

Union Calendar No. 245

112TH CONGRESS }
1st Session }

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

{ REPORT
{ 112-360

**SECOND SEMIANNUAL REPORT ON
THE ACTIVITIES**

OF THE

**COMMITTEE ON HOUSE
ADMINISTRATION**

OF THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DURING THE

ONE HUNDRED TWELTH CONGRESS

together with

MINORITY VIEWS



DECEMBER 30, 2011.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House
on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION,
Washington, DC, December 30, 2011.

Hon. KAREN HAAS,
Clerk of the House,
The Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MS. HAAS: Pursuant to Rule XI, clause 1, paragraph (d) of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, I am hereby transmitting the second Semiannual Report on the Activities of the Committee on House Administration. This report summarizes the activities of the Committee with respect to its legislative and oversight responsibilities in the 112th Congress from June 2011 to December 2011.

Sincerely,

DANIEL E. LUNGREN,
Chairman.

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SECOND SEMIANNUAL REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION DURING THE 112TH CONGRESS

DECEMBER 30, 2011.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State
of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California, from the Committee on
House Administration, submitted the following

R E P O R T

together with

MINORITY VIEWS

INTRODUCTION

The Committee on House Administration is charged with the oversight of federal elections and the day-to-day operations of the House of Representatives. With the 112th Congress, two subcommittees were added to the Committee's jurisdiction: the Subcommittee on Elections, which examines issues related to elections and voting systems, and the Subcommittee on Oversight, which focuses on identifying and reducing wasteful spending within House operations and establishing best practices to help improve services to the House community.

COMMITTEE FUNDING

Under House rule X, clause 6, the Committee on House Administration is charged with the responsibility of reporting an expense resolution to grant authorization for the expenses, including salaries, of the select and standing committees of the House. On March 9, 2011, the Committee met and unanimously agreed to a motion to favorably report H. Res. 147, which combined the standing and select committees' initial budget requests for the 112th Congress. Section 3(c) of the resolution stipulated that none of the funds for the second session may be made available after March 15, 2012,

until the Chairs and Ranking Members appeared and presented testimony before House Administration to review the use of funds in the first session.

On July 22, 2011, the House passed H.R. 2551, the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2012. This bill appropriates \$125,964,870 for salaries and expenses of the standing and select committees for 2012. That amount represents a 6.4% reduction from the 2011 appropriation level for committee budgets.

To meet the section 3(c) requirement of H. Res. 147, on November 30, 2011, the Committee held an oversight hearing to review the budgets for all the standing and select committees (except the Committee on Appropriations) in 2011, and to review budget planning for 2012. During the hearing, Committee members asked the Chairs and Ranking Members about how each committee operated with their lower budgets and whether the committees could continue to perform their responsibilities with future cuts to their budgets. Each committee was also questioned on whether they have held to the practice of giving the minority one-third of the committee's budget.

On December 14, 2011, Chairman Lungren introduced a second committee funding resolution, H. Res. 496, to adjust committee authorization levels. This was done to ensure that committee budgets were changed based on the lowered level of appropriated funds provided for 2012. On December 16, 2011, the Committee, by voice vote, agreed to a motion to favorably report the resolution to the House.

MEMBERS' REPRESENTATIONAL ALLOWANCE

The Committee, along with the Committee on Ethics, issued a joint Dear Colleague letter to Member offices on the use of official resources and House Rules pertaining to redistricting. The guidance reminded Members that they cannot send franked mail into the areas that are outside of their current districts. The Committee also sent a Dear Colleague letter to Member offices to remind them about the policies and procedures governing the advance payment of expenses and the obligation of funds specific to year-end purchases. Committee staff drafted updates to the Members' Congressional Handbook. On December 16, 2011, the Committee adopted the updated Members' Congressional Handbook by voice vote.

COMMISSION ON CONGRESSIONAL MAILING STANDARDS

In June, the Commission on Congressional Mailing Standards ("Franking Commission") sent a survey to Member offices to get feedback from Member offices on franking regulations and processes. Survey results will be used to evaluate possible updates to the franking regulations, services and resources.

In July, the Commission held a business meeting. During the meeting, the Commission agreed to begin drafting updates to the Franking Manual. The Commission also agreed to update the Commission's website in order to move to a web-based submission and review system.

OVERSIGHT AND LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE

Officers of the House

One of the key responsibilities of the Committee is to provide oversight of the Officers of the House, whose organizations serve primary roles in the operation of the legislative process and in providing the day to day administrative and operational infrastructure necessary to support the Members and staff of the House.

Clerk of the House

The Office of the Clerk is charged with overseeing nine departments including the Office of Art and Archives, the Legislative Resource Center, and the Office of Official Reporters, but the Clerk's primary responsibilities reside with the legislative activities of the House. This includes managing the legislative bills originating in the House as well as overseeing the voting system.

On July 28, 2011, the Clerk changed the dissemination method for the Legislative Activity Guides (LAGs) from mailed printed copies to emailed PDFs. The LAG has historically been a paper document consisting of each Member's cumulative voting record, as well as a summary of the legislative actions of the House. This new electronic version saves more than 350,000 sheets of paper each Congress and saves the House thousands of dollars every year.

The Clerk's Office also made significant improvements to HouseLive.gov website and provided technical leadership for the development of the Standards for the Electronic Posting of House and Committee Documents & Data. The Clerk worked with the Majority Leader, the Committee on Rules, the Parliamentarian, and the House Administration Committee to support a new and more transparent process for House documents in the second session of this Congress. The Office of the Clerk is working with five pilot committees to capture requirements for Phase 2 involving posting of committee documents.

Sergeant at Arms

Oversight of the House Sergeant at Arms (HSAA) and the United States Capitol Police (USCP) continues to be a major focus for the Committee. The two offices are responsible for providing security to the Capitol grounds, Members and visitors to the Capitol.

The Committee directed the HSAA to plan and execute multiple emergency response drills for all of the House Office Buildings and several alternate chamber exercises. These exercises validated current emergency response planning and execution capabilities and the HSAA and USCP's ability to manage a crisis. The USCP continues to work on systems to reduce the time between an actual emergency and the notification of Members, staff and visitors of important information.

During the past six months, the HSAA continued to facilitate security enhancements for Member District offices with vulnerability assessments conducted by ADT with additional options for enhanced security systems. To date, 254 Members have requested vulnerability assessments and all have been completed. In addition to the security enhancements, the HSAA has continued the Law Enforcement Coordinator program with 99 percent of the Member

district offices assigning a coordinator to establish security arrangements for Member events.

