

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE RECORDS OF CONGRESS
MEETING #41
DECEMBER 5, 2011
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
ARCHIVIST'S BOARDROOM

Members of the Committee in attendance: Nancy Erickson, Chair (Secretary of the Senate); Karen Haas, Co-Chair (Clerk of the House); 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); Sharon Leon (Director of Public Projects, Center for History and New Media, George Mason 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: Karen Paul, Archivist, Senate Historical Office, U.S. Senate; Robin Reeder, Archivist, Office of Art and Archives, U.S. House of Representatives; and Richard Hunt, Director, Center for Legislative Archives, National Archives and Records Administration.

The meeting began at 10:00 a.m. in the Archivist's Boardroom, National Archives and Records Administration, Hon. Nancy Erickson, Secretary of the Senate, presiding.

ERICKSON: Good morning, everybody. As chair of the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress for the 112th Congress, it is a pleasure to welcome you all to our meeting, and I would like to add a special thank you to David and his staff for their hospitality this morning hosting us. I would like to add, speaking of hospitality, I recently had the opportunity to bring our Senate legislative clerks to the Legislative Treasure Vault. I was surprised that the majority of them had never been to the National Archives to see our records in the Legislative Treasure Vault. It was a personal thrill for me to watch the expression of our Senate journal clerks when they saw the very first *Senate Journal* from 1789. I also want to say that I appreciate the work of Richard's staff, especially Charlie and Sharon. They are not only knowledgeable but, most importantly, I appreciate their enthusiasm when sharing Senate records with guests who come to the Legislative Vault. I want to thank them for making it a special visit for the legislative clerks just as they do every time folks from the Senate and House come to see our records.

David, your organization has been in the news of late and I know you'll be talking about that later. I am sure most of you have heard about President Obama's recent directive to executive branch agencies to begin making plans for the preservation of their electronic records and I have to say -- I think you all would agree with me -- that we have a special sense of pride in noting that Congress has already begun doing that. We are pleased that we are trailblazers for the executive branch on that front. Because the preservation of electronic records is much more complex than saving paper records, I have strongly supported increased training for Senate archivists, and I have encouraged Senate committees to add professional archivists to their staffs. I am very pleased to report that 75% of Senate committees are now dealing with the archival preservation of their electronic records. I am also very pleased with the progress of the Center for Legislative Archives with the development of a new electronic finding aid for records of the Senate and the House, and I look forward to their progress report on this issue during the meeting. I also want to thank the archivists and the Clerk of the House, Karen Haas, for their continued support for this project.

Recently I had the opportunity to participate in the 10th Anniversary Luncheon for the CHARM Group, which stands for Capitol Hill Archivists and Records Managers. I was happy to meet their diverse members and learn something about the group's founding, and also to hear some of the challenges they face as ambassadors of record preservation. Several of our CHARM members are here today and I'm glad to extend a special welcome to them as well.

By the end of 2012, the Advisory Committee will be producing its Fifth Report to Congress as mandated when the committee was established. I look forward to overseeing the compilation of our accomplishments and our future goals. Each of the four preceding reports document the steady progress being made to bring the records of Congress under better archival control, and they demonstrate the important role of this advisory committee. I would like to propose the creation of a task force to prepare the next report, and I'll ask Karen Paul, Senate Archivist, to coordinate with me on the report's preparation. We will aim to have the draft available for the Advisory Committee at our next spring meeting. I now turn to Karen Haas, Clerk of the House.

HAAS: Thank you so much. I'd like to second the Secretary's greeting to the Advisory Committee. It's great to see everyone here today. I'd also like to welcome Jeff Thomas back to the table. Jeff is the archivist with the Ohio Congressional Archives at Ohio State University.

At this time I would like to discuss some of the activities that have been going on in the Office of the Clerk since our meeting last June. The House Office of the Inspector

General conducted interviews and issued a report regarding records retention and disposition practices in the House. The IG singled out the Office of the Clerks' records management policies and schedules as a model for the rest of the House and recommended that the House Archivists assist other House officers with their records management. We are already taking that advice to heart and Robin Reeder is working with other House officers to identify the records they create and make recommendations on their retention and disposition.

Now I'd like to ask our Deputy Clerk, Bob Reeves, to give us an update on *House Live*. As you know from past Advisory Committee meetings, *House Live* is a prominent feature on the Clerk's website that not only streams video of the House proceedings as they are happening but also archives the video which allows users to access information in short specific portions. Bob, could you give us an update?

REEVES: Thank you, Madam Clerk. Earlier this year we made a couple of changes to *House Live* that were software and hardware oriented. This would facilitate changes that we would make later in the year; one of which was a new video player. The significance of the video player is that it allows the user to not have to download any additional programs such as "Silverlight," and adapts to the platform used to watch the video. It also allowed us to provide the archived video to mobile devices such as iPads, and others. The other change we made early in the process was to add an advanced search feature that allows the user to search additional fields to narrow their search to get directly to what they are looking for.

Towards the end of April, we implemented a tool that the public will not see because it's internal only. It's a video clip tool. This tool allows Member offices to have staff watch the live stream of House floor proceedings and be able to clip -- through use of the tool -- a one-minute, two-minute, or five-minute section. They then have an MP4 video that they can place either on their Members' website or on their social media site. At the end of September, we also updated the Clerk's House floor activities page. We improved the appearance of the page, included separate look-up functions for both bills and votes that had been introduced on the floor, and added the ability to download proceedings in an XML form. Our most recent change was in early October when we implemented a live H264 feed, which is the feed that makes the live transmission available on mobile devices. Going forward in the first quarter, we're looking to implement what we're calling a usability upgrade, which essentially simplifies and also maintains the enriched content.

HAAS: Thank you. At our previous meeting in June, I mentioned that our office has been tasked by the House Administration Committee to develop and implement a portal for posting committee documents. We are moving forward with this project. My

archival staff has met recently with the IT staff to discuss the naming conventions for electronic committee documents. We also are continuing to expand our efforts to educate committee staff about best practices for records management and requirements to archive unpublished records under House Rule 7. In fact, as part of your handouts, we have included a copy of our new House Committee Records Management Manual. Prior to this manual, the last update was published in 2004. Records formats have changed considerably since then, especially with regard to electronic records. We have been working quite closely with the Center for Legislative Archives to make certain that committee records are captured and preserved whether they are paper or electronic. David, I want to thank you today for hosting us. It's always a pleasure to come down here to see the Archives and to remind us how well our records are being cared for. And, Nancy, thank you for organizing today's meeting.

ERICKSON: David?

