

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE RECORDS OF CONGRESS

MEETING # 39

DECEMBER 6, 2010

CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER MEETING ROOM SOUTH

THE CAPITOL

Members of the Committee in attendance: Lorraine Miller, Chair (Clerk of the House); Nancy Erickson, Co-Chair (Secretary of the Senate); David Ferriero (Archivist of the United States); Don Ritchie (Historian, U.S. Senate); Matthew Wasniewski (Historian, U.S. House of Representatives); Terry Birdwhistell (Associate Dean of Special Collections and Digital Programs and Director, Wendell H. Ford Public Policy Research Center, University of Kentucky); Bernard Forrester (Archivist and Coordinator, Special Collections, Robert J. Terry Library, Texas Southern University); Jeff Thomas (Archivist, Ohio Congressional Archives, The Ohio State University); Sheryl Vogt (Director, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies); Steven Zink (Vice-President of Information Technology, and Dean of the University Libraries at the University of Nevada, Reno).

Also Present: Robin Reeder, Archivist, Office of History and Preservation, U.S. House of Representatives; Karen Paul, Archivist, Senate Historical Office, U.S. Senate; and Richard Hunt, Director, Center for Legislative Archives, National Archives and Records Administration.

The meeting began at 10:00 a.m., in the Congressional Meeting Room South, Capitol Visitor Center, Hon. Lorraine Miller, Clerk of the House, presiding.

I. Chair's Opening Remarks – Lorraine Miller

Ms. Miller. Good morning. Good morning.

Oh, there we go. I am an old-school teacher. You have to say good morning in response.

Well, we are here again. Good morning everyone, and I am delighted to see you.

I want to take this opportunity to welcome back our steadfast members of this committee. I was just reflecting the other day, to Farar and to Robin that I had the privilege of working for three previous Speakers of the House. And when this committee would come up for

appointment, a lot of times it didn't get the attention that it so deserved. But now, having been a part of this committee for the last few years, the work that we do is so important, and not only to the House and the Senate, Nancy, but for the Federal Government itself. And it is one of the reasons why the Archivist is such a key part of this.

I want to thank the committee members for sticking with us and for your intellectual input on some of the policy decisions, and also extend a big thanks to our constituent groups, our advocacy groups, who have also participated in this process vigorously.

We won't name names, because the moment you name a name, you forget someone, and then they say, "you didn't mention me." But just know that this committee appreciates your input and following what we are trying to do here. This is very important.

So as many of you know, we have, over the last few months, had some additions on the House side. And one of the highlights of this, Don, is our selection of a new House Historian. So it is my great pleasure to welcome to the table Matthew Wasniewski, who we have gotten to know very well. In just a minute, Don will say some nice things about you that we paid him to do, and then Matt will offer some remarks.

Before we get started, are there any kind of opening remarks from our committee members?
Terry?

Any of you?

Well, good.

Don, do you want to say a couple of things about our new House Historian.

Mr. Ritchie. I will say that everyone in the Senate Historical Office was ecstatic that Matt Wasniewski was appointed to be the House Historian. It is very important for everything that we do on the Senate side that we have a colleague and a counterpart on the House side. And we try to have -- unlike much of the relationship between the Senate and the House-- we try to have a very agreeable relationship and work in tandem because we always succeed if both sides are operating together.

And we have worked with Matt for years in so many different capacities, and we know his work, and we find him such a great collegial person that we just think the House of Representatives in this case made the absolute right decision.

Ms. Miller. Great.

And Matt has been with the Office of the Clerk the last 8 years with our Office of History and Preservation. I was put in a pretty difficult position because I was asked to be a part of the

search committee. And so you are trying to find the balance of saying, folks, we don't need to search; he is here. But you can't say that. People have to come to their own conclusions.

Through the process and through interviews, we had a robust national search. The candidates were Book of the Month Club honorees; really significant people. And Matt blew them out of the water. He is very organized. He is a historian's historian.

Matt, this is your 2 seconds in the sun.

Mr. Wasniewski. Thank you both.

I have a few brief remarks in the spirit of the freshman tradition that you ought to be seen and not heard.

Ms. Miller. Is your mic on?

Mr. Wasniewski. There we go.

First of all, Madam Clerk, I wanted to thank you personally for your kindness and your support during my 8 years in the Office of History and Preservation, and thank the Office of the Clerk for all of their support.

And going forward, as I take on my new dispensation, I appreciate greatly your continued support.

Madam Secretary and Mr. Archivist, I have gotten the chance to know you a little bit better in recent months, and I am looking forward to continuing those relationships and working with both of you on important issues that will come before this committee.

And members of the committee, many of whom I have worked with personally for many years now on many different projects, I look forward to continuing those relationships going forward. And I look forward to our future endeavors.

I have only been on the job for 6 weeks, so I don't have a lot of projects to talk about. I can say that my office is undergoing a transition now that I think will make it a public history office that is worthy of our institution's rich heritage and will make it a topflight public history office. And institutional competition being what it is, we have our sights set on Don's high standards over on the Senate side.

To be successful, the House Historian's Office must have a strong and collaborative relationship with the Office of the Clerk, and going forward, I expect a very long and fruitful partnership with two of my very dear colleagues from the Office of the Clerk, Robin Reeder,

the Archivist of the House, and Farar Elliott, the Curator of the House.

I have been an observer of this committee for many years now. So I am not a stranger to the issues that have come before it, and two in particular hold my interest now. The first is the NARA Transformation Plan, which I think holds great promise for raising the profile of congressional records. And the second is the Task Force on Description, the group working on the Next-Generation Finding Aid, which Dick Baker had been such an articulate advocate for, for so many years. I strongly believe if we are going to inspire a new generation of historians to write about political history again, and particularly congressional history, we are going to need to raise both the profile and the accessibility of congressional records.

As a House Historian, I have a very real stake in this issue because one future measure of the success of my office, as I see it, 5 or 10 years out, is going to be: how many young scholars, how many young historians have we turned on to an important House history topic that is begging to be done? The biography of Clarence Cannon, for example, or the biography of Mary T. Norton, or the definitive history of the Office of the Resident Commissioner, and everything that falls in between.

Through my own personal experience, I know that scholars, once they are directed to Richard Hunt and the Center for Legislative Archives, they are in the very best hands. And I look forward to working with this committee to see that House and Senate records get the resources and get the attention that they richly deserve.

Thank you.

Ms. Miller. Thank you, Matt.

Ms. Vogt. Having been around a long time and actually having been chair of the Congressional Papers Roundtable at the time the House Historian's Office became more politicized, I want to say how thrilled I am to learn that Speaker Pelosi and Mr. Boehner worked together to make this a professional search, and actually the archival community is so glad to have that happen and to see a return to that in the House. We were thrilled when Matt was selected.

Ms. Miller. Thank you.

Besides it being a personal benefit for our office to have Matt, you have to look at the competition and the caliber of people that were a part of the search, but he has the temperament. He is the right guy. And this was done in a bipartisan effort. Barry Jackson was with us every step of the way with the committee, interviewing, talking to candidates. And we really grilled these people pretty aggressively. So it was a good process

I imagine it was a little nailbiting for you, Matt. But I was confident through the whole process. It really turned out well, not only because he was selected, but the way the process was set up, and it was fair. It was open, and I am delighted that the archival community sees you as a willing applicant. Great. Thanks, Matt, and welcome.

Mr. Wasniewski. Thank you.

Ms. Miller. I would like to welcome and say thank you again to our lovely Secretary of the Senate, Nancy Erickson. I have enjoyed working with you, Nancy, over these last few years on various projects. And I know that you will carry the torch as our incoming chair of the advisory committee.

I would also like to give kudos and welcome to David Ferriero. David is our Archivist of the United States. He was just meeting the CAO a minute ago, Dan Strodel, and I said, "Dan, bow." I know you have been quite busy as of late. And we look forward to hearing about the transformation plan for the National Archives.

So I wanted to preface our discussions by highlighting some of the events in the Office of the Clerk, beyond our new Historian; our curatorial staff has been moving art during the recess as a result of our "Greening of the Capitol" initiative.

One of the things that will happen with the Historian is our Office of History and Preservation will be transformed to the Office of Art and Archives, which is more descriptive of what they will be doing. And we were really focused on trying to make sure that there was a direct correlation, that people knew that we were archivists. And we are proud of that, right, Robin? So, later, Farar will give you a thumbnail sketch of what Art and Archives, A&A as we call it in the Clerk's Office, will be doing. But I think this is a great opportunity to highlight more of the art and the archival mission of the Office of the Clerk.

