



## MODERNIZATION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The House Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress made 202 unanimous, bipartisan recommendations over four years (the 116<sup>th</sup> and 117<sup>th</sup> Congress) to “strengthen the ability of Congress to work more effectively on behalf of the American people,” including with respect to oversight.<sup>1</sup> Key recommendations related to oversight are listed below; many will require additional Member and staff support to achieve full implementation. The House Administration Subcommittee on Modernization is now working on implementation.

### **Implemented**

- 32. Update committee policies to increase bipartisan learning opportunities for staff.
- 51. The House should prioritize the approval of platforms that staff need for effective telework, and each individual staff member should have licensed access to the approved technology. [Implemented re Office 365, Teams, Cisco, WebEx, and Zoom.]
- 53. The House should make permanent the option to electronically submit committee reports.
- 59. Create a common committee calendar portal to help with scheduling and reduce conflicts.
- 113. Committees should be provided a program allowance, separate from their budget, for compensation of interns.
- 122. Committees should have flexibility to host occasional events to foster collaboration and further develop working relationships among committee members.
- 124. The Library of Congress is encouraged to expand its regular, bipartisan events to include events specifically focused on promoting relationship building and collaboration among members.
- 130. The House should explore bipartisan co-working spaces for staff.
- 144. The CAO should assist committees in obtaining and utilizing effective, industry-standard “e-discovery” software to improve document review and processing capabilities. [All committees now have access to a CAO-approved e-discovery platform.]

### **Partially Implemented**

- 17. Reestablish and restructure an improved Office of Technology Assessment.
- 25. Prioritize a “rapid response” program at the Congressional Research Service for nonpartisan fact sheets on key issues.
- 55. Committees should develop bipartisan plans on how technology and innovative platforms can be best incorporated into daily work.
- 58. Establish specific committee-only meeting times when Congress is in session.
- 60. Establish specific days – or weeks – where committee work takes priority.
- 63. Offer staff certifications, in additions to trainings, through the nonpartisan Congressional Staff Academy. In the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress it was updated to read: The House should allow Member, committee, and leadership offices to pay for certain professional development opportunities for

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<sup>1</sup> For the entire list of 202 recommendations, see <https://www.webharvest.gov/congress/117th/20221224180050/https://modernizecongress.house.gov/116th-recommendations>.

staff that include a certification. [The CSA has been established but no classes on oversight are offered yet; they could be added in the future.]

73. Incentivize committees to experiment with alternative hearing formats to encourage more bipartisan participation.

74. Committees should hire bipartisan staff approved by both the Chair and Ranking Member to promote strong institutional knowledge, evidence-based policy making, and a less partisan oversight agenda.

75. Committees should hold bipartisan pre-hearing committee meetings.

76. Encourage subcommittees to pilot rules changes that could have a positive effect committee-wide.

81. Identify how increased regulatory and legal resources could help strengthen the role of the legislative branch. [GAO study completed on options to create a congressional counterpart to DOJ's Office of Legal Counsel to address oversight issues and another congressional support office to oversee regulatory matters. More work is needed to create each office.]

82. Facilitate a true system of checks and balances by ensuring the legislative branch is sufficiently represented in the courts. [See 81.]

84. Increase capacity for policy staff, especially for Committees, policy support organizations and a restored Office of Technology Assessment.

86. Require an annual Fiscal State of the Nation report.

101. The House should initiate and facilitate a formal mentorship program for matching more experienced staff with less experienced staff.

110. The House should establish an Intern and Fellowship Program Office or Coordinator that helps with onboarding, developing educational curriculum, professional development, and training for office coordinators.

111. Congress should clarify rules to allow fellows and detailees to receive the same resources as professional staff.

112. The House should study the feasibility of permanently allowing remote internships.

126. The House should offer technology tools to facilitate member collaboration on legislation and issues of mutual interest.

133. Support agencies should report on challenges and potential solutions for accessing federal data.

134. CRS should ensure that its products and services are designed to adapt and meet the needs of an evolving Congress.

135. GAO should boost initiatives to meet Congress' information needs and assess member and staff awareness of and satisfaction with its products and services.

136. GAO should report annually on the estimated cost savings of its unimplemented recommendations.

138. CBO should expand its congressional outreach to provide additional information and assistance to members of Congress and staff.

139. Congress and congressional support agencies should establish a shared staff directory to enhance the exchange of information and improve collaboration. [This project is underway.]

140. The committees of jurisdiction should examine support agency authorities and determine if they need to be updated.

142. Congress should establish a bipartisan, bicameral Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking to encourage and facilitate better use of data in the legislative process.

**Open, Need Additional Support**

- 4. One-click access to a list of agencies and programs that have expired and need Congressional attention.
- 48. Establish regular maintenance plans for office technology, so the equipment and technology needed during remote operations and telework is functional.
- 78. Establish committee-based domestic policy CODELs.
- 123. The House should survey and examine best practices from state legislatures.
- 125. Ongoing institutional support to facilitate civility and collaboration should provide best practices and facilitate workshops that encourage bipartisan collaboration.
- 128. Committees should have a bipartisan, public-facing website with basic, nonpartisan information about the committee and its operations.
- 129. The House should provide resources and guidance to committees seeking to create tailored civility norms.
- 141. The Science, Technology Assessment, and Analytics program at GAO should be authorized and made permanent by Congress.

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