FERRIERO: Thank you. Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the National Archives. It's nice to have you all here and, obviously, we should have chosen a larger room to accommodate the crowd. Next time we'll make sure we do that. As Nancy said we have been in the news a lot recently. Some good, some not so good. Let me focus on the good stuff first. First, historic for us, is the memo from the President on the 28th of November. It requires the head of agencies to submit a report to me and the Director of OMB within the next 120 days with the agency's plan for how they are going to improve and maintain records management, especially concerning electronic records. This is the first acknowledgement to federal agencies regarding their responsibilities for electronic records. We're very excited about that, and to quote the most important paragraph: "When records are well-managed, agencies can use them to assess the impact of programs, to reduce redundant efforts, to save money, and to share knowledge within and across their organizations. In these ways, proper records management is the backbone of open government." That has been my mantra since my arrival and I'm really very pleased to see it in writing.

Also of significance on the legislative front, is that our oversight committee, spearheaded by Darrell Issa, has worked on a markup of a House bill to move the dead IMPA bill forward, which recognizes electronic records for the first time. For those of you who don't know, the 1996 Presidential Records Act was amended to acknowledge electronic records. The Federal Records Act has never been amended, so this is historic, and also has support from the Senate. In the *Washington Post* just yesterday I believe, there was a report on the National Declassification Center established by executive order in December 2009, with a mandate to review 400 million pages of classified content going back to World War I by December 31, 2013. We have reviewed 217 million pages so far,

80% of those have been cleared for release. I'm proud to say that they include the six oldest documents from 1917 and 1918, which contain the German formulas for invisible ink. If you go to my blog you will see facsimiles of these wonderful, wonderful documents. My favorite one has the formula and written down at the bottom it says in big letters, "Do Not Inhale." (laughter)

Other good news is our first research fellowship for the Center for Legislative Archives. This is an initiative funded by the Foundation for the National Archives aimed at promoting research in the records of Congress. Peter Shulman from Case Western Reserve is our first fellow working on a book version of his MIT dissertation, which was entitled "Empire of Energy: War, Environment, and Geopolitics Before the Age of Oil." He heavily used the Center records for his dissertation and we're very pleased to have Peter working with us as our first fellow. We have proposed that the Foundation support another year for the fellowship. I hope this is going to be a continuing program. The Board of Directors is meeting tomorrow morning and I expect a positive response from them.

We have been working very closely with the Office of Personnel Management to create, for the first time in history, the job description of Records Manager. If you can believe it, there is no such position in the federal agencies, which means that very often it's an assignment given to a fairly junior person, it's not a full-time job, not a well trained person, and not a high priority in the agencies. This is an opportunity for us to turn that around and create a family of jobs that recognizes the importance of records management. This is also very historic. That's the good news.

On the more challenging news front, we're dealing with a reduced budget, which has caused us to rethink how we do things. It's a nice dovetail with the transformation work that is going on in the new organization of the Archives, but it's also caused us to be super cautious about hiring, so we have instituted a hiring freeze requiring heads of units to look carefully at openings to see if there are other ways of accomplishing the job before hiring a new person to fill the position. They will have to request to override the hiring freeze or go through a panel that we have established in order to hire a new employee. This is a strategy on our part to protect jobs, especially not knowing exactly what the budget situation is going to be in the future. We are still in our second continuing resolution which makes us nervous about the budget.

And for those of you who are paying attention to the employee viewpoints survey -- how people feel about working in the federal government -- we have finally succeeded in winning last place. We were second from the last when I arrived. We were tied for last place last year, and now we have succeeded in being dead last in that survey. Not, as you

might expect, where I want to be. The survey was administered around the same day we announced our reorganization. Some of the dissatisfaction is reflected in terms of the turmoil a reorganization creates, but we're very serious about taking these messages that we are getting from the staff to heart, especially in terms of creating opportunities for advancement -- and these are the hot buttons -- rewards, and recognition for staff. I should point out, however; those bad marks do not reflect the Center for Legislative Archives' staff opinions.

HUNT: We get high marks every year.
(laughter)

FERRIERO: So I'll stop there.

ERICKSON: Thank you. Next we need to move to the approval of the minutes of the last meeting on June 13. Could I can have a motion on the floor?

HAAS: I'll make a motion that we accept the minutes.

ERICKSON: Second?

FERRIERO: Second.

ERICKSON: So moved. All in favor?

GROUP: Aye.

ERICKSON: Nays? Hearing none, the motion is approved. Next, Karen, would you share your report?

PAUL: Yes. I'd like to bring you up to date on our efforts with electronic records. We continue to devote every available resource to the accessioning and description of digital records, and encouraging committees to continue with these efforts or, if they have not started, to begin the process. In June, 70% of committees were processing electronic records, and currently we are at 75%. This 5% change represents one of the A-list committees that suddenly decided to begin processing electronic records after a two year lobbying effort with this particular committee.

We are hearing that some of the committees who do have archivists engaged in processing electronic records are finding that the backlogs are too great to handle. They

are able to work with the electronic records as they go forward, but to deal with the backlogs of records has become quite a project.

So consequently, we did resort to Plan B and our office has volunteered to help the committees with their efforts. Committees that do not have archivists are simply turning their electronic records over to our office to process. I'm pleased to report that we have a hands-on opportunity that has rendered some valuable insights about staff recordkeeping. For example, over the summer, scrutinizing staff e-mail accounts for purposes of description, we discovered some unusual gaps, which seem to indicate that staff were not really totally aware of how to use the Outlook archive folder function. We were then able to address this by providing some targeted guidance. Whether or not people follow the guidance is up to them, but it really shows that we do benefit from committees having professionally trained archivists. Trained archivists are able to make sure that committee staff understand these processes, whereas that kind of simple basic task is frequently overlooked by IT-focused staff. Working with these backlogs has also allowed us to refine our description of digital records and we continue to make progress in that area. I want to thank Allison White and Elisabeth Butler who have contributed most heavily to this effort.

Growing use of mobile communication devices throughout the Senate and, in particular, the committees has led us to produce a checklist designed to help staff archivists locate records. This checklist is designed to be used when staff departs as part of their exit interview. This idea was inspired by the Collecting Repositories Electronic Workshop Group (CREW), which met in conjunction with SAA in August. With having to look for electronic records in various places, we also turned our attention to classified records. One of our committee archivists raised questions about the appraisal of these records and this resulted in the creation of an appraisal chart that security officers and archivists can use to identify the historically valuable classified records, which are handled on an item by item basis. The level of control is more complicated than just archival control. It's item by item. Hopefully we are helping staff to archive the hundreds and hundreds of cubic feet of classified records created by the Senate each year, and to really focus on those classified documents that have enduring value. One of the things in particular that we are concerned about is making sure that staff notes taken at classified briefings end up in the collection. We also updated our pamphlets that we use in committee and office briefings. You have copies of those.