On December 1, 2011, the Honorable Wilson “Bill” Livingood, the House Sergeant at Arms, announced his retirement after 17 years of service as the chief law enforcement and protocol officer of the House.

Chief Administrative Officer

The Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) provides all support functions for the House. The office supports the budget, finance, procurement, facilities, and information technology needs of the House and all of its components. The Committee is charged with overseeing the CAO’s office.

With the direction and coordination of the Committee, much of the CAO’s focus was on cost savings and process improvements for the House community. The CAO was successful in re-bidding the House’s mail contract which resulted in a savings of \$56 million over the eight-year life of the contract.

Over the last several months, the Committee worked closely with the CAO to examine the House’s enterprise-wide and individual office subscriptions to see where savings could be achieved. The CAO cancelled some underutilized services resulting in a savings of \$195,000 for FY11 and \$1.2 million for FY12. The Committee directed the CAO to negotiate with other providers as well, obtaining lower rates that will assist House offices.

The Committee worked extensively with the CAO over the last six months on the expansion of the House’s Purchase Card Program. The program was expanded by twenty-five offices in December 2011, bringing the total participant level to sixty. The program is designed to help reduce office operating costs by streamlining and improving office purchasing and financial processes.

House Information Resources

Throughout the second half of 2011, HIR worked with the Committee to improve technological services for the House community. Three hundred eighteen House Offices now participate in the House Cloud, which provides a centralized, secure and highly available computer infrastructure.

The Committee worked with HIR to permit the use of popular, free video teleconferencing services (ooVoo and Skype) that allow Members to communicate with constituents in real time.

HIR continued to install wireless access points across the House Office Buildings and the House side of the Capitol. Member Offices, public spaces, and committee staff spaces have been completed with over 750 access points installed to date. This network supports both public and internal wireless access.

Inspector General

House Rule II creates the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and charges the Committee with oversight of the office.

During the second half of the year the OIG, with the approval and support of the Committee, produced four management advisory reports and ten audit reports. The OIG thoroughly reviewed the House Purchase Card Program to ensure its policies and proce-

dures manuals and training modules are accurate and user-friendly.

The OIG also released the audit of the House's Fiscal Year 2010 Financial Statements on September 21, 2011. The House received an unqualified or "clean" opinion on its financial statements for the thirteenth year in a row. However, it received an adverse opinion on its internal controls over financial reporting. This is the same opinion the House received for Fiscal Year 2009 and it results from the lack of a management control program along with weaknesses in controls over information security. These deficiencies were noted in previous audits. The current CAO, appointed in July 2010, has been working to implement the Inspector General's recommendations and ensure the FY11 audit will receive an unqualified opinion in all respects.

The Architect of the Capitol

The Architect of the Capitol (AOC) is responsible for the maintenance, operation, development, and preservation of the entire Capitol Complex, which includes 17.4 million square feet of buildings and more than 460 acres of land. The Committee is charged with overseeing the AOC.

In August, with the help of the Committee, the Architect of the Capitol's Office of Energy and Sustainability assumed and expanded the House of Representatives' sustainability initiatives formerly conducted by the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer.

On October 6, 2011, at the direction of the Committee, the AOC entered into a new waste removal contract that diverts up to 90 percent of the Capitol Complex's non-recyclable solid waste from landfills through the utilization of local waste-to-energy facilities. The decision to send non-recyclable solid waste from Congressional facilities—an estimated 5,300 tons annually—to waste-to-energy facilities was based on a thorough analysis conducted by AOC's Office of Energy and Sustainability. When compared to composting, waste-to-energy was proven a more cost-effective alternative. The Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Energy and the Federal Energy Management Program all consider waste-to-energy as an environmentally responsible means of solid waste disposal. The new contract is expected to save taxpayers approximately \$60,000 annually.

Committee staff and representatives from Leadership and the AOC have been working through the planning phases and spreading awareness among Members and staff of major renovations of the Cannon House Office Building scheduled to begin in 2016.

Capitol Visitor Center

The responsibility for the Capitol Visitor Center's (CVC) operations and maintenance resides with the Architect of the Capitol. The Committee on House Administration and the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration provide policy review and oversight of the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center.

The CVC performed a number of enhancement projects. Modifications were made to widen the Orientation Theater doors to eliminate an accessibility barrier for oversize wheelchairs, strollers and scooters; a new life-cycle program was established for the heavily-used audio listening devices; and the North and South Congres-

sional Meeting Rooms were upgraded with current audio-visual technology. Additionally, at the direction of the Committee, the CVC began the procurement process for adding additional lighting on the “In God We Trust” engraving in Emancipation Hall to make the inscription easier to view by visitors. As a result of this directive, a study was commenced to examine further lighting enhancement opportunities for the entirety of Exhibition Hall. The findings of this study will be released in early 2012.

Office of Congressional Accessibility Services

The Office of Congressional Accessibility Services (OCAS) was created by The Capitol Visitor Center Act of 2008. OCAS operates under the direction of the Congressional Accessibility Services Board and is charged with providing and coordinating accessibility services for individuals with disabilities including Members of Congress, officers and employees of the House and Senate, and visitors in the U.S. Capitol Complex. The Committee on House Administration is charged with overseeing the agency and meets with OCAS staff monthly.

During the last six months, OCAS has worked with the Committee and the CVC to ensure the CVC experience is as accessible as possible. OCAS initiatives and projects include: improving the accessibility signage inside and outside the CVC, adding an audio descriptive tour for visitors in Exhibition Hall, training new guides on accessibility features and services, adding additional door openers at the CVC entrance, and posting maps to the CVC website that display accessible routes.

Library of Congress

Close to 200 total employees separated from the Library by accepting VSIP/VERA. The Library is still working to meet its final FY2012 appropriation levels and is also anticipating further reduced appropriations in upcoming fiscal years.

The “Little Scholars Center” is located at 601 E. Capitol St., SE (formerly St. Cecilia’s Academy). A proposed renovation would completely renovate the day care center and the rest of the facility to hold 50 residential units for a new Residential Scholars Center to provide affordable housing for visiting Library scholars across service units. All funding has been raised through the Library’s Madison Council. If approved, the entire project will take about three years.

The Joint Committee on the Library

The Librarian of Congress, as directed by statute, consulted with the JCL regarding the appointment of the new Director of the Congressional Research Service. Former Director Dan Mulhollan stepped down as Director in the spring. Dr. Mary Mazanec was appointed Acting Director in April and was then appointed the new Director in December.

Joint Committee on Printing and U.S. Government Printing Office

The Government Printing Office (GPO) produces, preserves and distributes the official publications and information products of Congress and the Federal Government. The Committee has over-

sight of and legislative jurisdiction over the Government Printing Office.

