that may seem painful at first, but that may prove smart later on.

In addition to challenges from pro-privatization forces, the GPO faces other possible roadblocks. A Justice Department opinion released in May said that the GPO's printing of executive branch documents is unconstitutional. Yet the public printer, head of the GPO, is appointed by the President, chief of the executive branch. And an April White House memo directed executive departments and agencies to "make maximum use of the capabilities and expertise of the Government Printing Office in handling your agency's printing and duplicating procurements." The effects of the Justice Department's opinion are still unclear.

So for the time being, the work is still flowing in, keeping the GPO's presses and other equipment in high gear.

And as long as that light in the Capitol dome keeps shining and Congress keeps meeting, Sherman and his coworkers intend to throw themselves full-force into the task of getting the government's printing done on time and as inexpensively as possible.

POINTS TO CONSIDER

HON. JACK KINGSTON

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 26, 1996

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I'm submitting the following, written by Nadra Enzi. These appeared in the Savannah Newspress and certainly make strong points for our society and government to consider.

[From the Savannah Morning News, Aug. 31, 1996]

(By Nadra Enzi)

ORDINARY CITIZENS COMBAT RACIST GRAFFITI

Editor: On May 22, while walking through Myers Park, an excited group of black girls called me over to its beautiful gazebo.

Puzzled, I strolled toward them and was treated to what they saw: intricate (not run-of-the-mill) white supremacist symbols, slogans and generally racist statements literally covered the gazebo's floor, railing and support beams.

Satisfied that adult attention was brought into the matter, they left, leaving me with a particularly golden opportunity to take action against an act of hate speech perpetrated in the heart of my historically predominant black community.

Given the gazebo's proximity to a nearby black church, I immediately walked there, wondering if this graffiti was connected to the black church burning campaign occurring nationally.

After showing its three occupants the scene, one of them, retired high school principal Richard Mole, called the police.

A unit arrived and its lone officer, also black, was so disturbed by what he saw that goose bumps raised on his arms.

Contacting his supervisor, who personally inspected the scene, including a note left behind, we were told that an investigation would be launched.

The next morning I called the city's Leisure Services Department, which referred my complaint to the direct of Park and Trees.

He personally called and told me that he'd have a crew there to photograph and remove the graffiti later that morning (which he did).

Later, a white male teen was arrested at the nearby McDonald's for defacing its men's room in the same fashion.

It is the personal responsibility of myself and every person of goodwill to ensure that this sort of criminal receives the maximum punishment possible. Otherwise, the crime receives a (pun intended) hoodwink and a high-five.

[From the Savannah Morning News]

AFRICAN-AMERICANS SHOULD SHED GROUP-THINK

(By Nadra Enzi)

African-Americans have been a unit of forced cohesion in this country. Slavery forced different tribal ethnicities to become a corporate entity and this entity's evolution has led to the national community existing today.

We face the frankly exciting opportunity to advance beyond the once-necessary group-think that was the hallmark of much of our past strategy. This opportunity, however, is not being welcomed with open arms by certain segments of our community.

It is worth mentioning that the very phrase "individualism" is often considered to be synonymous with greed and ethnic disloyalty.

This misperception is used by those entrenched interests (the civil Reich establishment, street corner revolutionaries, social program profiteers and others) who benefit from our current thinking.

It is also worth noting that not all civil rights advocates, black nationalists, program workers and others fall into this group. In fact, the rank and file in their number should not be considered as blindly approving of the antics from on high.

Our community, even now, is not the monolith that the above-mentioned interests market us as being. For instance, their continued demonization of U.S. Supreme Court

Justice Clarence Thomas is a prime example of their thought policing at its worst.

Because his views and judicial decisions differ from theirs, he is openly and crudely denounced as not being a "brother," or, it seems, is undeserving of basic respect.

Is their vision of a "community" a "black space" (to quote Cornel West), where differing ideas are condemned without even a moment's consideration? It doesn't seem too liberating or much improvement from the strictures of the plantation and Jim Crow America.

Justice Thomas is a prime example of how fanatical, anti-individualists can place someone in exile for the heresy of thinking differently. It is hard to believe that people who trumpet freedom all the time would deny it so callously.

Recently, a black Prince George's County, Md., school board member nearly succeeded in barring Justice Thomas from addressing an honors ceremony at an area school. This contemptible act should serve as a textbook case in how low the monolith-pushers have sunk!

Individualism is one of the best options available to us as we progress past yesterday's artificially imposed limitations. Each of us is a committee of one whose mission is to develop his potential and contribute those competencies to the cause we hear so much about.

If liberation is truly the song we strive to sing, then individualism must be one its stanzas. It is not treasonous to diverge from the group. In fact, advancement comes from generating new ways of addressing reality.

One definition of insanity is doing the same thing and expecting different results. Obviously, this isn't the best course to choose on the eve of a new century and millennium.

The anti-individualists, in their crusade against this perspective, try to ghettoize individualism as belonging exclusively to black conservatives. In this way, they attempt to limit its impact to the relatively few but growing members of that philosophy.

Individualist tendencies exist among people of every class in black society. Not being a Republican or a conservative is not an automatic admission that one is anti-individualist. It is an outlook gloriously independent of other affiliations.

One becomes an individualist simply by choosing so. This choice is the result of reason, instead of emotion.

After declaring yourself one, watch the shouting and name calling erupt from the other side and please remember that, sadly, one of the difficult propositions for many white and black people to accept is the sight of a black person who thinks for himself.

Individualism can be the new middle-ground that joins homeboys, Buppies, hoochie mamas, nationalists, patriots, and every other identifiable community subset in the common cause of freeing what is best and original within each one of us without waiting for any self-appointed "massuh" to give his unasked-for approval.

After all, if I can dictate your development, then I essentially own you. Is trading white slavemasters and discriminators for black ones really an improvement?

[From the Savannah Morning News]

AFRICAN-AMERICAN VOTERS MUST HAVE A BIG TENT

(By Nadra Enzi)

Editor: There is an aching need for African-Americans to rid ourselves of the truly stupid notion that one's community membership can legitimately be questioned if one commits the unpardonable offense of not being a Democrat.