The Next-Generation Finding Aid Taskforce finished its work in June when the report was accepted at the last Advisory Committee meeting. This led to a descriptive tool taskforce, to look at system requirements for descriptive software. It looks like Archivist Toolkit (AT) is already a popular software choice. The taskforce will also investigate

shared metadata schemes and figure out workflow, and will be headed by Jacqie Ferry from the Center for Legislative Archives. We have had one planning meeting with a working meeting scheduled for tomorrow. The Senate recently has been approved for Archivist Toolkit software. When we met this past June, we didn't think we were going to be approved to use it, but we have it now and are beginning to evaluate its usefulness, and determine how it would fit into an overall workflow between us and the Center. We understand it has great potential benefits in a shared database, particularly in the biographical history area. We are finding in electronic files so much staff crossover from House to Senate, and from Members' offices to committee offices, making the electronic records we are seeing an amalgam of almost the whole congressional community. We think AT will help standardize access terms. It will help us greatly to link different accessions. We can get multiple accessions from one individual and also to link changes in committees and sub-committees names as they evolve.

And I think finally, and most importantly, we expect AT to give us all collectively the ability to present our collections in ways that we want to present them, and will create the path that will allow us to link our description with universities and historical society repositories. We hope that the Center for Legislative Archives will obtain Archivist Toolkit soon since we've all been recently trained in its use, so we can begin to look at the potential workflow that might evolve.

I want to bring you up to date on our IT initiatives. The large file transfer is up and running. We are transferring electronically our series descriptions to the Center. The new loan form has been approved which will allow the Senate to use barcodes to track loans and we're planning to roll that out in the next few weeks.

Our Senate archives server is on hold at the moment for a couple of reasons. We're hoping that the IT position at the Center will be filled. We'd like to have that filled before we move ahead with that project and the determination of other requirements of the Congressional Records Instance in ERA. We do have a systems requirements document finished, but processing the backlog of electronic records has taken precedence in our office right now. We need to keep up momentum and pressure on the remaining committees to participate.

For Members services we are working with the eight members who are retiring and have pulled together a closing office notebook for them. We are pleased to report that Vice President Biden, after several years of negotiating, recently announced his selection of the University of Delaware as the repository for his Senate papers. For new members offices, we held a brownbag meeting that Nancy hosted and we rolled out the office Archives Toolkit and distributed copies to all administrative managers. This has helped

raise awareness of our programs and services and we're experiencing an uptick in calls from Members offices. We do note one trend in the offices that are closing. In the last Congress, and also in this Congress, we have noticed a real concern about preserving electronic files. They seem to equate this with distributing information to the Internet so there's a heightened concern on their part with preserving all of the electronic files, and an awareness of who is going to access them.

Another project that's underway is working with the staff of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction. When we learned that we would be handling the archiving of their records, we moved quickly to buttonhole the staff and we were successful in getting their attention through the help of the Secretary's office. In fact, we were making contact before there was hardly any staff on board. We were waiting for them when they walked in the door. As we meet today, the committee is packing up its paper records, but most of the archive is digital and our office will be handling all of that as well. That's another big digital project coming.

We hosted the second Congress Week/Constitution Day celebration in September and were really happy to have the Stennis Center partner with us on this particular event. They provided speakers for the panel. Don Ritchie, Senate Historian, led the panel discussion. The Stennis Center also provided a wonderfully graphic cake, which you can view on the ACSC website.

And to conclude, this was a year of anniversaries. The Society of American Archivists (SAA) celebrated its 75th and the Congressional Papers Roundtable (CPR) celebrated its 25th anniversary at SAA in August. I was honored to do an oral history on SAA and participate in the CPR panel discussions, which were organized by Sheryl Vogt's deputy, Jill Severn, who did a wonderful job emceeding that whole day. The CHARM Group has also celebrated its 10th year anniversary and I want to especially thank our Photo Historian, Heather Moore, for making our event happen; and I have to point out it was not a brownbag it was a catered luncheon. (laughter)

ERICKSON: Nothing but the best. Does anybody want to share with the group the plans of our eight retiring senators -- the status of their decisions on designating their repository?

PAUL: All but two have designated repositories and we're continuing to meet with the final two who have not decided. This is where we're discovering the issue and problems with archiving electronic records. If a repository is not successful getting the electronic records then you are not going to be getting the heart of the collection. There's also a tendency, especially for younger members departing, that they want to take their electronic records. It's easy for them to do so. You need the repository to come forward

and say they are going to take the responsibility of preserving their electronic records over the long-term.” This really is an issue.

ERICKSON: Anybody have any questions, comments?

FERRIERO: Yes, just curious; of those six that have been placed, what role do you play in determining the readiness of the institution to accept the records?

PAUL: We provide as much background as we can about the records they should be donating so when they meet with the repository staff they know what questions to ask and what to look for. But in terms of determining their readiness, there really isn't a role for us. We can't certify a repository. All we really can do is inform the Member to pick a large institution with a track record. And still, even though some of the institutions are good, and it's better than it was four years ago, there are institutions that just aren't ready to accept the records and are not able to give that assurance to a Member.

RITCHIE: We can give them bad examples of Senators who gave their papers to their Alma Mater and those papers are still in boxes in the basement of the library because they've never been processed or opened.

VOGT: I would like to comment on that. I would say the profession has tried to do something about that through the Congressional Papers Roundtable (CPR) and also the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress (ACSC) by saying what kind of repository a Member should be looking for. It's a matter of trying to educate the Members and it's difficult. It's something that has been the focus of these organizations for quite some time. Some publications have been written about this and tried to address the issue, but it's still difficult to get to everyone.

FERRIERO: The question was triggered by my experience in academic research libraries with the great variety in control of electronic records within their institution.

PAUL: We had a really interesting instance with the University of Delaware in that regard. There have been several instances where staff fight over who has control of the electronic records trying to decide whether it should be an archival unit or a separate IT unit. It is just part of the evolution. We all have to learn to work together as teams on these issues.

BIRDWHISTELL: I was in a meeting in Kentucky just last week and some of this came up because the congressional collections are being scattered throughout the regional comprehensive universities, and I brought it up to other deans of libraries about the need to focus on the users and the researcher's needs because you can't do anything about

saying where collections are going to go. That's not our business, but I think we can do more. I know Karen has tried to do this for years, as well as others, to make sure that we focus on the needs of the researchers and how they are going to get to this information. I'm going to take another crack at the University of Kentucky where we are making some fairly good progress on the data collation side. If we can get that up and running then I think we need to offer a partnership to smaller libraries who aren't able to do that mainly for the benefit of the researchers. It won't do us any good necessarily but I think that's one of the things we're going to have to do until this sort of shakes out and everybody has that capability because we are going to have a gap for hundreds years yet.