So, in August alone, there were about 100 moves of art in the Capitol. We also completed publications documenting historic spaces in the House of Representatives. There are copies of those pamphlets in your packet. And there are digital versions on the Clerk's Web site. And just last week, the portrait of John Marshall, which has been out for the past year being conserved, was reinstalled on the third floor of the Capitol, just outside of the House Gallery.

Robin Reeder, the House Archivist, has been quite busy with the end of Congress. We are working with departing Members' offices and with committees busily transferring their records. They have been as busy as a one-arm paperhanger because we have so many departing Members; not only Members that chose not to seek re-election, but those that lost in the general election. It is unbelievable. I think the AOC said that there are about 211

different office moves that we are making in the House alone. So if you are walking the halls of the House Office Buildings, you will see lots of furniture and debris in the halls. And that is because of all of these tremendous moves that are going on. Later this morning, Robin will talk to us more about their archival activities.

So now I would like to yield to the distinguished Secretary of the Senate and the co-chair of the advisory committee, Nancy Erickson.

II. Recognition of Co-Chair – Nancy Erickson, Secretary of the Senate

Ms. Erickson. Good morning, everyone.

As you all know, the Senate and House are in a lame duck session, and I think I speak for all staff that we are ready for the completion of this Congress.

And as we were preparing on the Senate side for a Saturday session, which brought back memories for many of us of many Saturday sessions a year ago when we were working on the health care bill, Don Ritchie sent me an e-mail on Friday -- one of his historical minutes -- and reminded me that if we didn't have the 20th Amendment passed in 1933, that the second session of the 111th Congress would begin today and run through March 3rd. So we are grateful for the passage of the 20th Amendment as we wrap up our business.

Education and outreach, I think it is fair to say, have been a priority for Lorraine and me during our tenure on this committee, and we take that responsibility seriously. The orientation program for new Senators—a 3-day program—is really quite unique in that it is an orientation that is led by Senators themselves. And it concluded with a visit to the National Archives Legislative Vault. And we were grateful for David and for the Foundation of the National Archives' support of that event. But it was a wonderful way to educate Senators-elect about the importance of preserving their papers right away. And we will be following up with their offices individually once they take office.

After a lecture that Don Ritchie gave in the old Senate Chamber, one of the new Senators-elect came up to me and to Betty Koed from Don's staff and said, I am really glad that you have archivists on your staff, because I want someone to follow up with my office right away. He recognized not only was it important for him to preserve his records from the get-go, but it is also a part of an effective and efficient organization to have a trained archivist on staff.

Continuing in our education and outreach efforts, at this last meeting, David kindly offered to host a coffee for Senate and House archivists. And this provided an excellent opportunity for us on the Senate side to extend an invitation to folks who, quite frankly, haven't been

active in our CHARM group and other activities that we have planned for archivists. So it was an opportunity to reach new people, particularly some committee staff directors who came down to the Archives for the first time and had an opportunity not only to meet the new Archivist of the United States but to engage in a lively discussion about archiving. One point the session highlighted was the safeguards that are in place at the National Archives to preserve electronic records. So thank you, David, for making that opportunity available.

With respect to our departing and retiring Senators, Karen Paul and her staff, a total of three people now working on archiving in the Senate, are working with departing Senators and their staff on their records. And I am pleased to report that among the Members, 17 Members out of 18 have selected a repository.

Last week, I had a great meeting with David on the reorganization plan, and I am not going to steal his thunder, but I think it is fair to say that every member who has served this committee since 1990 would be very pleased with what David is proposing. And following the meeting, I said to Don, you have to call Dick Baker, our Senate Historian emeritus, to share the discussion that we had with David, and I will leave it at that. But I think folks here are going to be very, very pleased.

With respect to the declassification of Senate records, following Don Ritchie's participation in a meeting of the Public Interest Declassification Board in July that focused on the declassification of older records of Congress, we sent a request to the Center to proceed with a systematic review of classified Senate records that are more than 25 years old. As a result, the National Declassification Center will begin a preliminary review and analysis of declassification issues in the approximately 1,000,625,000 pages of classified records that are more than 25 years old. Records of highest anticipated research use will be given highest priority. A project plan and time line are expected by mid-January.

Finally, the passing of Senator Byrd marked an end of an era in the United States Senate, and it resulted in over 1,300 cubic feet of records being transferred to the Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies at Shepherd University, via a 53-foot trailer and a separate 26-foot truck. This transfer joined another 2,200 feet of material that had been transferred at an earlier date. And, according to Karen Paul, the outstanding characteristics of the collection include evidence of a history, of devoted recordkeeping and complete documentation over the years, as well as an enormous quantity of memorabilia that surely will provide rich resources for future exhibits.

And I just want to say a special thank you to Karen Paul and her staff for working so diligently. I think special recognition also has to go to Ray Smock at the Byrd Center. This required enormous effort. This is one responsibility that the Secretary has that is a daunting

task. It is also personally difficult to go into an office when the staff is grieving, and they are faced with the enormous task of not only closing down an office, but in this case, transferring volumes and volumes of records.

So I want to also pay special tribute to the staff of Senator Byrd, who worked tirelessly under a 60-day time frame to close the office. And I know that it will be a rich resource for future historians and folks doing congressional research.

Finally, I just want to say thank you to Lorraine. I am going to get teary-eyed talking about her. But Lorraine and I worked together on some pretty difficult issues off the bat during the opening of the Capitol Visitor Center. Immediately, we were also given charge of the responsibility of implementing the Honest Leadership, Open Government Act that gave us a firsthand view of the challenges of implementing a far-reaching statute that drastically changed the Lobbying Disclosure Act. And I think we had 12 weeks to implement that act. And if anyone would have told me that we could get that done -- it really was a challenge. With the natural differences between the House and the Senate, it is not something that is done every day around here. We literally had to implement this act joined at the hip. And so we worked together on some difficult issues, but I think it helped us to forge a very close working relationship. And our partnership working on this committee has just truly been one of the delights of our tenure working together.

So, personally, I am going to miss working with Lorraine, and I know you all join me in lauding her leadership on the Advisory Committee.

Ms. Miller. Thanks, Nancy. Your check is in the mail.

We couldn't have accomplished all of this unless both of us had decided we were going to work together, even though she is a part of the lower body, and we are the upper body. But it is House and Senate together, and we had a mutual task that had to be done, and we just had to dig in and get it done. But with that, I would like to recognize the Archivist of the United States.

III. Introduction of David Ferriero, Archivist of the United States

Ms. Miller. You know, I have been really impressed with how David has come aboard. He has gotten his hands immersed in the Archives, and he has reached out. Sometimes you come into these new positions, and you get so myopic; you are looking at what you have got to do. But while he was focused on what he had to do in the National Archives, he looked up and looked around and brought Nancy and me into his circle, as well as many of you in this room. So, David, would you like to have a few opening comments before we get to your big report.

Mr. Ferriero. Thank you and good morning. Thanks to the committee. It has been an incredible first year of learning. I had an opportunity not long ago to meet with the Ambassador to Canada, David Jacobson. He was the guy in the White House working on appointments who talked to me about the job, and I had an opportunity to give him an earful about what he didn't tell me about the job.

It has been a great learning experience. Thanks to all of you for your education of me. Thanks especially to the stakeholders around the room who have also been very honest with me about what works and what doesn't work, and your relationship with the Archivist.

Congratulations to Matt. I look forward to working with you. And you know, as a result of our last meeting, we made the decision at the Archives to create the archives historian position, long overdue. So I look forward to working with you on that task.

Thanks especially to Nancy and Lorraine for your friendship, for also being very honest with me about the ups and downs of the relationship with the Archives. And I am really honored to be working with both of you. And I am going to miss you like crazy.

Ms. Miller. Thank you.

Mr. Ferriero. We have a little gift from your friends at the National Archives. These are facsimiles of pages from the very first House Journal.

Ms. Miller. Oh, great.

Mr. Ferriero. I know this is a favorite of yours. One page shows when the House first convened on March 4, 1789. And on the second page, the first actions taken on April 1st, when the House finally achieved a quorum, which were the election of a Speaker, Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg, and the election of the first Clerk.

Ms. Miller. Thank you, David.

I really don't get excited about a lot of things. But seeing the Journal, the 1789 Journal right there in front of me, that is a big deal. Great, thank you. You are a love doodle. I really like this.

IV. Approval of the Minutes of the Last Meeting

Is there any objection to dispensing the reading of the minutes? Great.

Are there any corrections to the minutes? Okay.

If there are no corrections, the chair entertains a motion and a second for their approval?

Mr. Ritchie. So moved.

Ms. Miller. Second?

Mr. Birdwhistell. Second.