The Joint Committee on Printing directed the Government Printing Office to acquire the Uniform Resource Locator www.CongressionalDirectory.gov. The digital version of the Congressional Directory can now be found online at this site.

The JCP also directed the creation of unique online addresses and applications to increase the digital presence of Congressional publications. As a result, the Government Printing Office acquired the URLs www.USCode.gov and www.CongressionalRecord.gov and the Committee on House Administration worked with the GPO to release its first mobile Web application.

Members, Committees and Administrative offices were surveyed to allow them to opt out of delivery of specific publications. In 2011, there was an 18 percent decrease in the number of printed Congressional Records and a 7.5 percent decrease in the number of printed Federal Registers as a result of the survey.

House Fine Arts Board

The House Fine Arts Board (FAB) was established in 1988. The Fine Arts Board is comprised of the five House members of the Joint Committee on the Library. It has authority over works of fine art and historical objects that are the property of Congress and are for display in the House wing of the Capitol or in the House Office Buildings.

The Board approves all portraits of Committee chairmen in the House. In the last six months, Congressman Charles B. Rangel's portrait was delivered to the House Collection of Committee Chairmen and Chairwomen in accordance with the Rules of the House. Requests were made on behalf of Representatives John L. Mica, George Miller, Ralph M. Hall, and Juanita Millender-McDonald to authorize to organize portrait fund committees.

Smithsonian

The Committee serves as the primary legislative and oversight body for the Smithsonian Institution (SI), a federal trust instrumentality composed of 19 museums, numerous research centers, and the National Zoo.

Committee staff conducted two site visits. In September, Committee staff visited the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute in Front Royal, Virginia. In October, Committee staff toured the Arts and Industries Building and received a briefing from Smithsonian staff on the status of the building's renovations, which have cost approximately \$55 million to date.

Office of Compliance

The Office of Compliance (OOC) was created by the Congressional Accountability Act (CAA) to facilitate the application of statutes identified in the CAA to Congress. The Committee has oversight over the OOC, and bipartisan Committee staff meets monthly with OOC leadership to discuss OOC initiatives and any issues arising in the course of OOC operations.

Elections

On November 3, 2011, the Committee held an oversight hearing on the policies, processes and procedures of the Federal Election Commission (FEC). The Committee focused extensively on manuals and enforcement policies used by the FEC and not disclosed to the public, and threatened to use its subpoena power to make the manuals public if the Commission did not act. The Committee also reviewed the status of some of the FEC's pending revisions to its regulations. The FEC voluntarily provided all requested materials to the Committee, and they are under review by the Committee to determine the best course of action to make them publicly available wherever possible.

Continuing legislative efforts begun earlier in the year, Chairman Harper of the Elections Subcommittee introduced a bill with Representative Cole, H.R. 3463, to eliminate the Election Assistance Commission on the same terms contained in H.R. 672 and to eliminate the Presidential Election Campaign Fund on the same terms contained in H.R. 359. The bill would save taxpayers approximately \$480 million over five years. The House considered H.R. 3463 under a rule on December 1, 2011, and it passed by a vote of 235–190.

ADDITIONAL OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE

Congressional Internship Program for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

Established by Representative Gregg Harper in the spring of 2010 and administered by the Committee on House Administration, the Congressional Internship Program for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities provides students with varying intellectual disabilities an opportunity to gain congressional work experience. The program, which includes spring, summer and fall sessions, pairs congressional offices with students from George Mason University's Mason LIFE Program—a postsecondary education program for young adults with intellectual disabilities. In 2010, the program started as a pilot with six House offices participating. By December 2011, 44 Congressional offices have participated in the program.

HEARINGS AND MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

On November 3, 2011, the Subcommittee on Elections of the Committee on House Administration held an oversight hearing entitled “Federal Election Commission: Reviewing Policies, Processes and Procedures.” The Subcommittee met to hear testimony from The Honorable Cynthia L. Bauerly, Chair of the Federal Election Commission, The Honorable Caroline C. Hunter, Vice Chair of the Federal Election Commission, and Commissioners Donald F. McGahn, Matthew Petersen, Steven Walther, and Ellen Weintraub.

On November 30, 2011, the Committee on House Administration held an oversight hearing entitled “Review of the Use of Committee Funds of the 112th Congress.” The Committee met to hear testimony from the Chairs and Ranking Members of the standing and select committees regarding the use of authorized funds for the 112th Congress.

On December 19, 2011, the Committee on House Administration met to mark up legislation. The Committee agreed to favorably report H. Res. 496, adjusting the amount provided for the expenses of certain committees of the House of Representatives in the 112th Congress, to the House by voice vote. The Committee adopted Committee Resolution 112–9, Adoption of Standards for the Electronic Posting of House and Committee Documents & Data, by voice vote. Lastly, the Committee adopted Committee Resolution 112–10, Adoption of the Members’ Congressional Handbook, by voice vote.

LEGISLATION WITHIN THE COMMITTEE’S JURISDICTION CONSIDERED BY
THE HOUSE

On June 3, 2011, the House considered H. Res. 299, a resolution permitting official photographs of the House of the Representatives to be taken while the House is in session. The House passed the measure by unanimous consent.

On September 21, 2011, the House considered S. Con. Res. 28, a resolution authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for an event to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and the Military Intelligence Service, United States Army, in recognition of their dedicated service during World War II, under suspension of the rules. The House passed the measure by a vote of 424–0.

On October 3, 2011, the House considered S. Con. Res. 29, a resolution authorizing the use of the rotunda for an event to present the Congressional Gold Medal to Neil A. Armstrong, Edwin E. “Buzz” Aldrin, Jr., Michael Collins, and John Herschel Glenn, Jr., under suspension of the rules. The House passed the measure by voice vote.

On December 1, 2011, the House considered H.R. 3463, to reduce Federal spending and the deficit by terminating taxpayer financing of presidential election campaigns and party conventions and by terminating the Election Assistance Commission, under a closed rule. The House passed the measure by a vote of 235–190.

On December 13, 2011, the House considered H.R. 3630, the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2011, under a closed rule. The House passed the measure by a vote of 234–193.

On December 19, 2011, the House considered H. Res. 497, to provide for the placement of a statue or bust of Sir Winston Churchill in the United States Capitol, under suspension of the Rules. The House adopted the resolution by voice vote.

