ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE RECORDS OF CONGRESS
MEETING #40
JUNE 13, 2011
CONGRESSIONAL MEETING ROOM NORTH
CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER


ERICKSON: Good morning everyone.

ALL: Good morning.

ERICKSON: As chair of the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress for the 112th Congress, I'd like to welcome everyone to this semi-annual meeting. We were talking about the National Archives' new exhibit on cooking before the meeting.  On Friday, when I was leaving work, I saw a bus advertisement that advertised vitamin doughnuts. [laughter]  So, the doughnuts this morning are full of good vitamins.  [laughter]

I especially want to welcome back as co-chair of this committee, Karen Haas, the Clerk of the House, a position that she held previously in the 109th Congress.  Karen has accrued almost three decades of experience on Capitol Hill, including working for the Minority Leader of the House, the Speaker of the House, and as Minority Staff Director of the House Small Business Committee.  She has seen the issues involving congressional records up close in a multitude of ways.  I worked with Karen on the Capitol Preservation Commission, which oversaw issues related to the construction and the opening of the Capitol Visitor Center. And during our tenure together on that commission, I came to appreciate her deep knowledge of this institution, and equally important, her love and respect for Congress.  And I might add, on a personal note, I appreciated, and I still appreciate, her very calm demeanor, which was especially helpful during some periodic tense meetings of the Capitol Preservation Commission.  None of us would've been surprised, quite frankly, if we had seen a truck full of

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dirt heading towards the visitor's center to fill that hole. [laughter] Karen always spoke fondly of her service on this committee, and I hope that she will be pleased to see the progress that has been made, and is still being made, with the records of the Senate and the House, since her years of service on this committee.

We also want to welcome back to this committee the three members who have been reappointed to another term: Terry Birdwhistell, Steven Zink, and Sheryl Vogt. We also want to welcome our new member, Sharon Leon, who we met last year in her role as author of the new finding aid study. I want to congratulate Steven, who since the last meeting has become Vice Chancellor for Information Technology for the Nevada System of Higher Education, where he oversees the operation of system computing services for the Nevada system, and its institutions, its affiliates, and partners. And Steven, we've appreciated your technological expertise in our discussions before this advisory group.

ZINK: Thank you.

ERICKSON: I'm also very pleased to welcome back our Archivist of the United States, David Ferriero. It was almost two years ago that he participated in the Advisory Committee meeting on his very first day in office as Archivist. And I think it's fair to say, since then, we have all come to appreciate, David, for your strong support of the Center for Legislative Archives. Namely, his creation of a new administrative unit that will be appropriately named Legislative Archives, Presidential Libraries, and Museum Services. We also thank him for his initiative in creating a legislative fellowship in the amount of $10,000 to support research in legislative holdings. I can't think of a better way to bring recognition to the Center's legislative holdings. And finally, we thank him for his first initiative, namely that of funding a task force to propose new descriptive practices and finding aids for the Center for Legislative Archives.

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During freshman orientation for the 112th Congress, the National Archives hosted our 16 new Senators, and provided a visit to the Legislative Treasure Vault, and some are still talking about that visit today. Karen Paul, our Senate Archivist, also met with new Senators and their staffs to brief them on setting up records in a new office. Now that our new Senators have moved from their temporary basement offices in the Dirksen Building into permanent offices, our team of archivists plans to host a Secretary's brown bag luncheon for these new member offices, where we will further address archiving issues, and encourage them to get started right away in good records management practices. On the other side of this equation, our team of Senate archivists are also working with the eight Senators who have announced their retirement at the end of this Congress.

I also note that the Senate archivists have been working with the Center for Legislative Archives, and the National Declassification Center, on an assessment of the 1,200 boxes of classified Senate committee records, which date from the 99th Congress and earlier. The assessment included evaluating the degree of difficulty associated with reviewing the records based on the ongoing sensitivity of the information they contain. It identified 36 boxes of records over 50 years old that are ready for declassification. These records include records of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Foreign Relations Committee, and the Judiciary Subcommittee on Internal Security. After this, the Center for Legislative Archives will perform an annual review to identify additional classified records as they reach 50 years old. This concludes my report, and now I'd like to turn it over to Karen.

HAAS: Thank you, let me start off by seconding your welcoming remarks to the Advisory Committee members. And thank you Nancy, for your kind words. It's very nice to be back as Clerk, and to be involved again with the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress. I'd like to welcome my appointee, Sharon Leon, who is the Director of Public

Projects for the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University.  She is a familiar face to everyone here at the committee since she has been working on the next-generation finding aid project.  In fact, she was under contract until this past February with the Center for Legislative Archives, and her report is in your packet. Sharon certainly understands the issues surrounding congressional records, as well as the preservation and access issues we face with electronic records.  The House leadership still has two appointments to make, and we are hopeful that they will make those appointments prior to our next meeting.