Ms. Miller. It has been properly moved and seconded. And our minutes are approved. Thank you very much.

We have a very big agenda today, and we have got a lot of things to do, so let's move along. We will begin with our discussion of the "NARA Transformation Plan: A Charter for Change." I would like to recognize David to tell us about the NARA Transformation Plan, and I am also interested to hear how it will affect the Center of Legislative Archives, since we have a vested interest in that.

V. Discussion of NARA Transformation Plan: *A Charter for Change*

Mr. Ferriero. As you know, I have been on the job for a year now and have visited 21 of our 44 facilities around the country to get an opportunity to listen to the staff. In each of these settings, I have set aside time to meet with the entire staff to get a sense of what it is like to work in the National Archives from their perspective.

I have also met with anyone who will meet with me, stakeholders and folks on the Hill and Members of Congress and staff and just about everyone, to help me put together the picture of the Archives, what we are doing right and what we are doing wrong. As a result, I launched, during the summer, an internal task force to help me think about the future. In their final report, which you have in front of you, I would like to focus on two sections. The first, pages 4 and 5, is a set of the six transformational outcomes that we are aspiring to, and each one of these is based on what I heard from the staff and what I heard from the stakeholders in terms of what doesn't work.

So the first one is creating one NARA. It shouldn't be a surprise, but the farther you get from 700 Pennsylvania Avenue, as a staff member, the less you feel part of one organization, the less you feel your voice is heard. In St. Louis, folks don't feel that Washington understands what is going on. So creating a sense of one agency, one organization, is huge for us.

Being out in front in terms of electronic information -- this agency is responsible for advising the Federal Government and the White House on its use of technology. That means we need to be out in front in terms of our use of that technology. We should be experimenting with new and emerging technologies, so we are in a position to give that advice. We are not there. We are far behind.

An agency of leaders. One of the things I discovered in the process of learning about the

agency over the past year is there is an enormous pent-up feeling of desire to contribute to the organization, and the folks have not had a chance to contribute in a meaningful way. I am convinced that leadership can come from anywhere in the agency, and we need to create opportunities for the staff to be able to contribute. The work with the task force over the summer, in fact, has convinced me that I am right on this, and this was a staff-driven process. So how can we create a culture where that leadership is fostered?

We are, and you may not know this, but we are tied for bottom of the scale in terms of best place to work in the Federal Government. We are tied with HUD. It is not a good position for the new Archivist to be in, and I am committed to making this the best place in the government to work. So we have a fair amount of work to do in transforming that aspect of us.

We need to be a customer-driven organization. We have a history of developing procedures and services that, frankly, meet the needs of the staff rather than the needs of the users. We need to turn that around and put the user at the center of everything we do; users being the agencies that we deal with, the Congress, the historians, and all of our user groups.

And the last one is an open NARA. We are and have been a pretty insular organization. We don't look around for other ways of doing things. We are not very communicative. And that has led to all kinds of problems in terms of people's awareness of what we are doing and what we are up to.

So that is the framework around which the plan was created. The plan comes with a reorganization, and despite what some of my staff might think, it is not a rearranging of the deck chairs. It is actually a transformation in terms of how we are organized.

We are in the process of driving out repetitive and duplicative processes across the organizational silos, flattening the organization, and making it a much more efficient and effective organization. An implementation team is now hard at work. They have until January 15th to deliver to me a final report on three themes: One, organizational values. I am firmly convinced that we need to agree on a set of values to which we aspire that everyone can understand and buy into and can make choices on their own against those values. Is this the kind of agency that you want to be working for?

The second theme of the implementation team is quick hits -- easy kinds of low-hanging fruit that we can move quickly on. I am really anxious that we have some momentum developed in the agency. I don't want this plan to sit on a shelf somewhere and languish. We need to start making changes that demonstrate we are serious about this transformation.

And the third is the most complicated one, and that is the one that the organization team is working on -- flushing out the next level of the organization.

As I said, that all comes to me on the 15th of January. I am personally very excited about it. I am pleased that the staff stepped up to this challenge. I am pleased that we were able to incorporate lots of social media tools and engage the staff in this conversation. We used IdeaScale and other things to bring them along through the entire process and give them an opportunity for their voices to be heard in this transformation. I could have brought in an outside consultant to do this, but I am especially pleased that this came from staff. That is the best part for me.

And if you turn to page 15, and for those of you who are sitting around the room who don't have this in front of you, it is on the NARA Web site. On page 15 is the proposed siting for the Center of Legislative Archives, in a new unit tentatively called Library and Museum Services. We are now in the process of incorporating "Congressional" in that, as a result of our conversations. And you may ask why with Library and Museum Services? This includes Presidential Libraries. I have learned and have come to appreciate the work that Richard and his staff have done on electronic records, and the parallel operation within the National Archives is the Presidential Library System. Both are way out in front, on basically a shoestring budget, on getting a handle on electronic records, and I want to capitalize on that. So bringing the two units who are out in the front on electronic records issues together in one unit works for me. And that is the primary motivation for me.

I also think that the museum outreach and exhibit functions can benefit from Richard's content, Richard's expertise, and the experience of his staff to do a better job of exposing the collections held in the Center. So those are the rationales for that. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Ms. Miller. Committee, do you have any questions you want to ask of David? Feel free. This is the time.

Mr. Forrester. Good morning. I understand your reorganization. Financially can you give Richard the support he needs to make this transition to address the enormous amount of electronic records facing him? We have gone from the storage of gigabytes to terabytes overnight, correct? So I was just wondering if there is support for that.

Mr. Ferriero. We started in 2004 building the Electronic Records Archive, which is funded. This is part of that process. We are working very closely with the new CIO in the White House, Vivek Kundra, and the appropriations folks and GAO and every agency who has any kind of control over our budgets to ensure we have the appropriate level of funding that we

need, not only for all of the Presidential electronic records, but the Congressional records also.

Ms. Miller. Thank you.

Ms. Vogt. You mentioned Outreach and Museum Services. How will collaboration with the Center work?

Mr. Ferriero. We have, across the Presidential Libraries, across the regional centers, downtown on Pennsylvania Avenue and in the Center, all kinds of activities that are uncoordinated. This is an opportunity to bring together all of those activities to share the professionalism that exists within the agency, to do a better job in thematic emphasis across the Archives, and in the content that I have come to learn about and value. And the Center is an integral part of what we have to offer.

Ms. Vogt. I think that one concern we have is because the Center is doing an excellent job with their outreach activities now, we do not want to see that progress diminished by trying to collaborate with other units, when they are already stretched thin on their resources.

Mr. Ferriero. One of the great values of the plan, which I hope to be able to come back and report to you, is because we are coordinating and driving out duplication in the agency, it is giving us some flexibility that we haven't had before. So I am not as concerned about that as maybe other people are.

Ms. Miller. Terry?

Mr. Birdwhistell. Having gone through a reorganization of my own library, I have great sympathy for what you are trying to do, and I want to be supportive. But one of my concerns, on the outside looking in, is that during my service on this committee with the leadership we have had, we have made tremendous progress for the Center for Legislative Archives. And your early recognition of that fact when you came in made us all very optimistic. My only concern is that as you look to rework such a large agency, that you don't place the Center for Legislative Archives in a spot where that headway we have made -- in recognition of the importance of Congress itself -- gets tangled up into a larger goal that you might have for the agency as a whole. I would hate to see us sacrifice the leadership that has been shown in this particular body over the next 2 or 3 years when I feel like we are just getting ready to make a major move for the Center and congressional collections.

Mr. Ferriero. This is something that came up when I met with Nancy earlier. This is not an attempt to distance or bury the Center within the Archives. And it does not change my

relationship with Richard and his staff. This is a passion of mine. This is something that I am really focused on – space and the resources that he needs to do his job. One of the huge mistakes we made is not getting "Congressional" into the name of the box. We will take care of that.

Mr. Thomas. That was going to be my comment, somewhere in there, the word "Congress" needs to be highlighted.

Mr. Ferriero. It's kind of a no-brainer, isn't it?

Mr. Hunt. To go on record, Joe Cooper, who is not feeling well and couldn't attend today's meeting, called from his sick bed today with that very message: put "Congress" in the title.

Ms. Miller. That was my concern also. I see we are unanimous here. Because all of the work that has gone into the Center -- my God -- the worst thing that could happen for it would be to be buried. I underlined this point last night when I was reading through this again, and I saw the Office of the Presidential Libraries, and I said, oh, my God, Richard is going to have to fight day and night to stay alive, because so much of the agency's focus has been on the Presidential Libraries.

I just hope, Richard, that you have got your sword. But you have your sword -- you have the Archivist, who is very supportive of you and the Center.