APPENDIX A

COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED DURING THE PERIOD OF THIS
REPORT

ADOPTION OF STANDARDS FOR THE ELECTRONIC POSTING OF HOUSE
AND COMMITTEE DOCUMENTS & DATA

(Committee Resolution 112–9)

Adopted December 19, 2011

ADOPTION OF THE MEMBERS' CONGRESSIONAL HANDBOOK

(Committee Resolution 112–10)

Adopted December 19, 2011

MINORITY VIEWS

Federal election oversight remained a principal Committee focus for the second half of the first session of the 112th Congress. The Committee supported several bad bills whose provisions ultimately passed the House but did not become law, and also held a general oversight hearing on the operations of the Federal Election Commission (FEC).

VOTER SUPPRESSION IN THE 2012 ELECTION

There is a “War on Voting” being waged throughout the country. The 2010 election results, which gave Republicans complete control of many state governments, allowed them to take many detrimental initiatives. The Committee, in its hearings in the Subcommittee on Elections, has been an enabler in this process, especially through its efforts to abolish the Election Assistance Committee (EAC). Although the House wisely declined to pass legislation to abolish the EAC earlier this year, a later bill combining its provisions with a bill to destroy the Presidential Election Campaign Fund, a bill which was never marked up nor subject to a single hearing in this committee, (H.R. 3463) was passed by the House on December 1, 2011. Fortunately the Senate has not joined in this error.

State legislatures across the country are making it harder for eligible voters to exercise their constitutionally protected right to cast a ballot. The number of states pushing legislation to require voter IDs has quadrupled since 2010 and the number considering proof of citizenship laws has doubled. States are also making voter registration harder, imposing arbitrary and valueless restrictions on voter drives and making it harder for voters to stay registered after moving. Nine states have introduced bills to reduce early and absentee voting periods.

The Democratic Members of the Committee on House Administration joined with the Democratic Caucus in a letter to all secretaries of states and chief election officials expressing concern that the bipartisan consensus and partnership between all levels of government, which for decades has been a central principle of election administration, is deteriorating. The letter called on the secretaries of state, who are the chief administrator of elections for almost all states, to ensure that the franchise is effectively extended to all of our eligible citizens.

The Federal Election Commission and the Election Assistance Commission were designed to play separate but critical roles in our elections. Destructive Supreme Court decisions and lenient and vague campaign finance disclosure laws, coupled with a systemic attack on voting rights at the state level, are threatening our democracy. The twin missions of the FEC and the EAC help voters and state and local election officials alike navigate this landscape.

Unfortunately, one agency has been undermined by partisan infighting and the other by Senate Republicans' reckless and unprecedented assault on the nomination process. Reforms are overdue for each agency, necessary reforms that would allow them to carry out their missions and protect the integrity of American elections and the right to vote. Indeed, Representative Gonzalez sponsored H.R. 1937, the EAC Reform Act by to reauthorize EAC and provide it with precisely the types of reforms that the Majority has long claimed executive branch agencies need.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS OVERSIGHT HEARING

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION: REVIEWING POLICIES, PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

On November 3, 2011, the Subcommittee conducted an oversight hearing on FEC operations. Commissioner Cynthia Bauerly and Commissioner Caroline Hunter provided written testimony and opening statements, and all six commissioners answered questions from the Committee. This was an important hearing as on two separate occasions this year—floor consideration H.R. 672 and H.R. 3463—Republican Members brought to the House legislation that would force the already overburdened and underperforming FEC to take on additional responsibilities currently handled by the Election Assistance Commission.

Recently, a pattern of partisan gridlock and an overly politicized rulemaking procedure often prevented the Commission from taking actions essential to its role. This inability to perform official actions has affected each category of FEC action: enforcements, audits, regulations, and advisory opinions. A deadlocked and inefficient FEC is another component of the War on Voting that Committee Democrats have been combating.

Representative Chris Van Hollen filed a lawsuit challenging the Federal Election Commission (FEC) regulations that have undermined the campaign finance disclosure requirements established in the McCain-Feingold law to require groups to disclose the donors who pay for “electioneering communications”.

The absence of transparency will enable special interest groups to bankroll campaign initiatives while operating under a veil of anonymity. Committee Democrats will continue to press for greater donor disclosure in the courts, and in Congress, in order to bring in the much-needed sunlight. Congressional Republicans succeeding in blocking the enactment of enhanced disclosure requirements the House passed in the 111th Congress and the Committee has made no effort in the 112th Congress to address the problems of under-regulated corporate money playing an oversized role in our elections. Worse, even the requirements in existing law have been significantly weakened by the FEC's interpretation. The Van Hollen lawsuit seeks to restore the statutory requirement that provides greater disclosure of the donors who provide funding for electioneering communications. If this standard had been adhered to, much of the more than \$135 million in secret contributions that funded expenditures in the 2010 congressional races would have been disclosed to the public.

The law requires the disclosure of the identity and contribution amounts of donors who fund electioneering communications. By limiting this requirement to donations “made for the purpose of furthering electioneering communications” by the spender, FEC has given a free pass for contribution disclosure that is nowhere in the statute. Congress did not include a “state of mind” or “purpose” condition tied to “furthering electioneering communications” in the relevant McCain-Feingold disclosure provision. The FEC has contravened the plain language and meaning of the statute and gutted the contribution disclosure requirements for “electioneering communications.”

Representative Van Hollen also filed a petition with the FEC which asks the agency to conduct a rulemaking proceeding to adopt new regulations that would require organizations which make “independent expenditures” to also disclose the identity of their donors. The petition points out that the FEC regulations implementing the contribution disclosure requirements for “independent expenditures” are similarly contrary to the law and have similarly gutted the statutory contribution disclosure requirements for “independent expenditures.”

Representative Van Hollen filed this FEC petition rather than bringing a lawsuit, because unlike the case of the more recent “electioneering communications” regulations, the six-year statute of limitations bars a direct challenge of the “independent expenditure” regulations in court. In order to challenge these regulations that misinterpret the statutory requirements that pertain to “independent expenditures”, Representative Van Hollen must first file a petition for rulemaking and give the FEC an opportunity to address the problems raised by the petition.

The FEC considered this Petition on December 15, 2011, but unfortunately, deadlocked on a 3/3 vote on proceeding to a new rulemaking. In consultation and cooperation with Committee Democrats, Representative Van Hollen is reviewing their action and will determine whether to bring a lawsuit in Federal Court to compel the FEC to reconsider its regulations on the donor disclosure of independent expenditures.

ABOLITION OF PRESIDENTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING FUND AND THE EAC

The House on December 1, 2011, passed H.R. 3463, a hybrid of two bills considered earlier in this Congress: H.R. 359, which would have ended public financing of presidential campaign and party nominating conventions by abolishing the Presidential Election Campaign Fund (PECF) and H.R. 672, which would have abolished the EAC but, fortunately, failed under suspension of the rules.