The House leadership is very interested in transparency, and the work of the committees.  And they have tasked the Clerk's office with advancing these initiatives.  We are working with our leadership to host web resources that will include all aspects of the work of the committees that can be made available to the public.  Of course, our office will continue to work with the House committees to make certain that the unpublished records are identified, and that they come to my office, and are made available consistent with House rules.

I'd like to preface our discussion by highlighting some developments in the Office of the Clerk.  The reorganization of the Office of History and Preservation is complete, the curatorial and archival staff are a separate office, and are now known as the Office of Art and Archives.  Farar Elliot is the chief of this office.  The Historical Publications staff have merged with the House Historian's office, and are now part of the Clerk's office, while Matt Wasniewski is the House leadership appointee as House Historian.  The office will continue to work on the books begun by Matt that include Hispanic-Americans in Congress and Asian and Pacific Islanders in Congress, as well as their oral history project.  I will let the House Historian, Matt Wasniewski, tell you a little bit about his office.  Matt, would you like to say a few words?

WASNIEWSKI: Thank you very much. First, let me personally thank you, Karen, for all of your support during this transition. I've long believed that a strong partnership between the Historian's office and the Clerk of the House reflects our shared commitment to the House's heritage, and it's a partnership that's best for the House over the long term. And my office looks forward to a continued close collaborative relationship with the Office of Art and Archives under the Clerk. We reorganized recently, and the new administrative structure for the Historian's office has the office staff under the Clerk, and the Clerk's office will provide the Historian's office budgetary, IT, and administrative support. And I think that that really fulfills the intent of the leadership at the time of my appointment, and the recommendations of the outside committee that studied House history functions last year. And it also allows our office to focus on its core duty, which is to record the House's unique institutional history, and make it available to all members, staff, committees, and the general public. And in the coming months, I look forward to some collaborative history projects, and the development of a new website. One of Karen's many kindnesses is that she's allowing me to cybersquat by redirecting my website to Art and Archives for the time being while I work on a new website. We're also working on the minorities in Congress series, and we're also doing a series of special interviews to commemorate the 10th anniversary of 9/11. And those will eventually be up online. So I thank you for the opportunity to make some brief remarks, and look forward to a productive meeting.

HAAS: Thank you, Matt. David, I look forward to working with you, and I'm pleased about the reorganization that's taking place now at the National Archives. I know we're going to hear more about that later in the meeting. In closing, I just would like to thank Nancy and your staff for hosting us today. I'd like to thank the Center for Legislative Archives, and the National Archives, for all of the work that you do to help us here in Congress. Thank you.

ERICKSON:  David?

FERRIERO:  Good morning, and I'd like to add my welcome to the returning members, and a special, special welcome for Sharon. It's great to see you here at this table, and thanks for the work that you lead at another table down the street.  So let me start by bringing you up to date on the transformation.  As Nancy said, I've been on the job -- this is month 19, actually.  [laughter]  Not that I'm counting.  [laughter]  But we began a process almost a year ago, it was in July, 2010, to take a look at the organization.  We had a planning team, who presented a report to me in September.  And we started implementation in January.  So it's been relatively short, but there's a fair amount of progress to report.  The implementation plan establishes a new organization, a new set of organizational values, and basically, a new culture. I'm much more interested in the culture than I am in the organization. To date, we have appointed a new Chief Human Capital Officer, and it was important for me to get that person in place first as a signal to the staff that they are our most important resource.  And if you can't get that right, then nothing else is going to be right.  We also have a new Chief Operating Officer, Tom Mills, who is with us this morning, and a new Chief Records Officer—for the first time in Archives history, we have an individual who is responsible for our records—the Chief Records Officer. Sorry it's taken us 76 years.  [laughter]  A brand new Chief Information Officer, Mike Wash, who we stole from, most recently, the Department of Transportation, but we got to know very well when he was in that position at the Government Printing Office, and he already has, in a very short period of time, impressed just about everyone on the staff.  We have a new head of ISOO, the Information Security Oversight Office. Jay Bosanko, the former ISOO head, has taken over new responsibilities as the executive for Agency Services.   A new business support services unit also has been set up.

And we've just finished interviews for a new deputy archivist, a new strategy and communications officer, and the one that you're most interested in, the executive for Legislative Archives, Presidential Libraries, and Museum Services. We've just finished that interview series, and we're now reviewing applications for Research Services, and I think that's the last one to be filled. So I don't want to brag, but in a very short period of time, we've got new leadership in place.