As we always do in the Clerk's Office, you try to think about the present and the future. And David, yes, you are going to be there until you are ninety-nine-and-a-half as Archivist. But what happens on the day you leave and there is another Archivist with different priorities? We need to put "Congressional" in the title to make sure that the Center doesn't get lost in the shuffle, because it can happen so easily.

Mr. Ferriero. That observation triggers two comments from me. One, the plan can't be dependent upon an individual, cannot be dependent upon this Archivist; it has to be a plan that can stand by itself. The second is, this is not cast in stone. This is something new for my agency. If it is not working -- and I mean if it is not working in 6 months -- then we fix it. We don't live with it for 5 years and decide, oh, we made a mistake. That is built into it also.

Ms. Miller. Great. Thank you. That was interesting. And I am glad. And of course, we will hand the charge to our upcoming chairman, Secretary of the Senate, who will carry on the torch for the Center.

Yes, Nancy?

Ms. Erickson. Yes.

Mr. Birdwhistell. It seems to me that this advisory committee could play a key role in the initial implementation of the plan in terms of being a body that can give you direct feedback at our next meeting and the meeting after that so that there is no misunderstanding about where things are and how it is playing out. I assume we would be happy to play that role; this is what we do.

Mr. Hunt. I would just like to add the observation that we did a little research on the Center's history. From 1938 to the present, Legislative Records have been under 16 different organizations with 13 different names throughout the National Archives. All I can conclude from that is that they haven't found our place yet.

But for most of that history, we were always joined together with the large world of Federal agency records, which we found to put us at a competitive disadvantage. "You may have problems," the agency would say, "but our problems are a million times bigger, get to the back of the line." So this is transformative and potentially revolutionary to put us in with Presidential Libraries. But Lorraine is correct, they have some pretty deep pockets themselves and heavy resources. So I do have some challenges in front of me, and I am going to need your help in order to succeed.

I find it an interesting and intriguing combination when you put the records of representative government -- the two elected branches -- into the same office with public programs, which suggests an emphasis on civic education. This is a new powerful combination that could highlight the records of Congress, and the programs of the Congressional centers as well. I am nervous, I will admit, and can see uncharted terrain ahead of us. But I think there is also great promise here.

Ms. Miller. Committee, can we, by unanimous consent, support the transformation but keep an eye on the Center for Legislative Archives to make sure that they are protected and we are involved in the process with the Archivist? Can we, in unanimous consent, agree that that will be a charge of our committee going forward?

Great. Thank you.

Ms. Paul. May I ask a question? What is the time line for the implementation of a final draft of the plan?

Mr. Ferriero. This is the final draft. The next iteration will be the implementation plan. So there will be another plan, as I said. That is due to me on January 15th, and it depends on how I feel about it in terms of when the final version of the implementation plan is delivered.

Mr. Forrester. Can I ask, since most of the people here also serve in the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress, that you try to come to our meeting in May and do another presentation or discussion with our group as well?

Ms. Miller. There's lots of support, David, for what you are doing and for the Center for Legislative Archives. So that is good. Thank you. This has been a good discussion. Moving forward, any other questions from the committee? I want to make sure we have had a thorough airing here.

VI. Task Force on Description Report – Robert Horton, Chair

Next is a report from our Task Force on Description. This is another committee priority for the last few years. There are recommendations for the Center for Legislative Archives to improve its descriptive practices and finding aids.

This is Mr. Robert Horton, who is the chair of the Task Force on Description, which is making recommendations on the Next-Generation Finding Aids project. Mr. Horton is the director of the Division of Library Productions and Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society. And thank you for traveling to this meeting. Is it cold in Minnesota also?

Mr. Horton. Yes, it is terribly cold. It is a real pleasure for me to be in Washington for what would be a warm summer day in Minnesota.

Ms. Miller. Great. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Horton. Thank you, Madam Chair, members of the committee. It is an honor to represent the task force today.

And I want to note that many members of the task force are here, and some are at the table and the primary author of the report that is in your briefing book is here as well from the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University. So I urge all of you to jump in if I make any mistakes or misinterpretations of the report. I am going to talk very briefly and cover four issues.

I want to review with you the task force activities and work schedules so you understand what

our hopes are; very briefly go through the draft report; outline the major recommendations of the task force; and talk about the next steps that would be necessary to implement the recommendations. Please feel free to interrupt, ask questions, and make comments as I go along. It is a very informal presentation.

The task force first met in December of 2009 and discussed a variety of issues and concerns that you had presented to us. That led subsequently to the Center's hiring of the Center For History and New Media as a consultant, and the Center then went through a variety of tasks to develop the draft report. The task force met recently, on the 30th of November, to review that first draft. And what you see here is a second draft reflecting the conservations and suggestions of the task force.

We will have another meeting in January on a date to be determined, and the final report will be finished in February, mid-February. I believe the 12th is the target. Is that right, Richard?

Mr. Hunt. Yes.

Mr. Horton. The report is a draft, and there are certainly some revisions and changes that need to come. But at this point, the task force fully agrees with the direction it is setting for the Center and the recommendations it includes.

First and foremost, the report clearly underlines the importance of the material at the Center and the work of the Center, both in support of the Congress and for the historical record. I wanted to quote Matt's point, which he made eloquently earlier, that it is really a significant and important job to raise the profile of the Center and improve the accessibility of its records, and I think the report makes that clear. The report also outlines the major challenges that the Center faces.

First and foremost of which is the increasing volume of content heading its way, both paper and digital. There are 61,000 cubic feet of closed records alone at the Center. And certainly from my perspective -- I run a rather large state historical society's archives -- 61,000 cubic feet would lead to a wave of resignations and probable suicides of my staff. This is exacerbated by the fact that the collection is growing at a rate of nearly 4,000 cubic feet per year. So it is an enormous volume of material, including more and more electronic records, which almost geometrically complicates the situation.

The report goes on to detail the challenges of establishing intellectual control over the material. There are silos of information. There are transfer points, coming both from the House and the Senate, which are created, on one side, electronically and, on the other, in

paper, but are transferred to the Center on paper. There are also listings in ARC, the Archival Research Catalog, -- the National Archives system that provides for access to its content. There are published guides to material and preliminary inventories. And almost all of these are created and maintained separately, with all the consequences you can imagine. There are some inefficient work flows. There isn't loss of information, but ultimately the result creates a very frustrating situation for anyone trying to use the material. This puts a very large burden on the Center's staff to interpret, present, and translate information about the collections from a variety of sources so that other people can discover, find, and use what they need.

To address this issue, the report looks at various professional standards and developments. These are not new. The Center has some major challenges, but its functions are pretty much the same as any archives. So looking at what the rest of the archival profession is doing I think is quite important.

The report discusses processing standards, particularly the use of Encoded Archival Description, EAD, as an XML-based format for finding aids, which allows for a whole variety of different developments we can talk about.

It looks at a major report that came out several years ago on how to accelerate processing at a basic level, the Greene-Meissner Report, which we are proud of at the Minnesota Historical Society because both authors worked for us; one still does. And it talks about various applications, such as the Archivists' Toolkit, a technology tool that would allow for capturing information from the point of creation all the way through the lifecycles of the information, including transfer to the archives at the Center and delivery over the Web.

All of that is in the report in great detail, and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have. And I apologize in advance for the use of the acronyms in terms of XML, EAD, and others that unfortunately go along with a discussion like this.

The major recommendations of the task force are these: One, begin to integrate all the various descriptive resources that are available, requiring the repurposing of existing content -- from the guides, the preliminary inventories, and other sources; and put it together in a compatible format, based on XML. This would probably lead to the use of Encoded Archival Description for finding aids, allowing materials to be shared, integrated and made compatible with content, both from within NARA, and from the House and Senate; and I think most interesting from Congressional Members' collections across the country.

The other major recommendation is to capture more descriptive content at the points of creation and accession; that is, to capture the information and knowledge that House and

Senate staff have about their own records.

To do that would involve a certain amount of education and support for House and Senate staff, and the adoption of an archival application that would allow for a more seamless transfer of information electronically so nothing is lost along the way. This probably would be based on some form of XML and an application such as the Archivists' Toolkit that would allow for capturing and transferring that information. That would involve a standardized and integrated routine and work flow that would encompass the entire life cycle of the records, from the point of the creation to the transfer to the archives and subsequent use.

In order to understand how that might work, and how it might most effectively and cost effectively be implemented, the report also recommends that a number of pilots or tests be undertaken. It suggests two: one, looking at material that is now closed but about to be open, and use that to test a set of basic processing procedures in order to capture some minimal amount of information, probably at the series level, for records that are about to be opened.