PAUL: That's true.

ERICKSON: I think that's happening even at the national level. At the preservation conference you mentioned, that was a recognized need for LOC, the Smithsonian, and the Archives to start partnering on these issues.

ZINK: I have a question and I think we talked about this at the last meeting about correspondence and the digitization that takes place within the congressional offices, and the various systems that may be used, and the difficulties downstream. I know that doesn't strictly fall under your purview, but is falling under the purview of the recipient institutions given some of the proprietary nature of the digitization methods. Is there an attempt to educate staff that there is not uniform digitization software across all offices?

PAUL: No, and the House and Senate differ also. I think in the Senate there are four approved systems. Robin, how many you have in the House?

REEDER: Actually, I think it's four as well. There are two main ones, which are IQ and Capitol Letters.

PAUL: In the Senate, our people contract with the vendors for specific downloads in specific formats, and for the correspondence systems they are required to download them in a particular format. So we have an ASCII flat file. We provide the code to the university that receives the records. It is then up to the university to look at that format and decide what components of that format they want to activate and move into a system that they are using. That is very uniform. That is very standardized in the Senate. Those systems are very complicated relational databases and it's really the only way to transfer it into a format that's usable. Our people actually, when that download occurs, put it into an access database to run the check on it so that's one possibility. But there is something like 28 data fields in this format. I don't think you would want all of those fields

activated. You would need to select the half a dozen or so that you would want to be part of a database.

ERICKSON: Don, just to return to you briefly, you had mentioned one of our retiring members is undertaking an oral history program with their staff and you had mentioned the Mitchell Center. Would you talk about that?

RITCHIE: Yes, the Mitchell Center has just posted a very impressive series of about 100 to 120 oral history interviews that were videotaped and audiotaped with a cross-section of people, including a former Secretary of the Senate and Sergeant-at-Arms, and others who worked for Judge Mitchell. Full transcripts are available online. It's a model project and we are actually working with some of the outgoing Senators right now in working out systems like this. The largest senatorial oral history was with Senator Ted Kennedy, an organized project through the University of Virginia. That one was so big that it doesn't serve as a model for many of the other offices, but the Mitchell Project I think is going to stand up very significantly, and it certainly matches with the Bob Dole and Howard Baker collections. A number of others are becoming important components of these Center collections, such as Ina Caro, who is the chief researcher for Bob Caro, said that when she goes to look at a modern senatorial collection, the first thing she asks is, "do you have oral histories?" She said those are the roadmaps to the collection. Otherwise, it's 30,000 cubic feet of material and there is no way to really tell where to start in the process. I think we are seeing this happening now with more and more of the retiring Senators considering doing oral histories.

PAUL: We have two other retiring senators who are conducting oral histories with staff at this time.

ERICKSON: Thank you, Karen. Robin?

REEDER: Thank you. I just wanted to catch everybody up on what's been going on in the Clerk's office since the last meeting in June. It's been a quite busy first session of the 112th Congress. The archive staff of the Office of Art and Archives has been attending training sessions on Archivist Toolkit and we successfully have it up and running on our computers so we are not only prepared, but also have been using it. Alison Trulock of our staff has been spearheading this effort and has been busily entering information, and also using it for current records that we've been receiving. The software is really versatile and has a lot of useful components to it. We've been using it as well for our own internal use and have a staff member from our office working with photographs. He's been in charge of bringing together the photographs from the Historian's office and the

curatorial part of our office, as well as the archival part of our office, and entering that information into the museum system software that we have within our offices.

We are also happy to announce that we have about 3,000 boxes of orphan records that are coming down to the Center for Legislative Archives this week. With the change in party leadership, I think a lot of records that have been stored in other spots have been found. They are from previous Congresses so they will be coming to the Center. I know that space is an issue for the Center as it is for everybody, so hopefully down the line we'll have a solution to the space issue.

Our big news is the Records Management Manual that the Clerk told you all about. Literally they are hot off the press. The committees don't even have them yet. (laughter) We're very excited about the publication. It's much smaller than our previous manual, which I think will be good for the staff in terms of absorbing the electronic records guidance. The Center worked with us on the language for the manual and we hope that it'll be a lot more user-friendly for the staff and they'll be able to understand the language in it a lot easier.

Also, we have been working very closely with the offices that have announced that either the Member is retiring, has resigned, or has announced they are running for other offices. We have been proactive about contacting them through the Clerk's office and meeting with them to start them thinking about a repository for their personal papers. We're trying to keep on top of that so that the offices have time to figure out what they'll be doing with their records.

I do want to announce that the curatorial staff of our office will be installing an exhibit in the Cannon Rotunda early next year on Capitol souvenirs. You'll have to come by the Cannon House Office Building to look at that. In mentioning oral histories, Matt, would you talk about your 9/11 website that you all created?

WASNIEWSKI: This year, for the 10th anniversary of 9/11, we conducted interviews with about three dozen House staff including everyone from pages to officers of the House, Father Dan, Charlie Johnson, people who had memories of the day but also could reflect on the larger meaning of those events for the institution. We launched the page September 6th and have received great feedback. It will be an ongoing project. When we do interviews with people who have worked in the House for 20 or 30 years, the 9/11 questions will be a component that we'll ask during those interviews. So we'll be adding to the page over time.

REEDER: In terms of statistics since our last meeting, we've had 25 consultations with Member's offices. We've only had two with committees, but that's because we had so many in the first six months of the year with Members. We've accessioned over 290,000 pages of new records. Loans from the Center have been over 60,000 pages. Loans from us for the current two Congresses that we keep on-site are 6,750 pages, and we have sent out many empty cartons so the amount of pages coming back to us will be over 202,000 pages. I am sure that this will be increasing more as the year goes on. This concludes my report.

ERICKSON: Thank you. Anybody have any questions for Robin?

HAAS: Nancy, if I could just give Robin an extra pat on the back. She has been very, very aggressive with our departing Member offices. As soon as they announce that they will not be running, Robin is at their door ready to go; she's been very aggressive in trying to work with Member offices to prepare for their departure.

ERICKSON: Being aggressive is the name of the game when it comes to archiving. (laughter)

ERICKSON: Next, Matt Fulgham will report on the status of the Next-Generation Finding Aid project.