The PECF was enacted after Watergate to reduce the influence of money in politics. Due to technological innovation, raising large sums of money from many small contributions has been made easier, thereby allowing candidates to secure the resources needed to run large-scale campaigns without relying on a small group of large donors. At a time when the undue influence of large donors is an increasing concern for the public, especially after the Citizens United decision reversed a century of precedent by deregulating

corporate campaign expenditures, such a decision is particularly misguided.

Repealing the PEOF is also dishonest to those taxpayers who each elected to donate \$3 to the fund. Under H.R. 3463, if enacted, the current balance of the PEOF, approximately \$195 million, would automatically transfer to the general fund of the U.S. Treasury. Taxpayers did not intend for these dollars to be directed to the general fund. It is tantamount to misappropriation.

H.R. 3463 would also eliminate the EAC. Born in response to the election debacle in Florida in 2000, the EAC is the only Federal agency tasked with assisting states in the administration of elections. EAC programs and support have saved state and local election officials millions of dollars and helped to improve the voting experience and protect the rights of tens of millions of voters. That's why the agency receives overwhelming support from local election officials, voting rights groups, and civil rights groups, and why the majority's multiple attempts to abolish the agency are so troubling and have failed.

State and local election officials depend on the EAC for guidance on best voting practices. No other federal agency has ever provided anything like it. The agency's reports and recommendations save states and counties untold sums of money, quickly and efficiently answering questions and alerting officials to problems they might not even have recognized they had. The EAC is also the only federal agency that certifies voting equipment, ensuring that the machines that count votes are efficient and accurate so all votes are counted. Its record on this front is exemplary and stands in stark contrast to its predecessor. It was the FEC's failure in this regard, particularly in Florida in 2000 that led to the EAC's creation. The Majority's push to return this vital process to FEC's portfolio, when FEC is already struggling to accomplish its primary mission, is thoroughly misguided.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS OVERSIGHT

While the Committee did not conduct any oversight hearings on the Library of Congress during the 112th Congress, bipartisan staff oversight meetings were conducted with the Library covering all of the Library's service units.

VOLUNTARY SEPARATION INCENTIVE PROGRAM AND VOLUNTARY EARLY RETIREMENT AUTHORIZATION

The Library, along with the Office of Personnel Management, elected to institute a voluntary separation incentive program (VSIP) along with voluntary early retirement authorization (VERA) as cost-saving measures. While the Library fell short of its goal of approximately 400 eligible employees accepting the VSIP/VERA offer, 186 ultimately did. The reduction in operating costs will help the Library adjust to FY12 appropriation levels as well as the possibility of future appropriation reductions. Committee Democrats will continue vigilant oversight of the Library's ability to perform its service, particularly to Congress through the Congressional Research Service, in the shadow of this personnel reduction.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE LIBRARY

The Joint Committee on the Library has no legislative authority but is tasked with oversight of the Library of Congress and the Congressional Research Service, management of the congressional art collection and the United States Botanic Garden. To this end, the JCL oversaw the placement of a statue of Gerald Ford, from Michigan, in the Rotunda; planning for the future placement of a statue of Rosa Parks in Statuary Hall; authorized a replacement statue for Nebraska; authorized the extension of the United States Botanic Garden holiday hours; and oversaw the changing of artwork in the tunnel leading from the Capitol Visitor Center to the Library of Congress. Committee Democrats supported these efforts.

KEY POSTS FILLED AT LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Committee oversaw the appointment of several high-profile positions within the Library this year. On June 1, 2010, five months after being appointed acting Register of Copyrights, Maria Pallante was named the 12th Register of Copyrights and director of the United States Copyright office. Earlier in the year, Dan Mulhollan, then director of the Congressional Research Service (CRS), stepped down and was replaced by acting CRS director Dr. Mary Mazanec. In December 2011, Dr. Mazanec was named as the new director of CRS.

SERGEANT AT ARMS

Committee Democrats worked closely with the Majority to oversee the Sergeant at Arms' work on security matters. We strongly supported Mr. Livingood's continuing implementation of the Law Enforcement Coordinator program begun during the 111th Congress. The program's goal is to weave Members' district offices into an holistic, House-wide approach that incorporates the threats posed to Members beyond the District of Columbia, as demonstrated by the shocking assault on Representative Giffords and others in Tucson, Ariz., on Jan. 8, 2011.

Likewise, we continued support for the HSAA program offering Members access to professional, prompt assessments of district-office physical security, with the House (rather than individual Members) bearing the cost of prudent improvements to office suites. We look forward to working with the HSAA and the Majority to identify ways Members can maximize use of federal buildings, usually the most secure locations available, for their district offices. We supported Mr. Livingood's redoubled efforts to establish and maintain more lasting ties between his office, the Capitol Police, and local law-enforcement agencies in the vicinity of Member district offices.

We wish to note the impending retirement next month of Mr. Livingood as our Sergeant at Arms for the last 17 years. There is good reason that Bill has held this post for so long, serving under four speakers. He is a skilled and consummate professional who has served all Members and leaves the House a different, more secure place than he found it. We wish him well. He will be missed.

UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE (USCP)

Democratic Members worked closely with the Majority on bipartisan oversight of the Capitol Police focusing on the subjects highlighted in the Committee oversight plan, especially on agency budgeting and administration. During the 111th Congress, flawed budgetary formulations and executions by the USCP had greatly undermined Committee, Member and public confidence. Actions taken by Chief Morse, including the appointment of his chief of staff, civilian Richard Braddock, as Chief Administrative Officer, have put USCP back on course for a “clean, unqualified” financial report for fiscal 2011 with greater confidence for improvements in 2012 and future years.

The Minority worked constructively with the Majority on close oversight of the USCP radio modernization project, a multi-year, multi-million-dollar project to upgrade aging radio equipment and infrastructure. The Committee has received regular briefings on the status of the project and has benefited from USCP’s inter-agency approach to maximize coordination and minimize miscommunication among the Police, the Architect of the Capitol and NAVAIR, the project designer. As of this writing the project remains on schedule for delivery in early 2013 and on budget.

The Minority continued its keen oversight of implementation of the merger of the Library of Congress Police with the Capitol Police, finalized in late 2009 under Chairman Brady. At this point in 2011, according to reports from management and employees of both agencies, the merger has been implemented successfully. The Minority considers this implementation as a “roadmap” for future implementation of a merger of the Government Printing Office Police with the Capitol Police to realize the “seamless” security across the Capitol campus envisioned years ago.

Assistant Chief Dan Nichols retired earlier this year. Chief Nichols served with distinction in many roles during his long USCP career, including chief of the House Division, public-affairs officer, and culminating in the number-two spot responsible for day-to-day operations. The position cannot be easy, but Nichols made it appear so. We look forward to working with his successor and wish Dan well in his new endeavors.