It also recommends a pilot looking at the records of an individual Congress, and it suggests a Congress from the 1930s, that would allow the Center to explore how to integrate existing descriptive information in XML-based format. As these are tested and implemented, they would form the basis for the last recommendation, which is an improved Web site with discovery tools. It conceivably could be built on NARA's Open Public Access tool, OPA, and perhaps have a unique skin or manifestation for the Center that would highlight and promote access to legislative collections.

And as I mentioned earlier, ultimately, if all of these things are in place, this could all be the foundation to support access to the distributed collections, the various Members' material all over the country. Minnesota, for example, has a rich set of congressional records from Members, and it would be very interesting to be able to link those to what's here at the Center.

Those are the recommendations. To implement those, there are some specific steps that the task force recommends.

One, hire a consultant. The Center has done a wonderful job in outlining the issues and exploring the problems, but at this point we would be looking for someone with more skill and experience in description and work flow design, someone or some ones who could come in, design the XML forms, and develop the procedures and standards that would need to be in place for this integrated work flow across the whole life cycle of records.

In addition, certainly in the short term but perhaps in the longer term as well, the Center will need archivists with particular and specialized expertise in order to implement those projects, someone knowledgeable of XML, knowledgeable of EAD, someone who understands and could implement those procedures both in the Center and work with the House and the Senate in adopting the tools necessary to make them work.

This should also involve some attempt to address the backlog of material, 61,000 cubic feet of material that are closed and needs to be brought up to a certain level in order to be compatible and to be integrated into this new descriptive framework. Everybody has a backlog, and it may not be possible to solve it overnight, but it certainly is something that needs to be addressed and would require additional staff resources.

As well, there would have to be resources and attention paid to supporting the work in the House and the Senate, especially in terms of acquainting staff with the use of some tools, such as the Archivists' Toolkit, the development of that overall technology infrastructure, and the support necessary to make it all work.

So that, very briefly and perhaps far too quickly, is the presentation. I would just add on my own -- and it's not part of the task force's conversation -- that I think the report echoes what we have been hearing today already from the Archivist about the transformation of NARA as a whole. I do think the Center's work is extraordinarily valuable. This could be one of the lower hanging fruits in terms of demonstrating how to work more closely with all stakeholders in an effective manner and demonstrate how NARA can be both innovative and customer-oriented. It could also demonstrate how the Center could be a center of excellence for both NARA and for the entire archival profession. So the potential is there, and I hope the report, when it's ultimately finished, meets with your approval. I'd welcome any questions or comments you might have.

Ms. Miller. Great. Thank you, Mr. Horton. That was quite interesting. Committee members, do we have any questions?

Ms. Paul. Well, I think that we agree generally with the overall recommendations of the report and initially were concerned that the contemporary records did not get sufficient attention. I think we did correct some of that in this second draft, and I was pleased to see that.

In the Senate this past year we have tried to upgrade the level of description that we are capturing electronically and do feel that while we haven't certainly solved all of the problems with describing electronic and digital transfers and so on, we think we have made some progress. We agree that it would be nice to work with either a consultant or someone with

expertise in that system's design to take a look at where we are and what the next step would be to move that to the Archivists' Toolkit.

I don't know if it is within the parameter of this report to take a closer look at Archivists' Toolkit to expand on the capabilities and perhaps problems that have been noted in regards to Archivists' Toolkit, but we do feel that some further elucidation of that system and what the collective experience with that has been before we, you know, just sort of jump into it. So I think that's one area that definitely needs some expansion.

Mr. Horton. Yes, I would agree completely. I apologize if I gave you the impression that that was a solid recommendation. The reports suggests something like Archivists' Toolkit, some application that would facilitate an integrated routine, and it needn't be Archivists' Toolkit. But we certainly want to pay closer attention to the options before making a decision.

Ms. Paul. Do you see that as within the parameter of this report to look at other applications?

Mr. Horton. I am not sure within the time available that it would be conceivable. And, Richard, you might correct me on that. But it may be part of the recommendation for a next consultant or a next phase, I would think.

Mr. Hunt. I have a feeling, given the time line, that we will probably have to go to another alternative or another contract vehicle. But I would just like to note how valuable this draft report is and the work of the task force. This is the first time we've seen the problem and the issues in their entirety. I've been asked before about resources and without a full understanding of what we were tackling, I was very hesitant to give an answer. But now we have it, and we see that it involves all of us at the table as well. So I feel like I am in good company as we go forward.

Mr. Ritchie. Could I just add, this is something that we have been working on for years. And this is a wonderful stage to have gotten to, because this report was something that we had looked for. We realize that this is going to be setting the agenda for a long time to come and that the Web site and that the electronic finding aids are going to make a big difference in terms of who uses those records. Just alerting people to what is there has been one of the biggest issues, and now I think it will make it a lot easier in terms of setting priorities within the Center for dealing with these records.

Ms. Miller. Any other questions?

Mr. Thomas. Yes. I just wanted to comment that I found the report very good reading. It lays out the problems that existed and made some good recommendations. I do have a few qualms about a couple of the things. The Archivists' Toolkit is certainly a valuable tool to use. It's being used quite widely around the country. However, it really isn't a shelf-ready product, and there is a certain amount of coding that will need to be done. I just want to make sure that the resources are available to do that part of the task.

The other thing I am seeing is that at some point in time or at some place within our recommendations, it talked about a Web-based tool for the right application to allow the House, the Senate, and the Center to use the same databases. I would make a recommendation that you do not wait for that and that at some point in time all three parties get on the same server.

I know there would be some security issues involved, but I think the technology is there that that can be implemented. It might take a little bit of talk between the three parties to find out who can do this and how it can be done. But if you're literally not on the same page when you are using this database, I think that's going to lead to some problems.

Mr. Horton. Thank you.

Mr. Thomas. One last thing I would like to say, the report talks about resources needed for implementation, and I'd like to add my strong recommendation that those resources are given to all three parties so this doesn't get lost. This is low-hanging fruit, and we can move forward with this.

Mr. Horton. Thank you very much.

Ms. Miller. You said everything I was going to say. You were reading my mind.

Ms. Vogt. I have a question. In the report -- this may be getting too detailed, but I would really like to have explained -- what do you mean by file unit descriptions? I found that to be confusing. Do you mean a subseries or are you talking about a file folder?

Mr. Horton. I think it means at the file folder level. And this is in reference to part of the EAD or the Greene-Meissner report. I would think that the distinctions would be series level, subseries level, box level, file level, and item level. And file level is a more manageable goal, especially in terms of the volume we are talking about. And the Greene-Meissner report, which I would be happy to share if you're interested, is basically a call to determine the appropriate level of processing for a collection. Basically, it says certain types of material warrant an appropriate level of processing, and you have to gauge the appropriate level for the records use and value.

Ms. Vogt. Right. And we find in our archives, and we're much smaller than the Center, that we can't really go to the file level. So I was wondering why you were promoting that, because I would think that series level would certainly be something that would move you forward much faster with the resources at hand. The objective is to get the record out there and get a MARC record output to disseminate information.

I think file level is something that Greene-Meissner argues against doing something to that level. I think we have to process at all levels depending on the information that we want to get out there. And even within one collection it might be processed at different levels. But file unit is sitting very low in the hierarchy to give that kind of description. So I think that should be looked at.

Mr. Horton. I think you're absolutely right. And perhaps that would be a main focus of the pilot test, to see what resources would be necessary to achieve that level of description. Either the task force or the Center should address the question: What is the appropriate level of processing?

Mr. Hunt. My impression is that the level of description would be determined by descriptive information that already exists. Where we have descriptive information, it would be captured and layered into a descriptive hierarchy; but we don't go out and create it. It would add at least the congressional context to a series that now spans multiple Congresses, and would re-establish that frame of reference.

But you're absolutely right. Given the volume that we have, we are never going to go back in and do lower level description unless it's driven by researcher demand, or unless some transaction requires that we put our hands on the records, and we can produce additional description at the same time..

Ms. Vogt. Definitely, if the information is already there, then I think it should be used, but to move forward and create new file-level description would be almost impossible.

Mr. Hunt. Absolutely.

Ms. Vogt. One other thing I want to mention is we've talked about staff and being sure we have the staff levels we need. But also I want to make the push for continuing education of staff as staff turns over. If this is what you're going to be doing in the future, which we all are hoping you will be doing, once you get this backlog behind you, you need to have that continuing education for your staff as standards move forward. I hope we can do that.

Mr. Zink. I had one question. Coming from an IT background, I'm curious as to how fully implemented are the recommendations from the Greene-Meissner report; has it been implemented within the Minnesota Historical Society? How widely accepted has it been?