FULGHAM: Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to talk about this project, which we are very excited about. To bring you up to speed from our June meeting, with the support of this Advisory Committee and the Archivist David Ferriero, one great accomplishment was the hiring of our first digital/descriptive archivist, Jacqie Ferry. She joined us in September and her expertise in digital description is a great addition to the team.

There are two main components of the descriptive project. The first is taking our existing description from finding aids that we've had for quite some time and converting it into metadata, which we put online. At the last meeting of the Advisory Committee we presented the findings from the 75th Congress pilot project. We have now completed the conversion of descriptive data for the first 50 Congresses.

The second component is the 95th Congress pilot project, producing a more granular description. We use the basic data in our holdings management system as a starting point. The holdings management system is a location tool with limited descriptive information. The pilot requires that we go into the records and confirm what we are finding in there and also adding to the description.

I'll start with the work on the first 50 Congresses. This is the first 100 years of federal congresses from 1789 to 1889 and I am happy to report we have done the conversion of data for the first 100 years of Congress, which is very exciting. For the first 40 years there's two reviews. We do an internal review and there is a review by the folks at our Archival Record Catalogue staff, the ARC staff, who also do some follow up on that. So the first 40 years is very close to going online. We are hoping that that can be available online in January. The next phase -- the 21st through the 50th Congress -- the next 60 years -- we have initial description that still needs to undergo review. During this project we created more than 4,600 file-unit descriptions. And those, especially for the early congresses, are pretty close to folder-title level description. The other thing to keep in mind is that congressional records for the first 100 years represents only 6,500 cubic feet.

Now I'll talk about the 95th Congress pilot project. The records for the 95th Congress House and Senate Committees equals approximately 10,150 cubic feet. The volume for this Congress is almost twice the volume of what we have for the first 100 years. The scale of modern records is huge. We have completed the initial description for the 95th Congress. We created 1,154 new file-unit descriptions for the records of this one Congress. The average descriptive file unit for this is much larger than for records of the first 100 years, which is an average of about three archival boxes. For the 95th Congress, the average is 16 boxes. Our description has to undergo more review, but we're hoping we can have the 95th Congress description available early next year.

Part of our work was to try to estimate how many resources do we need to complete description for all Congresses. Since we're basing our estimate on one Congress, these estimates are fairly rough. For the finding aid conversion, especially with the hiring freeze, we will limit ourselves to existing staff. We had two part-time George Washington University students who worked a combined 20 hours a week, and we had someone last summer who helped us out who worked 40 hours a week for two months. If we were able to get that kind of support again, which we would have to do in the case of the summer student, we estimate that it would take about two-and-a-half or three years to finish the conversion of existing finding aid information into metadata descriptions that we could put online. If we could double that, we would have four students working a combined 40 hours a week and a full-time student for three months, we can cut that in half to about a year-and-a-half. The students have done a good job on this work, which is primarily the conversion of data into a new structure, measuring actual volume of records, and confirming the accuracy of information.

For the modern records survey, we estimate to complete it with existing staff in 10 to 11 years. With the addition of one professional staff member, we think we can cut the time in half to five or six years. With two, maybe down to three or four. We do recommend

professional staff versus student help because it is complex work. You really have to get a sense of the records and how they relate to other records. The learning curve for students is fairly steep on this and by the time they've learned it they're gone.

One of the other things to keep in mind is we put everybody on this project as much as we could. In fact, at this time I want to thank everybody who worked on it. Natalie Rocchio, Kate Mollan, Kris Wilhelm, Bill Davis, Tom Eisinger, Judy Adkins, Adam Berenbak, Richard McCulley, and also Rod Ross, who during this project, handled most of the reference duties. So during this time that meant other things didn't get done. Processing 9/11 Commission records, for example, which the *Wall Street Journal* said "we're sitting on." Kris Wilhelm was surprised to hear that since she's been working really hard on those records. If other major screening projects come along, such as screening records of legislative commissions, people will have to work on these time-consuming projects. This Next-Generation Finding Aid project is all hands on deck, and we'll try to maintain that but we know that certainly things come up that require resources.

At this time I'm welcome to answer any questions that you may have and entertain some ideas of how to promote this description and how to get the word out. We certainly do want to spread the word on this new way you can get at our records, and target communities we may want to get it out to. We're going to work with our ARC staff to find ways to present it in a very user-friendly way and try to make it specific to our records and to legislative branch materials, but we are open to any suggestions at this time.

THOMAS: Matt, one question on the modern records that you've been working with. You said there was 16 boxes per description?

FULGHAM: On average.

THOMAS: On average as far as a description per volume of records?

FULGHAM: Right.

THOMAS: Have you thought about taking one of those and doing a folder-level description just to see what it would take to do that?

FULGHAM: Yes, in fact, we've identified some good candidates for that and we are going to use some student as well as some other staff who work on other projects. We certainly want to do that to show the time required, because I know personal paper collections of

former Members often is described at the folder level. We know certainly that presidential libraries description is often at the folder, if not at the item level. And so it would be good to know what resources that would take and at the next meeting we should be able to give you some estimates on that. One of the things, moving forward, that we plan to do as well is to use the exceptional paperwork that has folder title lists in the transfer paperwork and scan those and make those available as well. But it's a good suggestion and something we are planning to try to have some time estimates on how much time that would take.

THOMAS: One thing you might consider is using volunteers for this. I've had a lot of success with that myself because it's fairly routine. Volunteers can type lists from the folders.

FULGHAM: Absolutely. I appreciate that. We've used some in the past and that's a great suggestion.

THOMAS: And, actually, if you get some retirees they pay attention to detail better than students.

FULGHAM: Yes. Thanks.

PAUL: Matt? When you said 10 years, was that to cover everything that you have in the holdings or everything that would be open in the holdings?

FULGHAM: That is everything in the holdings.

HUNT: Since we're gathering the data on a spreadsheet, we can collect it even if the records are closed and wouldn't be available, but it's only when that data is transferred into ARC that it's publically accessible, so we thought we should provide estimates for the entire volume as it is today.

FULGHAM: And that's the main purpose for us to have Archivist Toolkit as a place to hold that flow of information. ARC doesn't have a storage place where you can have that descriptive information until records are open.

HUNT: We've submitted a request to purchase and install that software through the IT Helpdesk at NARA.

FERRIERO: And where is that request?

FULGHAM: It's in the hands of the folks who will be evaluating it at Archives II. I'll keep you informed on its progress.

PAUL: You have to keep after them like we did in the Senate.

LEON: Matt, do you have relationships with the iSchool at Maryland and at Catholic University? Is there a possibility that you can get some more skilled student volunteers?