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE (GPO)

NEW PUBLIC PRINTER AND CHANGE AT THE AGENCY

From our perspective the agency has made tremendous strides under the leadership of William Boarman, of Maryland, who took office as the 26th Public Printer on January 3, 2011, following a recess appointment by President Obama.

As revealed during an Oversight subcommittee hearing on May 11, when Mr. Boarman became Public Printer GPO was in dire financial trouble. Among other things, recent public printers had saddled GPO with large and growing overhead costs by hiring more senior managers who added nothing to the “bottom line”; by sanctioning excessive travel, especially overseas travel, yielding little tangible benefit to anyone but the traveling senior managers; and

by failing to pursue the millions owed but uncollected from GPO agency customers.

On the “cost” side of the ledger, Mr. Boarman has since January taken a multitude of necessary steps. He has frozen all but essential hiring and travel, and drastically cut certain outside contractual services. He has trimmed the annual spending plan submitted to the Joint Committee on Printing (JCP) by \$15 million. He immediately cut the pending appropriations request (FY2012) by \$5 million. With the approval of the Committee and its Senate counterpart, he has taken advantage of voluntary separation and “early-out” authority to encourage hundreds of willing employees to separate. This last action alone will save tens of millions in coming years. GPO’s new, streamlined passport-production plant in Mississippi is working to share its methods with the plant in Washington, D.C., which will benefit GPO, the State Department and everyone who carries a passport.

As for revenues, Mr. Boarman has invigorated efforts to collect overdue accounts and streamline the collections process to prevent their recurrence. GPO has leased thousands of square feet of underutilized space in its North Capitol Street facility and is looking to lease thousands more to legislative-branch tenants like the House, Senate and Architect of the Capitol. In addition to being the State Department’s sole source for U.S. passports, GPO is redoubling efforts to expand its market position for additional security-related documents for the Department of Homeland Security and other federal entities.

The Public Printer is also working directly with the Committee to improve information delivery within Congress. We are working with him and with the Chairman to identify potential amendments to chapters 7 and 9 of Title 44, U.S. Code, which establish the framework for production, distribution and dissemination of congressional materials to Congress itself, the Library of Congress, to hundreds of federal depository libraries across the country, to the National Archives, and others in both printed and electronic form. In our view, significant issues are presented here, but there are also presented opportunities, including an opportunity to consider how GPO’s business model, based largely on printing, can expand to generate revenues.

KEY MATTERS OF INTEREST

In the spring, the Subcommittee on Oversight held two hearings to explore the general topics of GPO transformation and business model, and information dissemination in the House. While useful as a foundation for further analysis, the topical hearings analyzed no specific legislation to amend Title 44 or its potential effect on GPO, the Congress, the government as a whole, or the public. Were such legislation introduced, we believe specific hearings would be necessary for policymakers to weigh alternatives carefully.

At this time Members, staff and others still await delivery of a new edition of the *Congressional Directory*, to which the Minority staff contributed as requested. As always, the contribution and expert support of the GPO staff were crucial and in fact made the difference between success and failure. Minority staff joined their Ma-

majority counterparts in initial discussions of potential revisions to the Government Printing and Binding Regulations.

The Democratic Members and staff look forward to working with the majority, the Superintendent of Documents and others to consider updates to the organic laws establishing the Federal Depository Library Program, which is confronting difficulties. Regional and selective libraries alike are increasingly adopting *de facto* changes to the program which may or may not serve the public interest overall. We hope that the Committee will devote resources to the oversight of this program and work with stakeholders to implement an appropriate approach to the issues presented.

Finally, in addition to everything else the Public Printer and his staff are doing for Congress every day, the Minority wishes to express appreciation for GPO's "COOP" (continuity of operations) work. GPO staff spends many man-hours meeting with the House Clerk, the Chief Administrative Officer, with Senate and other key offices to develop and exercise plans to assure Congress could conduct business elsewhere than the Capitol should it become necessary. GPO receives no reimbursement for any COOP-related work and must recover these costs through its printing rates. We also appreciate GPO's support of Congress through the GPO Police, likewise funded through its rates while other Legislative agencies enjoy protection of the Capitol Police. The Minority remain interested in pursuing a merger of the GPO Police with the Capitol Police to realize the obvious savings available there.

GPO LEADERSHIP FOR 2012 AND BEYOND

The Minority regrets the Senate's refusal in mid-December 2011 to confirm the nomination of William Boarman to be Public Printer and instead to return the nomination to the President. As a result, Mr. Boarman's recess appointment will necessarily expire at the end of the first session.

It remains a mystery to us why one or more senators forced this outcome after the Senate Rules Committee had twice recommended confirmation without dissent. As we described above, Mr. Boarman is serving GPO and the American people well in these difficult transitional times. We trust a majority of Senators will work with the President to restore this faithful public servant in this very important office as soon as possible.

We take comfort in knowing that until Bill Boarman is confirmed, his able deputy, Davita Vance-Cooks, will lead GPO as acting Public Printer. With his appointment of Ms. Vance-Cooks, the first African-American woman to serve in the post, he will be leaving GPO in excellent hands.

INSPECTOR GENERAL

House Rule II gives the Committee general responsibility for oversight and policy direction of the work of the Inspector General (IG). The Committee staff oversees the IG's work in a bipartisan manner through weekly bipartisan staff meetings.

At the request of then Chairman Brady, at the beginning of the 111th Congress, the IG's responsibilities were expanded under House Rules to provide for the inclusion of management advisory

services and potential implementation of government-wide “best practices” where applicable. These services have greatly benefitted the House Officers by identifying inefficiencies and thus saving the House time and money. The Minority is pleased that this practice has continued throughout the first session of the 112th Congress.

The benefits of the IG’s expansion in duties can be seen in the first session of the 112th Congress. One area that the IG focused on was preventive methods to protect the House from potential risk of unscrupulous individuals and companies seeking financial gain. This is evidenced by the IG collaborating with the Chief Administrative Office (CAO) to improve internal controls over the House procurement processes. Undoubtedly the implementation of new controls strengthens the House overall and lessens the likelihood of the House being exposed to potential abuse.

In addition to the procurement process, the IG working in tandem with the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) and CAO formed a working group in the 112th to discuss ways to combat potential vendor fraud. Upon further review the IG found the House susceptible to potential office supply and business directory schemes whereby vendors may attempt to overcharge for goods and services. In response, an educational campaign was mounted and the IG’s office began distributing Dear Colleague notices informing the House community of the potential danger in dealing with outside vendors that may solicit offices for their business.