Mr. Horton. As to its implementation in my own organization, it's an ongoing effort. The report was issued several years, or the article was written several years ago, and, to a certain extent, it already reflected choices we had made. In fact, if you go back to the genealogy of this, it is based on and promotes the MIT processing manual that Helen Samuels did 25 years ago. So it's not necessarily completely new; there are a number of institutions that use it in one way or another.

We basically use it as the justification for an appropriate level of processing. Where is your attention warranted, given the fact that our resources are limited? And to a certain extent that pushes some work on to the researcher, as discoverability inevitably does.

But, again, I think we're all in a situation where we have to identify our priorities and move forward accordingly. Some material is going to go online, and that really is going to be treated at an item level simply because if you're digitizing material, capturing material at that level, it demands a lot of attention. But that's extraordinarily expensive, and there are limited resources available. Other material is simply going to be described at the box level; and that's as far we will ever be able to go with it.

Mr. Zink. A follow-up and, once again, from an IT perspective, the faster that there can be XML or other coding used at the outset, you essentially stop the bleeding. But I know that it will probably be more difficult here than many places to get the records on-line. I don't know, and it seems that that is downplayed somewhat in the recommendations. Maybe it's a political reality.

Mr. Horton. I think that the Center, with its longstanding collaboration with the House and the Senate, is in a position to achieve this; I know in my own case it's extraordinarily hard for us to work with the 400-some units of government in Minnesota and get them involved in some standardized, integrated routine. Given the interest that the House and Senate have in material for their own use, there's a strong and compelling case for their involvement in this new approach right from the start. And that may make it an exception to the rule. So I think it really is achievable.

Ms. Miller. As I was listening to you, Mr. Horton, one of the things that immediately came to mind was appropriations. How do we fund this? But I think our attempt to have an integrated system where everybody -- the House, the Senate, and the Center -- has access, will help with the appropriations. A case will have to be made. I think that's a function that

we could do and take an active role in because we need to build support to get that done. And, Mr. Horton, how long will this take to implement?

Mr. Horton. Well, it will move at different stages. I think, if the consultant can be hired, you could have the intellectual and technological framework design within a year or less. Implementation would certainly require, as you said, appropriations and funding, both for staff and then for actually building and installing an integrated system in the House, Senate, and Center. And that's harder for me to estimate. But I would think, certainly within a year, you'd have the framework in place. If the funding were available, you could probably have the whole thing set up within 18 months.

Ms. Miller. And that begs the question, Nancy, of our working in close collaboration, House and Senate, to make sure that our systems are compatible. Because it doesn't make sense for the Senate to purchase some system that we can't mutually talk to, which is always an issue here.

Mr. Horton. And I think one thing that might make it easier is that we are looking at XML as an import and export mechanism, so it doesn't necessarily mean rebuilding or buying new systems. It simply means making sure we have a conceptual design for the information we want to exchange and then using XML as the vehicle for that. Because, to a certain extent, different systems can talk using XML. So it wouldn't necessarily involve any kind of major overhaul of the technologies.

Ms. Miller. Great. You got that, Bob? Bob Reeves is our Deputy Clerk for Technology.

Mr. Zink. What specifically would be the scope of the proposed consultant's report?

Mr. Horton. That would be determined in the final draft. But, off the top of my head, I would say that a consultant would offer someone with a deep and profound understanding of descriptive standards and the use of XML to determine how we could start to integrate these systems on a communications level. They would also develop the work flow and the set of standards and routines that would make it sustainable and practical. Those are not terribly difficult skills to find in the archival profession and the technology profession. This type of integration of content and sharing of information is pretty much what we are all trying to do in almost every profession and almost every workplace, everything from health records to open government. Data.gov is an example of the same sort of thing. So I think those skills are available.

Beyond that, you could request the consultant to look at specific applications, such as Archivists' Toolkit, and make an evaluation of those. There may be some other ancillary

questions one might ask of the consultant, but I think the primary ones are the development of the XML forms, the understanding of how to make the routines work, and a recommendation on the appropriate application to make it work.

Mr. Zink. Okay.

Ms. Miller. Committee, are there any other questions?

Mr. Ferriero. I would like to thank the group for the work that they did. I am a huge fan of Greene and Meissner. Helen Slotkin Samuels used to work for me at MIT, and I've been trying to figure out a way to get their approach into the culture of the National Archives. I see it as very important for not only for your collections, Richard, but for the Archives in general on the way we do processing at the National Archives. I am very excited about the opportunity that this presents.

Ms. Miller. Any other questions?

Mr. Horton. Thank you very much.

Mr. Hunt. Let me add, on the consultant front, I believe that recommendation represents an attempt in the short term to provide specialized expertise at the Center. Even if I can get permission to post a position to add this expertise to the staff, it will take "X" number of months to hire someone. I'm anxious to get started. I will wait for the task force to finish its work of course, and I will wait for the advisory committee to give its final blessing, but many of these pilots and other suggestions we can start and make some progress on. I think that's the spirit of this recommendation, hire a consultant to get help to us sooner, and then let me go through the process to hire somebody with the skill set. And I've been told that I need to find a Kat Stein, who works at the Russell Center, so Sheryl, you need to help me find a Kat Stein.

Ms. Vogt. Well, you can't come to my place to look for Kat Stein.

Mr. Hunt. I want to find someone with her skill set.

Ms. Miller. And do you have the resources already to start looking for the consultant?

Mr. Hunt. No. The only resources I have are in this existing contract.

Ms. Miller. Okay. All right. Any other questions, comments? Great. We need to move along here.

VII. Update on Electronic Records Issues and Congressional Web Harvest – Ashley Smoot, Robin Reeder, Karen Paul

Ms. Miller. Committee, we have been forging ahead with issues concerning the electronic records of Congress and keeping up with their capture and preservation, and making them available when time comes. So I'd like to ask Ashley Smoot from the Center for Legislative Archives to speak to us about this, as well as Robin Reeder and Karen Paul to comment on their internal progress in getting committees to turn over their electronic records. Mr. Smoot. A little handicap with the arm today?

Mr. Smoot. Yes, as you've heard the Archivist discuss his transformation plan, he is pushing us very hard, and it's not without penalty!

Thank you, Madam Chairman and committee members. My name is Ashley Smoot. I'd also like to point out my colleague, Shannon Niou. We are new to the Center for Legislative Archives, starting in the spring, and have been getting up to speed on archiving. I have an IT background and so does Shannon. But we've learned a lot in the 7 months that we've been at the Center. We've had a number of meetings and consultations with Senate offices and House offices, and we work closely with the Senate and House Archivists in meeting the requirements of the Congress.

We gave presentations at the Congressional Papers Roundtable and the House Clerk's forum, and at a meeting with House and Senate staff at the Archives that we called "doughnuts with Dave" about a month ago. There were no doughnuts, however.

I think we have had very successful meetings to address incoming electronic records. We've processed and received about three terabytes in the time that we've been there. We've also had discussions with the Senate and House IT people to try to improve the current process of portable hard drives and optical media coming over in boxes.

But working with the Senate and the House, we hope that in the next Congress we will have secure server systems in place that offices could use to transfer their electronic records to, which will make it a much more efficient and streamlined process. It would also make it easier to get their records and properly handle them. And, it would also make it more efficient for the Center as far as processing and receiving them.

One important thing that we're working on right now is the congressional Web harvest, which is done at the end of the Congress. It began December 1st, and it takes about 2 to 3 weeks. The National Archives works closely with the Internet Archive and a contractor to use Web harvest technology, which can comb the entire Senate.gov and House.gov domains and

preserve all of that Web presence, basically taking a snapshot of it.

You may be familiar with the Wayback Machine and the Internet Archive. There are over 620 specific Web sites that are in the Senate and House domains, and we will receive between two and four terabytes of data. That should be complete before Christmas and will be available online in February to the public.

The Congressional Records Instance has also progressed. A year ago, the last time there was a full meeting, it did not yet exist and had not been tested. Since then it has come online in two locations. There are actually two Congressional Records Instances. One is at Archives I, the main building downtown. That's in our secure vault. That's the only place where we process electronic records. There's also one at NARA's COOP site, which is at a remote location, and it's been provided by the ERA program. Those systems have enabled us to take in the three terabytes. That's 3,000 gigabytes.

The way the process works right now is we receive the records from the Hill and then they are uploaded to our local system, enabling us to meet congressional demand and use of the records. We return the records within 24 hours, which is the same practice and requirement that we have for textual records. At present there is no connection to the COOP site in ERA, so we actually travel to the remote location to do another upload to the ERA's Congressional Records Instance. This system has worked well for the first year and for the first three terabytes, but as an IT professional, it does concern me as far as its scalability and future needs.