FULGHAM: Absolutely. We had a student last year from Maryland. I don't know if they were from the iSchool. I think that's something to keep in mind. One summer we were fortunate to have somebody in the room, Alison Trulock, a University of Michigan School of Information student, who worked a whole summer on a number of different projects. The Archives worked a lot with Michigan the last few years and we have been very active identifying some great interns. And I think they would be very helpful. If we could get graduate level students that would be best.

LEON: Yes. That's what I'm thinking. In the context of a hiring freeze, that's your next best choice.

FERRIERO: I had a very good meeting with the folks at Catholic about two weeks ago and they are really interested in establishing some internships.

FULGHAM: Great.

PAUL: I think we could use one, too.

FERRIERO: This discoverability thing is of special interest to me since we know that Google is the first line of inquiry for most people; how can we ensure that our records are discoverable? Let's work on that.

HUNT: Absolutely. And I know that Don, Karen, Robin, and Matt have expressed an interest in helping us on that front, so it should be a shared task and I'm sure Sharon would have some ideas as well.

SHARON: Yes, I've got a few.

FULGHAM: Thank you very much.

HUNT: Thank you, Matt.

ERICKSON: Great. Richard?

HUNT: I just wanted to point out a couple of highlights from our annual report. As you can see it's been a busy and challenging year, and I'm very proud of my staff for all that they do in so many areas and all very successfully. To start, I had a recent conversation with Bob Dallek, who I think is known to most of you, a prominent presidential historian, and he brought the Stanford in Washington students by for a Legislative Vault tour on Friday. I had met him years ago. As he came in I reintroduced myself and he looked at me and said, "You know, I think I came on one of these tours about 20 years ago with my old friend Mike Gillette." And I said, "Yes, I was probably there, too." And he said, "And I remember Mike's major mission was to make the center just like a presidential library. How are you doing on that front?"

(laughter)

HUNT: So I was able to give him the good news that we're now part of the community of presidential libraries. He then asked me, "Now where are you on the planning for construction of a building?"

(laughter)

HUNT: He has big ideas. He's a great fan of the presidential libraries and of us as well.

FERRIERO: Can I just interrupt you for a minute? Jim has been with us now only three-and-a-half months, but he has become a fixture and you guys don't even know who we're talking about. Jim Gardner, who is the new head of Legislative Archives, Presidential Libraries and Museum Services, is the senior executive. I talked -- last time we met -- about creating this office. Stolen from the Smithsonian and he's hit the ground running. Welcome, Jim.

HUNT: I'm going to follow the form of my leader and present the good news and bad news. On the good news front, I feel we have made significant advances increasing the visibility of the Center on many fronts, and I think that's very important. That visibility will add value and appreciation among the people that are most important to us. Partly that stems from the progress on the Next-Generation Finding Aid. It also took a great leap forward with the research fellowship. We had so many applications from top candidates, from top universities around the country, and if we can get it approved again, I think the momentum on that front is helping to make our records known to the scholarly community.

The topics covered are diverse and have brought us some wonderful scholars. When they are here we take advantage and set up brownbag lunches and let them talk to staff and our friends from the Hill. These scholars are becoming part of the congressional community.

The public and educational programs we've done with partners here in Washington and in various states throughout the nation have been very well received, very highly regarded. Charlie is a great representative for the Center and the National Archives, and I think for the House and the Senate as well. He always gets rave reviews wherever he goes. So those have been, I think, our major successes and accomplishments.

On the challenges side, you will note in the report that we have not yet procured the enhanced Congressional Records Instance of ERA, but it cleared its final hurdle last week, so we have a green light and hope to procure it early 2012. The enhanced version will allow us to process a backlog that's growing because of limits on the current system. Regarding the hiring of the IT specialist, unfortunately, we did not get the set of candidates that we wanted. We fixed the position description and reposted it, but it got caught in the hiring freeze. But I will ask for an exception to see if we can get that one through.

I just want to spend a few minutes focusing from the Center's perspective on the issues of legislative branch commissions and their records. I get the feeling today that we're caught by precedence and approaches to those records of an earlier era, when legislative branch commissions were not all that exciting, and they didn't create a lot of records. It was some esoteric commission looking at some esoteric issue, and of course we can find a few feet on the shelf for records. All of that changed with the creation of the 9/11 Commission, and now a byproduct of our political situation is that some of the biggest, most contentious, most complex issues facing the nation get sent to these blue ribbon commissions. If they are legislative branch commissions, they come to the Center. When Congress creates an independent commission, it usually doesn't specify its branch status. There's been a few rare exceptions, the 9/11 Commission among them. Then there are some commissions who make that determination on their own based upon their function, their mandate, and who they report to. Most of them go undesignated and end up not at the Center but in the National Archives in the Research Services office.

Near the close of the life of a legislative branch commission, they typically, in consultation with the National Archives, our staff, and the General Counsel's staff, they exert their independent authority as an independent agency, and as the creators of the records they determine the access restrictions that govern those records. And what they look at is what are the sensitivities of the records from whom they were borrowed or received. So if it's a Department of Defense, or CIA, or Treasury, or financial

institutions or corporations, they look and think about what the sensitivities and restrictions that are typically imposed by those agencies, and then attempt to reflect that in their own access restrictions and closure period. That includes guarantees to witnesses who may be in whistle blower status who come and talk to them. So they don't just pick a number out of the air, and we don't tell them what the number is. This is their considered judgment and opinion.

Over the last decade, the legislative branch commission records reflect a new paradigm. You know we are all waiting for the day when paper records are going to disappear, replaced by electronic records -- these commissions have now crossed that bridge. We have received 1,000 cubic feet of commission records from 1999 forward, but we also have 17 terabytes of electronic data, which is 70% of our electronic holdings. They are much larger than the House and Senate records that we are primarily responsible for. The impact on the Center is a significant investment of resources, staff, and time devoted to commission records because they come in immediately. The commission disappears, the records are now our property, and there are people knocking at the door for access. These include congressional committees and federal agencies that want access to these closed records for official government purposes. So whatever our priority was, whatever our commitment to the next-generation finding aid project, we have to put resources on commission records.

The shorter the closure period, the more it becomes a priority and a demand on our resources. And if it's going to be open in a short period of time, there's a lot of work to get basic intellectual control of the records so we can be responsive to requests from government agencies and future researchers. These records are complex and require line-by-line review. To date we have really just been dealing with paper, and we have a system, a protocol, and processes in place, but now most of these records are electronic. I don't really know what line-by-line review is in the electronic world, although I know they do it at the Archives, but there are other systems and staffs with expertise that is not native to the Center. We either have to develop these skills or find some other way to handle these particular records.