The Minority recognizes that office supply schemes are a systemic problem across the country and not confined to Government; however, the efforts of the IG and the “working group” has lessened the ability for nefarious vendors to operate in secrecy and potentially saved the House an untold amount of money.

As the above examples illustrate, the IG plays a crucial role in optimizing the use of tax dollars to assist in running a large, complex organizational structure like the House in the most efficient manner possible. It would be impossible to quantify the IG’s work in the value of dollars and cents but there is no doubt that House operations are improving. The Minority looks forward to working with the IG and Committee staff in a bipartisan manner to achieve greater transparency and efficiency within the House for the upcoming second session of the 112th Congress.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

The National Museum of the American Latino Commission, created by Public Law 110–229, sent its final report to Congress and the President in May 2011. The Commission recommended that a museum be built as part of the Smithsonian Institution. One of the potential sites it suggested was the historic Arts and Industries Building on the National Mall, which is currently closed for renovation pending a future decision about its use.

Rep. Xavier Becerra of California on November 29, 2011 introduced H.R. 3459, the “Smithsonian American Latino Museum Act,” which was referred to the Committee on House Administration as the primary committee, with an additional referral to Transportation and Infrastructure. No action was taken on the bill during the first session.

CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER (CVC)

In the first session, Beth Plemmons has become CEO of the CVC, with Sandra Coffman as Deputy CEO. Beth Plemmons comes to the Capitol Visitor Center with extensive experience in visitor services. She was previously employed as the Associate Director for Guest Services at Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens where she supervised ticketing and group sales for more than one million visitors annually. Sandra D. Coffman previously worked for the U.S. Capitol Police where she achieved the rank of Deputy Chief with jurisdiction over the Protective Services Bureau, which included the Dignitary Protection Division, the Investigations Division and the Office of Intelligence Analysis.

Currently the main exhibit in Exhibition Hall is “Congress and the Civil War.” The exhibit offers rarely seen documents and photographs to demonstrate how Congress crafted new legislation to manage both the war effort and its consequences. Among highlights are a Lithograph, *The Fifteenth Amendment and Its Results* that features portraits of President Lincoln, abolitionist Frederick Douglass, and Senator Hiram Revels. This includes a copy of H.J. Res. 80, which was proposed by Ohio Representative Thomas Corwin to prevent Congress from interfering with slavery in any state. The Slave Narrative Project from the late 1930’s is also included, in which thousands of survivors of slavery recount their lives.

As of December 16, 2011, the CVC has had 2,111,747 visitors—down 3% from last year at this time. Committee Democrats will continue to work with the CVC to ensure visitor satisfaction of every guest with a focus on ensuring each experience is enjoyable and educational. Furthermore, Committee Democrats will remain vigilant in preserving the ability of individual Member offices to provide staff-led tours for constituents throughout the Capitol.

COMMISSION ON CONGRESSIONAL MAILING STANDARDS (FRANKING COMMISSION)

The Franking Commission, established by Public Law 93–191, is composed of six Members appointed by the Speaker of the House: three from the Majority, and three from the Minority. The Speaker designates as Chairman of the Franking Commission one of the Members appointed to the Commission, who must also be a Member of the Committee on House Administration.

In the 112th Congress, the Commission is chaired by Rep. Aaron Schock of Illinois, joined by Rep. Tom Price of Georgia, Rep. Bob Latta of Ohio, ranking Democratic member Rep. Susan Davis of California, Rep. Brad Sherman of California and Rep. Cedric Richmond of Louisiana.

The Commission met on July 22, 2011 and agreed to a revision of the Franking Manual and a separate new website for the Franking Commission. There was a consensus on the following revisions to the Franking Manual:

- Eliminate restrictions on party references, personal references, the size and appearance of the Member’s name and photo in mass mail and mass communications.

- Birthdays (80+) and anniversaries (50+) may be acknowledged. However, upon request by a constituent, the Member may acknowledge any age for a birthday or anniversary.

- Rep. DeFazio's request to congratulate constituents who graduate from a rehabilitation program for substance abuse was approved. Thus, the Members agreed the new manual should reflect that public distinctions are determined at the Member's discretion.

Regarding immediate implementation of the Agenda items, Ranking Member Davis emphasized the importance of everything being implemented at one time, which included the Democratic transparency proposal, i.e., making everything available on the new website for the public to view. Chairman Schock and his Majority Colleagues agreed to the implementation schedule.

The Committee procured contract services to upgrade the existing franking system software (BMC Remedy System) to permit self service by Member offices to submit a new request and to check the status of such request.

During the first session of the 112th Congress, the Franking Commission reviewed, considered, and approved nearly 7,000 requests for Advisory Opinions.

CAO REORGANIZATION

The Minority worked closely with the Majority on a bipartisan basis on the following House-wide issues at the Committee's bi-weekly oversight staff meetings: subscription cost reduction; Restaurant Associates; contract negotiations; digital mail implementation; purchase card; modular furniture program; transition debriefings.

However, on August 3, 2011 the Committee Majority unilaterally approved a major reorganization of the operations of the Chief Administrative Officer's operation, without proper consultation. The changes were in response to H.R. 2551, the Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill, which cut the CAO budget by \$11,000,000 (9%) in FY 2012. The Bill reduced the budget authorized amount from \$127,782,000 to \$116,783,000.

The reduction in personnel and services was dramatic. In addition to eliminating 38 frozen positions, 16 currently filled staff positions were cut. First Call, Greening the Capitol, and Strategic Initiatives were eliminated. The Committee Majority approved changes in defining the CAO core mission without formal input from the Minority.

Early in 2011 and with approval of the Majority, the CAO implemented a zero based budget process. The process was not based on any strategic planning process nor was appropriately trained staff engaged at the department level to discuss details and make decisions based on the needs of the House.

Based on recommendations of the CAO, the Committee Majority approved breaking the CAO into five separate newly defined business units: Finance; House Information Resources; Logistics and Support; Acquisitions Management; and Human Resources.

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

In addition to House-specific support operations, the Committee also oversees the legislative branch agencies that provide services to both houses of Congress. The Architect of the Capitol (AOC) serves as the facilities manager for the Congress, constructing and maintaining the Capitol and all of the other buildings in the Capitol complex. Certain decisions regarding management of the House office buildings and the House side of the Capitol reside with the House Office Building Commission, but the Committee supervises AOC implementation of all programs.

At the direction of the new Majority, the AOC halted certain facility-wide greening efforts in favor of an environmentally questionable waste-to-energy project. The Minority continues to question the rationale behind this decision and hopes that the House will not further erode the process of making the House complex economically and environmentally efficient.