Number one, as I mentioned, the upload tasks and process must be performed here and then also done again at the remote location because there's no connection. Because we have no connection, it's difficult to do reports on the data that we have out there. We don't have staff at the COOP site, and so we're basically managing two instances, which requires duplicating work and takes more resources. So managing our reporting needs is made more difficult.

The remote COOP site of the Congressional Records Instances really is the permanent, primary system. Because the system we have locally is not in a data center, it doesn't have a backup system or other kinds of technologies that we can use to protect the data. We really don't feel at ease until the permanent copy is at the remote site, where it's in the dedicated instance of the ERA, and where it does have professional data-center-level protections.

The local system is also already at capacity, which is a concern because in the next 6 months we're expecting a higher volume of data from the Committee on Global Warming and Energy Independence alone. This committee is going out of business starting in January, so Robin has been working with them, and we're expecting to receive one to two terabytes of data from

them.

As I mentioned, we're also getting two to four terabytes of data from the Web harvest. The Fiscal Crisis Inquiry Commission, a legislative commission, has anywhere from four to 16 terabytes of data. The Congressional Research Service, the research arm of the Library of Congress, has about 13 terabytes of archived data that they are ready to transfer to us, but we don't have that capacity locally right now to ingest it.

The system at the COOP site for ERA is scalable, however, and can meet these demands. We are looking to improve the local processing and local instance that we have right now. Right now, it's run off of a PC with a direct-attach storage system. It would be better to have a server-based system with multiple machines that can access it on a secure isolated network, obviously with larger capacity and backup capabilities. We need the ability to consolidate it to one instance so we don't have to duplicate the effort. That would make us much more efficient and better able to meet the rising tide of records that are coming in so we can focus on things like description and organization.

One other concern I have concerns classified committee records. Right now, we don't have any electronic record capability other than storing them in the drives and the servers that they came on. We also have the records of the 9/11 Commission, including classified records. And right now we do not have a congressional records instance for those. I know that the Archives is planning a classified instance of ERA for the future. But right now I think we need to take steps to protect these records because the hardware and storage devices that they're on will not last forever.

That concludes my report. I'm open to any questions that anyone has.

Ms. Miller. Any questions, committee members?

Ms. Vogt. Is there any reason that you can't get what you need, other than money, for combining these two systems? It seems like this is what needs to be done.

Mr. Smoot. Right. I think ERA is still in the development phase, so with our system we had to put the cart before the horse. I think as these systems come online and the long-term plans and infrastructure changes are made, our needs will be met. At least we need network links from our COOP site to the local instance. But I think it's just a matter of time in unlocking the security issues and implementing a network connection from the secure COOP site to our secure room here. I think that it's just a matter of time, requiring some technological issues to be modified.

Ms. Vogt. Does the Archives have an idea of how much time we're talking about?

Mr. Ferriero. We're wrapping up ERA development in June, because we're bringing on all the agencies starting in June. The classified instance is in development, so that will, I hope, take care of that problem. The storage issue is something that we need to talk about, because there are some solutions on that one.

Mr. Smoot. Regarding consolidation of the systems, which requires ingesting or uploading large volumes of records, the bandwidth requirement between two remote sites is significant, and the costs are considerable. Working in the Senate we had, I think, a three gigabyte per second connection; and it's not inexpensive. It is difficult if you have multiple points trying to make connect and upload large volumes of data. So there are lots of concerns and associated costs with uploading data from a remote site.

Retrieval and access would be our number one priority and concern. When we do get a request from the Hill, we must provide the data back within a 24-hour period.

Mr. Hunt. I just want to point out that I've asked Ashley and our old friend, Bob Spangler, who has even more responsibilities than previously for ERA and some of the other systems at the National Archives, to create an options paper for us to go forward. I want spelled out what we need to do in the next few months, what we need to do in the next 6 months, and what we need to do in the next year as these systems requirements evolve.

Having those options in front of us, I will need the Archivist's help to proceed. At the moment, I'm transitioning between offices. So I don't know who to ask for the funds. I'm between budgets at the moment.

Mr. Ferriero. What budget?

Ms. Miller. Any other questions or comments?

Mr. Zink. With that comment I am not sure I really want to be that close to you. A man without a land. Isn't the National Archives a member of Internet2?

Mr. Ferriero. That's a good question. I don't know if we are or not. I've never been briefed on that one.

Mr. Zink. Okay. Well, the reason I mentioned that is because I was assuming bandwidth was an issue and location may be an issue as well. But that dramatically declines -- maybe with a 90 percent reduction -- and particularly if the emphasis is on retrieval for scholarly use.

There is a big push among Internet2 institutions to include other than scientific and technical data and include the the humanities.

Mr. Ferriero. We're not a member. Learn something every day.

Mr. Forrester. Over the last hour Mr. Smoot has used the terms terrabyte, SCIFs, things like that. Nancy mentioned the papers going to West Virginia on a 23-foot semi truck. Well this man's talking about probably 10 times that many trucks at the same time. Also, our conversations or our words have gone from "linear feet" to terabytes. So I think this is something we definitely need to take notice of and be aware of and take action on.

The Association of Centers for the Study of Congress and institutions like Sheryl's do this every day and face the same issues. I'm sure that there is a way that we can come together, along with the SAA Congressional Papers Roundtable, to offer assistance. I'm sure there are people dying to say that we can help you with this; we can do those things. But it just goes to show that we're going to another stage.

And, Richard, you're going to need a bigger staff. And I just want to say that I've been a victim of this, where I have to explain to my institution, I cannot just digitize collections. The records have to be processed and indexed. I need extra staff, and that's when they lose their interest in digitization.

Ms. Paul. I had actually just one question. You mentioned the coming of secure servers for the archival activities in the House and Senate. What kind of time frame are we talking about or thinking about?

Mr. Smoot. I think with the turnover and the goings on right now they'd think I was crazy if I suggested it. But I think we should aim for a January goal.

Ms. Paul. Would that be an element in moving towards the Archivists' Toolkit implementation? Would that be part of that?

Mr. Smoot. That is not part of the request that I made to the Senate and the House. I think that would be a whole other ball game to run an application. The electronic repository is one thing, but a server application wouldn't be of much use to the Archives unless we were connected to the network, basically. Between the Senate and the House, there is a joint network that they have, but it is not part of that. But it could be -- it's definitely a camel's nose under the tent as far as making that possible and more feasible.

Ms. Miller. Karen and Robin, do you have any comments that you wanted to make?

Ms. Reeder. I just wanted to say, Ashley, you've been great helping us with the House and with our impending flip next Congress. A lot of the committees are turning over their electronic records, and they're very concerned because they're losing staff. So I just want to thank you and I know it's probably still going to be a little busy in the next few weeks, but we appreciate your help.

Ms. Paul. I wanted to say a couple of things about the Web crawl and the third party sites. As part of that effort to collect information about the sites, we met with the Library of Congress National Digital Information Infrastructure, NDIP, team; and they, in fact, had a fellow assigned to them to do a comprehensive study of the third party sites. And I thought it would be interesting for the committee to know that their analysis turned up the following: that YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter are, in fact, the most popular sites being used by the Members right now. And as part of their project, they are also looking at the actual ways that the crawl is conducted and are looking at the problems that they are having, and they are planning to put together a paper about that and share it with all of us. So we're looking forward to that.

In working with the offices that have been closing, increasingly Members who are retiring are asking about their Web sites, how they will be preserved, and will people be able to access them after they depart the House and the Senate. So we're beginning to see an increasing amount of interest in this.

And, also, in working with the offices that are closing, another interesting tidbit has come up that I wanted to share, and that is one of the things that we've always advised the Members to preserve and keep as part of their collection, which are their daily briefing books. And it's been surprising to, in this crop of retirees, to see how many are using Notepad for that function.

So that now leads to -- has raised a lot of other issues about preserving those daily briefing things that exist on Notepad; and, like everything else electronic, that tends to be in transition. We found that some offices have thought about that issue of preserving those things and I guess the word is syncing, synchronizing them to their servers, but others have not. So it's something that, as archivists, that we need to ask when we talk with staff in these offices. Because they're having an equally challenging time in keeping up with managing the information that they are collecting.

And in terms of electronic records, we have been continuing discussions with committees. I wanted to mention that our office has added the services of Elisabeth Butler. In October, she joined our team; and, as a result of Elisabeth joining the team, we've been able to offer more

direct services to the smaller committees that do not have archivists. Elisabeth is crackerjack at archiving electronic records; and, since she has been on board, we have actually made some progress with three of the smaller committees who are now turning over their files to us for processing, which, in some ways, is the best of all possible worlds because that way we can do the descriptive work we need to do.