We live in a world where from the president and Congress, the values are transparency and open government and providing access. So the gentleman on the hook is the Archivist of the United States who is going to be asked to say, "We want these things open sooner rather than later." So we have a whole tangle of issues here from Congress creating the commissions and laying out whatever guidelines that they can, to the commissions operating and collecting records and making its independent judgment on access restrictions to the receipt at the Center. I think the committee might want to consider these issues in the new business category.

FERRIERO: How many of these commissions have an archivist on board from the beginning appointed to work with the commission so that the process from the very beginning is smoothed out and regulated in a way that that makes these issues more manageable?

HUNT: The Commission on War-Time Contracting had an archivist, but I don't know if there have been other examples. The 9/11 Commission actually had one of those senior administrators who had served in a variety of government capacities, including at the White House, and those records were as well-managed as any records we've received from commissions. I don't know that it makes a fundamental difference to have an archivist. One of the things that we were able to do with the 9/11 Commission records is we hired that administrator for 12 to 16 months and had her on contract to consult, to find records, and to process records. In a perfect world, I would see a commission archivist, for a year or two after the commission, supported by the same funding through GSA, to come in and work and process the records at the Center. The one skill that they typically don't have is any review experience. So they are archivists in the sense of organization and finding things but, it takes a lot of training and experience to be able to make those calls and to say what we can open and what we can't. But at least they can help us find records and provide some level of access.

RITCHIE: Richard, you said that the Archives meets with these commissions basically when they are closing down.

HUNT: Yes.

RITCHIE: The commissions decide what to do with their records and they make the decision about access. Would you say that it would make more sense to address this when the commissions are created, giving them some sense of what their options are, what they need to do, because by the time they are closing down, it's probably too late for them to get the kind of funding required to process their records?

HUNT: Yes, that is a major problem. I don't know whether it has to be after some period of time when they are operating so they can actually understand what kind of records they are going to be holding so that they can make those determinations, but I thought at a minimum they should be required to post their proposed access restrictions in the *Federal Register* for public comment. So let's get the heat when the commission has to make a determination and they can then revise and change their position if they so feel. So it should come earlier in the life of the commission, absolutely.

FERRIERO: It feels like it should be a process. It's not just the beginning and it's not just the end but, it's a regular kind of communication. So who in the National Archives is meeting with these folks? Is it Paul Wester's folks?

HUNT: There are appraisal folks and when they are identified as legislative branch commissions, they call some of our staff in. They bring Bob Spangler in for electronic records and Gary Stern for legal counsel advice.

HUNT: Matt?

FULGHAM: It kind of varies by commission. We usually try to initiate a conversation about records management as early as we can get in there. And talk access. They usually make the access decision toward the end because then that's when they know what their body of records are. But we usually try to engage them on it. I think one of the big challenges that they face is they have huge challenges -- national challenges to address in a very short amount of time, and transferring and taking care of the records is one of the lowest things on their mind. We have, in some cases, gotten some real messes, and so we try to engage them as much as possible but we've had a few in particular that came down to the wire as far as us grabbing the records before they were locking the doors.

ERICKSON: Is there a role for this advisory committee to make a recommendation to set-up a structure or recommendations that we could give the Congress in helping to formulate guidelines when these commissions are established with respect to records conservation.

PAUL: Perhaps a taskforce or something should be set up to look at some options.

ZINK: When I read about this I just gasped because I was the author of a 600-page doorstop book on presidential commissions and that's not even easy to define. And strangely enough, these commissions were required to deposit their records at the Library of Congress. It's very difficult to tell and even define what a presidential commission is. There is no real hold on the staff which is often borrowed from the private sector, at least the prominent members. I was wondering is there anything going back in time where this is discussed as an entity, a congressional commission. I mean, this is pretty much new to me. The terminology or whether it's a derived terminology; there's a fine line between what might have been termed a commission and an informal committee that would result in a committee print or something like that. I don't know how long, of course, it's a long history of presidential commissions that it's an illegal sort of delegation of authority. And if you have a commission designated specifically as a congressional commission, where is the authority for transferring records. It may assume the authority of the congressional commission in the Members' minds during the course of its evolution. I find it

fascinating from an historical perspective, let alone the records management nightmare and preservation problems this creates.

HUNT: Yes, it's an anomalous situation and we actually tried to be proactive with the 9/11 Commission; we asked Congress to decide before you create the commission, and so they made it a legislative branch entity. What the unintended consequence was is that now they all want to be legislative branch commissions because they are not subject to FOIA while they are in existence.

ZINK: The Federal Advisory Committee Act, on the other hand, they wouldn't be subject to that as well, which was always one of the issues with presidential commissions. This is herding cats, but there is no one in charge of even trying to herd.

HUNT: Yes, when we were initially contacted, generally the staff and Matt and I look at the commission and 9 times out of 10 we say it's definitely not congressional, and they come back and say, "Yes, we are." So we have their records.

FULGHAM: Well, they'll say "we were created by an act of Congress;" but so are executive branch agencies. They'll say "we report to Congress," but so do executive branch agencies. So we pushed back on a few and there's a few that we haven't gotten.

RITCHIE: Part of this is the fact that in the past, congressional committees would have done the job; they would have had a special committee or a standing committee would have just devoted itself to it. A comparison, for instance, is the 1933 investigation of Wall Street, done by the Banking Committee. It was known as the Pecora Commission. As if the 1933 commission had been a commission but, in fact, it was a standing committee of the Senate that was operating. But today the committees are too busy with too many other events. And so that's one reason they've now delegated this to commissions and, in fact, I think Congress was very conscious of the fact that on that financial one that that was an extension of what they had done 80 years earlier but it was going to be done in a different format. The fact that they called it the Pecora Commission, and I notice a private company reprinted the public hearings from the 1930s and on the cover of the inside it says the Senate Banking Committee. On the cover of the outside it says the Pecora Commission and I think that's the trend that we're seeing. So what we're doing is really anticipating what we're likely to see coming out of Congress in the future.

ZINK: That is very typical of many derived presidential commissions that were very popular. Going back in time, the Commission on the Olympics was disseminated widely by reprint and one of the most challenging matters as I progressed through that accumulation was definitional because you can't really create a definition of what these things are until

you've identified a number and then start making some decisions as to what's included and what's not and how are you doing that? I mean, there are so many fine lines. If you say going forward but then you start looking back, how do you define and how do you develop these definitions?

HUNT: There's a congressional dimension to this, and congressional authority must be exercised. We'll get information and characteristics, but I don't think much is going to emerge from that kind of analysis because I think it's going to be all over the place.

ZINK: Well, I'm not sure that you will get that from Congress per se. I know you may wish that, but you can't really get that from the executive branch on presidential commissions either unless it's very, very explicit, which sometimes happens with executive orders but there are a number that just never reach that level.