Throughout the 112th Congress, bipartisan Committee staff met on a regular basis with the AOC and the AOC's Superintendent of House Office Buildings, but also reviewed all other AOC activities affecting the Capitol campus as a whole. Notably, the Committee in concert with the AOC officially unveiled plans to completely renovate the Cannon House Office Building. Cannon has never been fully renovated and the current state of deferred maintenance is quickly rendering the building unfit for use. Work on the east underground parking facility concluded on time and under budget, and the AOC is continuing to work the current contractor on planned renovations to the west underground parking facility.

The AOC responded without delay to the earthquake that stunned the Washington, D.C. metro area on August 23, 2011. The AOC-coordinated effort to assess damage, protect the public and repair facilities was well executed and resulted in minimal disruption to normal House operations.

Noting the ever present need to maintain public accessibility and safety in the House Office Buildings, the Committee worked with the AOC to continue a maintenance schedule of House committee rooms. These renovations allow the work of the Committees of the House to be accessed more widely.

The AOC's national search for a new Chief Financial Officer concluded with the appointment of the acting CFO, Thomas Carroll. Mr. Carroll served as Deputy House Superintendent prior to taking on the interim CFO position, and his selection as CFO is applauded by the Minority.

MEMBERS' REPRESENTATIONAL ALLOWANCE

The Committee has jurisdiction over the use of appropriations from the accounts of the U.S. House of Representatives for the Members' Representational Allowance (MRA) as well as official travel by Members and staff, and compensation, retirement and other benefits of Member office employees.

A Member's Representational Allowance (MRA) is the annual authorization made to each Member of the House to obligate U.S. Treasury funds not to exceed a certain amount. These funds may be used by the Member to pay ordinary and necessary business ex-

penses incurred by the Member and his or her congressional office employees in support of the conduct of the Member's official and representational duties on behalf of the district from which the Member is elected.

The annual MRA is available for one Legislative Year, i.e., January 3 of one year through January 2 of the following year. The MRA is made up of three primary expense components: personnel compensation, official expenses, and official (franked) mail expenses. The amount of the MRA varies from Member to Member based on the distance of a Member's district from Washington, D.C., the cost of federal office space serving a Member's district, and the number of U.S. Postal Service Private Delivery Stops in a Member's district. The use of funds in any expense category is not limited by the amount factored into a corresponding expense component, e.g., a Member may spend more or less than the amount of the personnel component to compensate his or her staff.

Each Member has complete discretion in budgeting the total amount of his or her MRA as he or she determines to support the operation of his or her Washington, D.C., congressional and district offices, consistent with applicable federal law and House Rules and regulations. Federal law authorizes the Committee, by order of the Committee, to fix and adjust the amounts, terms, and conditions of, and other matters relating to the MRA (including all aspects of official mail) by reason of:

1. A change in the price of materials, services, or office space;
2. A technological change or other improvement in office equipment; or
3. An increase in rates of pay under the General Schedule, e.g., a comparability and/or locality wage adjustment.

In the 112th Congress, the MRA was cut 5% per each Member's office. This was coupled with a further 6.4% reduction for the fiscal year beginning in October 2011. Many offices have been forced, as a result, to reduce staff and services. These reductions in funding have been compounded by drastic increases in rent charged by the Government Services Administration for use of federal building office space.

On December 16, 2011, the Committee adopted a new Members' Handbook. It was the first major revision in over a decade. Needed language was added to provide regulations and guidance on technological and social media tools used by many offices. Updated travel rules will aid Members and staff in constituent outreach and district office operations, and expanded advanced payment authorizations will enable Members to make purchases in a more cost effective manner. The bipartisan effort to bring this matter forward will aid Members' offices with more thorough and timely guidance. The Minority actively participated in improving the previous version.

COMMITTEE FUNDING

The Committee on House Administration processes the legislation by which standing and select committees of the House are authorized operating funds in a Congress.

In order to gather the information necessary to create the primary expense resolution, the Committee required all standing and

select committees to submit estimates for their expected expenses for both sessions of the 112th Congress. They were also asked to provide line item estimates for the following expenses: personnel compensation (including salaries and lump sum payments), overtime, transit benefits, travel, communications, and printing and reproduction costs. They were also asked to give a best estimate of other general office related expenses as well as those relative to their oversight duties.

Also during preparations for work on committee funding, the Committee asked the Chairs and Ranking Members how smaller budgets would impact their ability to conduct effective oversight or pursue their legislative goals. Overall, the Chairs and Ranking Members assured the Committee that they would be able to cope. However, there was concern that with additional budget cuts the ability of the standing and select Committees to attract and retain the caliber of staff needed to execute legislative and oversight plans would be impaired.

The Committee asked that the standing and select committee budget requests conform to H. Res. 22, a resolution that mandated the aggregate amount of funding for committees not exceed 95% of the funding for the 111th Congress. In submitting their requests, every standing and select committee met this goal.

The House then passed the biennial primary expense resolution on March 17, 2011.

The Committee conducted another round of oversight hearings, as required by House Resolution 147, on November 30, 2011, to examine the viability of the enacted funding levels for the second session of the 112th Congress. While many committees said they could adjust to any changes the committee might wish to make, others expressed concern that there could be hardships in adapting to any additional cuts, including cuts in the number of staff and in staff salaries. There was general concern that this arbitrary reduction in spending would not only impair the operations of the House but would result in additional costs to the government as a whole.

On December 16, 2011, the Committee by voice vote ordered reported H. Res. 496, an unprecedented legislative vehicle which would revise the biennial funding provisions of H. Res. 147. H. Res. 496 would make additional cuts of approximately 6.4 percent to committee budgets in 2012 to conform to appropriations cuts in the legislative branch and elsewhere in the government enacted during 2011. The resolution cut all standing and select committee budgets, except for the Ethics Committee.

The Minority Members opposed H. Res. 496, both because of fears of the potential damage the cuts might do, and because it undermined the stability provided by the biennial committee funding resolution. During the markup, Ranking Member Brady offered an amendment which would have provided a 60-day severance package for committee staff dismissed with little or no notice as a result of the new cuts. Minority staff might feel a greater impact from these cuts because their budgets were already tight, since the Minority reduced itself from two-thirds to one-third of committee staff at the start of the 112th Congress. The amendment was based on a proposal offered at the end of 2006 by former CHA Chairman Ehlers, with the support of Rep. Lungren, as the Republicans were

surrendering their previous majority. Unfortunately, the Brady amendment was defeated by voice vote.

As the session was ending, it appeared likely that House consideration of H. Res. 496 would be delayed into January 2012.

ROBERT A. BRADY.