And, also, a fourth committee is now considering the whole issue. So I think when we first began to look at the issue of electronic records maybe 3 years ago now, in depth, someone said it was going to be one tough slog. But at least we feel that we're starting to make some headway in this regard.

And I also wanted to recognize the services we provide on description. Because if you read in the report what we have been able to do in the past year in terms of upgrading the level of description that we are collecting from committee staff through various means -- exit interviews with the staff -- that we are able to collect a lot more contextual information to add to the files that we are now sending down.

My assistant, Alison White, headed up this entire project. I wanted to bring that to your attention. And I do think we, as a result of her work in that area, that we are at the point of taking a closer look at Archivists' Toolkit and working with someone on what those data fields ought to be.

So I think that in terms of resources, we have some pretty strong resources, and looking ahead we might be able to bring some people in from the Library of Congress to set up a task force to begin to work on those descriptive elements and to come up with a trial form for us to begin to use.

Increased description will revolutionize use of the Center's holdings. I see it incredibly so in all of the classified records that we transfer to the Center that exist in a limbo -- it's a function of the way classified records are handled. Frequently, they are not linked even with the investigation or the oversight activity that brought these records to Capitol Hill. And with increased description at this end, suddenly the Center is going to discover that, you have subcommittee records that you didn't know you had because there's just this whole level of activity that's really not visible.

So in terms of moving ahead with the finding aid project, I can't support that strongly enough. And we need to think of using that server or these servers and to begin to do it in small steps, maybe not all at once, but I think we have the building blocks, and it's time now to move ahead.

Ms. Miller. Thank you, Karen. And, you know, the accessibility of all of this material, not only out to the public and to outside groups but internally for leg counsels and for committee staff, it's just enormously significant; and so I think we've come a long, long way here. And thank you, Mr. Smoot, for your work. Appreciate your report.

VIII. Annual Report of the Center for Legislative Archives – Richard Hunt

Ms. Miller. Moving quickly along, we've come to our point of the morning where we have our annual report from our Center for Legislative Archives.

Mr. Hunt. And I would just like to make a few brief observations.

You've had a chance to look at our annual report and see how busy we've been and productive on so many fronts. And David had mentioned that he inherited the mantle of leadership with the National Archives. That's about the time that multiple survey results came out showing that morale is not where he would like it to be.

But I would like to point out that they do separate surveys at unit levels and that the Center for Legislative Archives was one of the major exceptions on low morale. And I hope you can see that in the sense of esprit de corps and mission captured in the annual report, because that's really what drives the Center. I hate to brag, but I do have one of the best staffs in the National Archives, and I hope to improve it. I'm really blessed to have everyone working there, especially with the leadership of Matt Fulgham and Charlie Flanagan. I'm sitting in a very good seat.

I had a long list of questions that I wanted answered today regarding the Transformation Plan, but you've asked all the right questions and discussed concerns, so I feel a lot better than when I walked in today and really look forward to the future.

I would also just like to compliment Sharon Fitzpatrick and Ashley Smoot for the cover of this year's annual report. We were trying to capture the sense of transformation on many fronts: this is transforming Congress and it's transforming us as a result since we're attached at the hip with the House and the Senate.

And I'm sorry Joe Cooper wasn't here because we tried to make some changes to the annual report to address his comments at the last meeting. He wanted to know what we are doing in our outreach to scholars and what we are doing on the educational outreach front. So not only are we doing more, but I thought we reported it better this time, so you get a sense of what we're trying to do. From that you can tell us what else we should do. So I would really encourage that discussion and hope to have your suggestions.

I want to point out that we're sharing a publication from our teaching institutes in partnership with HumanitiesTexas, the LBJ Library, and a whole host of Texas partners. This involves our old friend Mike Gillette, and it is a very impressive program where they reached somewhere between 250 and 400 Texas teachers this year. And, more importantly, with money from the State legislature, they focused on underachieving schools throughout the State, both in urban and rural settings.

Charlie Flanagan has been planning this program with them for a year now and participated in the first implementation. The reviews about how helpful these type of workshops and institutes and content-rich sessions have been to the teachers have been outstanding -- I know Mike is going to continue to develop the program and that I know that Charlie will be in high demand there. It shows what we can do in one of the leading curriculum-adoption States, and offers a model we can use in other States as well.

I would just like to end with the observation that we've launched a number of initiatives and a number of projects, and I think we've done so successfully. The question now for the Center and for the advisory committee is a question of sustainability; and whether it's electronic records, or the next-generation finding aid, or space, or other issues, it's where do we go and how do we go forward from where we are right now.

So I appreciate the Advisory Committee's leadership and assistance on all these issues. I really couldn't do it -- literally -- without your assistance and help. And now, having David as part of the leadership, we're in a good place.

Ms. Miller. Thank you so much.

Committee members, any questions of Richard?

Ms. Vogt. I would just like to make a comment that when I was going through the annual report I noticed your comments about what you were doing with teachers and your outreach, and I was really impressed. I had no idea that you were doing that much. We always talk about the Dirksen Center and what they're doing with teachers, but you have been doing a lot, and I think we have a lot to learn from you. And I hope that we will have you talking soon at one of the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress meetings on this topic.

And one more comment I would like to make. As a committee member, I want to thank our triumvirate of leadership with the Secretary, the Clerk, and the Archivist of the United States. There's a lot we've been trying to accomplish in this group, and we have made so much headway in the last 2 or 3 years, and it's because of the leadership we currently have for this

committee. And, Lorraine, we're going to miss you, but we hope we're going to see both of you back. We have a lot to do.

Ms. Miller. Thank you. Appreciate it. If I may make a point of personal privilege, I wanted to insert Farar for just a comment about our new office. But I would like to go to Karen Paul and to Robin Reeder for their reports about their activities as well.

Ms. Paul. Well, I basically gave mine already. So thank you.

Ms. Reeder. I'll just speak briefly. I want to acknowledge my wonderful colleagues, Heather Bourk and Alison Trulock. We've been inundated with the end of the Congress and the impending flip. We've been meeting with a lot of Members' offices and a lot of committees, and it's been a very exciting, interesting, crazy time, but I couldn't do it without them.

We're also working on updating our records management publications for committees, which hopefully will be coming out early next Congress. And that's pretty much all I'll say for now.

Ms. Miller. Farar.

Ms. Elliott. I'm Farar Elliott and the Clerk has asked me to speak ever so briefly about the new Office of Art and Archives. As she quite wisely said, it is an excellent description of what we will be focused on in the future as we work very closely with Matt and the Office of the House Historian.

I think, from the perspective of everyone here, you will see a seamless transition into our work on art and archives, something we have been focused on for a decade. And now I think you'll see an even more robust emphasis on outreach to committees and to Members as they work with their papers and an even greater focus on electronic records, our newly established House photo archives, and certainly our work on the next-generation finding aid. But Matt, Robin and I have all been together, kind of like we're triplets, since the office was founded in 2002, and I think you won't see an inch of daylight between us still.

IX. Other current issues and new business

Ms. Miller. Is there any other new business to come before the committee? Any other comments? David? Nancy? Any other committee members? Dr. Forrester?

Mr. Forrester. I would just like to say I have been the new guy on the block. With the change in Congress, since Madam Clerk is my sponsor, I am saying goodbye.

It has been very enjoyable. I have learned a lot. I have talked to some very interesting people here. I have learned a lot from my colleague, Mr. Birdwhistell, everybody here, Karen and Robin and Richard; I have grown a lot.

As you know, I manage the Barbara Jordan archives. Since I have been on this committee, I have been able to take that archives to a whole other level and just announced recently that we got an earmark from Sheila Jackson Lee, which after 20 years has finally allowed us to hire an archivist. He is from Kentucky, Mr. Chafee, who came to us from a recommendation from someone on this committee, and he worked out wonderfully. We are getting money to release the first set of Jordan papers, which is a very great accomplishment.

I would like to thank both chairmen, co-chairmen. I think that this committee has done an amazing job in the last 2 years, forcibly bringing us into the electronic age, and I think that is a very tough thing to do, and it is very hard. But I am very happy and I am very enriched by the people I have met not only at this table but on the outside. I thank you for that opportunity, and I am going to miss my 2 days in Washington every year.

Ms. Miller. Thank you, Dr. Forrester. If there is no other business to come before the committee, the chair will entertain a motion to adjourn and wish everyone a wonderful holiday season.

Is there a motion to adjourn?

Mr. Birdwhistell. Motion.

Ms. Miller. We are adjourned. Thank you so much.

[Whereupon, at 12:03 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]