HUNT: It's really a question of how much can we do up front while the matters are under consideration in the House and the Senate and how much that will fix and address problems. And then I think there's a separate discussion within the National Archives. I may successfully dispose of a legislative branch commission to make it a new executive or presidential one, but it is still going to be a burden on the National Archives because it's the same set of challenges for staffs that may be more or less equipped to handle it than we are.

FERRIERO: So these commissions are established by an act? So is it naïve to think that we could come up with standard language that has to be in every one of these acts around records?

HAAS: I don't think it's naïve. In the House it's something we struggled with for a long time. There is no standardized language for establishing these commissions, so I think that what I'm hearing from this group is there's multiple areas where we might be able to have some input into the process early on. If we could develop some language that legislative counsel in the House and Senate would be willing to support, I think that is something we could look at and see whether or not we can influence that. To Matt's point, when these commissions are being set up, the last thing they are thinking about is what they are doing with their records. You know, they have something in front of them that they are tasked to do and a very short time to make that happen, so the fact that you all are able to get in and have those conversations I think is a big deal already, but I think that's what we need to look at and to the secretary's point, do we need to develop some areas or some guidance for these groups that when they are established that we already have some guidance that they need to look to are some things I think we should think about.

ERICKSON: And I can predict that other stakeholders, such as our respective oversight committees, would be helpful in this role in developing guidelines. So any comments on the idea of having this committee recommend the creation of a taskforce that we could assemble to provide a list of recommendations or guidelines for the creation of legislative commissions?

ERICKSON: Don, did you have anything else to add?

RITCHIE: I was thinking that part of this issue really comes down to budget and that's why you've got to get it into the very beginning because when Congress is creating a commission and is appropriating the funds to support it, you have got to include it, right from the start, funds for archiving and records management. Once that's there, once you have some personnel on board, then a lot of these other problems will work themselves out. That's one reason I do think that the taskforce has got to address the front end of the process to influence things and so these commissions will have various options to consider. There are ways that these issues can be either immediate issues -- the 9/11 Commission has a five-year access restriction, which is remarkably short -- or you can follow the pattern of the House and the Senate, which open their records after 20 and 30 years and in some cases after 50 years in which case, the financial side of the burden of the resources isn't really called to the fore. And so at least if we can work that in, if the taskforce can begin to draft some language for all of that, then these commissions when they get started will understand that the decisions are theirs to make but there are consequences for these decisions and they are going to be responsible for some of those consequences.

ZINK: Knowing how difficult this was I recognize that you're facing an incredible variation of entities that are not all commissions in some respects.

FULGHAM: Yes, we have commissions, and we have the congressional oversight panel to oversee the spending of TARP money. There are probably other ones that are out there that are maybe not coming to us. I'm unaware of that possibility and it may be an agency-wide challenge since commissions are sometimes hard to catch, frankly. Everyone remembers the Millennial Housing Commission?

(laughter)

FULGHAM: We had a call on Monday that said, "Hi, we're a commission. We're going out of business Friday. I'm the last person in the office. Can you come get our records?" Which we did. So they can be hard. We try to monitor them and I have Kris Wilhelm on my staff scan the newspaper for anything, any new commissions being created to try to

get it on the radar, try to determine if it might be legislative, pass it along to our folks in records appraisal who do a similar thing, but some of them are hard to catch. If I could speak to what Don said, one thing also is there is a provision built into most of these, and I would have to check the legislation, but they have a period of shutdown. Maybe it wouldn't be too difficult to add a provision that when your final report is due, 60 days before that date you have to finish all your administrative responsibilities, maybe something could be tied to records. The problem we've encountered in a few cases is they've used most of that time to finish their work. (laughter) So their shutdown, in at least one case, was down to about two days and we kept calling them and calling them trying to get in the door before the doors were locked; so that might be an opportunity to pursue as we move forward.

BIRDWHISTELL: And it would be nice to get the financial support built-in regardless of how long the access restrictions are, wouldn't it? You are just talking about having a backlog you inherit with each commission.

ZINK: Well, the financial support of some presidential commissions has come from the private sector. It's not necessarily a trigger for some of the lesser ones, so even private sector offices, private sector donated time, is a challenge.

ERICKSON: So do we want to entertain a motion for the creation of a taskforce, and we would designate our respective Senate and House designees working with Richard's folks to develop guidelines to assist Congress in the creation of legislative commissions?

FERRIERO: So moved.

ERICKSON: Second?

VOGT: Second.

M: Second.

ERICKSON: All right. Call the question. We have agreement to create the taskforce say aye. Nay? It has passed, so more work for us.
(laughter)

M: And let's not forget the records of this taskforce.
(laughter)

ERICKSON: All right. The last item on our agenda. Other current issues and new business. Anything else to add?

RITCHIE: Do we need a motion on creating the taskforce for the final report at the end of this year?

ERICKSON: Yes, we do.

ERICKSON: This is a motion to create a taskforce for the report that we are mandated to compile. That is a statutory mandate and the Clerk and I will work on that report and have a draft ready for our next meeting, our spring meeting. Could we entertain a motion to create this taskforce to compile the report?

FERRIERO: So moved.

ERICKSON: Second?

LEON: Second.

M: Second.

ERICKSON: Question: do we have approval to create the taskforce for the compilation of our next statutory report? Any nays? It has passed. More work but we look forward to that. (laughter)

ERICKSON: All right. If there is no other new business, we will conclude this meeting and, again, I really appreciate everyone's participation. I always come away from these meetings knowing that we have a lot more work to do, but I always return to my office energized by the enthusiasm of this committee and the real progress we have made in an incredibly short period of time. I remember not too long ago our general throwing up our hands on electronic records, and I think we've really made some incredible progress and I appreciate all the stakeholders who are involved in this advisory committee.

HUNT: I would just like to recognize our old friend Mr. Bob Spangler before we adjourn. The one silver lining in losing Ashley is that we have been able to borrow Bob for significant projects.

ERICKSON: All right.

SPANGLER: Can I add one thing to the commission discussion? The silver lining in that regard is that it tends to be a pretty common model for the way these commissions work. They lead to a final report, they have a generally common office environment with email, websites and so on, so putting together a toolkit that you could give to these commissions should be a relatively straightforward task. There's nothing esoteric in the way these things work in terms of electronic records, so I think that's a real bright spot and an opportunity.

ERICKSON: A motion to adjourn this meeting? Is there a motion?

HAAS: Move to adjourn.

ERICKSON: Second?

FERRIERO: So moved. Second.

ERICKSON: All right. So adjourned. Thank you, everyone.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 11:35