That, frankly, and I say this with a lot of my staff in the room, that's the easiest piece, because those individuals, the new leadership, is responsible for working with the staffs, and creating what's underneath it, and how that's going to work. I can tell you that the pool for LPM—Legislative Archives, Presidential Libraries, and Museum Services—was strong. The candidates exhibited a great deal of excitement, which reassured me. When we put those three pieces together, I wasn't sure that we were going to be able to attract a pool of really good candidates, and I was concerned about what role I was going to play in selling this job to candidates. But I was just amazed that to a person, they brought great excitement about the relationship opportunities that the three pieces offer. The important thing for me is—and this is something that Richard constantly reminds me when he's talking to other people in my presence—for the first time, this puts Presidential Libraries and Legislative Archives on the same level, and that's a very important message.

And the reason for bringing those two pieces together is, in my time on the job, recognizing that these two units, of all of the units, have made much better and faster progress, especially in the electronic records arena, than the rest of the organization, and I wanted to leverage that success. So that's where we are with transformation. We will be hearing lots more soon about that as we move forward.

Nancy mentioned the research fellowship. I'm really, really excited about this. You know, I came here from the

New York Public Library, where one of my joys was being responsible for the Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers, where we brought 15 people every year, who spent an academic year with us, to do research. And I would wander down the hall every day, and talk to our researchers about what they were learning from our records, and what they were doing. In fact, we had one of them at the Archives on Thursday, Laura Shapiro, talking about her research on Eleanor Roosevelt's horrible, horrible White House kitchen. [laughter] So I would love to be able to recreate something like that at the National Archives, where we're actually bringing folks in to use our records, and helping us learn what we have, and creating new scholarship from our records. And so we have our first toe in the water here, with funding from the Foundation for the National Archives, a $10,000 grant to create a National Archives research fellowship around congressional records.

The application period closed on the 31st of May, and we received 26 applications. The minimal criteria stipulated that you had to be a Ph.D. candidate with an approved dissertation proposal, requiring the use of the historical records of Congress. And I am just blown away, after reading all of the applications over the weekend. The institutions represented are phenomenal. The letters of recommendation are to die for, and I hope these kids got copies of those, because these are keepers in terms of recommendations. But the topics, like Civil War banks and currency, the Great Society, the Homestead Act of 1862, electoral corruption, political history of the computer, military chaplains, women's staff, and my favorite, government outsourcing. We have a review panel of six historians and political scientists, and I'm expecting a recommendation soon.

HUNT: We should have the recommendations by the end of the week, when they will be submitting their findings to us. We'll collate and tabulate the results to rank the candidates.

FERRIERO: Super.  It's really very exciting, and I'm really pleased this happened.  My favorite topic is space.  I have 44 facilities around the country, and I know that you're worried about a subset of that space problem.  So we have launched a major space analysis and initiative to advise me on plans to accommodate space needs around the country, including -- as I'm reminded just about once a week by Richard, the space needs for the records of Congress.

ERICKSON: You had mentioned one of your challenges when you visited your offices that there is a sense that staff don't always feel part of the National Archives. In your transformation plan, how are you addressing that concern?

FERRIERO: I have visited, I think, 30 of the 44 sites now.  And at each one of those, I have a chance to sit down and talk to the staff about what's it like to work at that location so I get a first hand view of the issues that people are dealing with.  And it's pretty consistent, and in fact, it was the basis for the transformation. We need to solve some of these problems to be more effective and efficient and make it a better place to work.

One issue is communication.  And it's an issue that I'm familiar with, because I inherited the same issue at the New York Public Library, where I was responsible for 91 facilities spread out in three boroughs of New York.  The farther you get from 5$^{th}$ Avenue, the less you feel you're part of one organization, or, more importantly, that your voice is heard.  So what can you do to turn that around, and make people feel that they have an opportunity to contribute?  We set an expectation during the planning process by using lots of social media tools to engage the staff in the process.  So we used idea scales with the staff to test ideas that we were thinking about in the creation of this new organization.  We used idea scales especially in the development of values.  So we've now raised an expectation with the staff that they will be involved.  And that was a difficult hurdle, and we're still dealing with some levels of suspicion and distrust.  But we're going to keep pushing on this, and use webinars, and

more importantly, face-to-face kinds of opportunities to get the staff engaged in what we call one NARA, one organization.  It's something that we'll never perfect, but it's something that I'm really committed to working on.

I'm pleased to announce that Congressman Don Manzullo from Illinois and Tim Bishop from New York have created the first ever House Caucus on the National Archives.  Is that great?  [laughter]  The idea came as a result of a visit to the Legislative Treasure Vault.  They are already advertising an open house tomorrow night.  The Foundation for the National Archive and Mars, my new favorite candy company, are sponsoring an open house for House members and their families on Flag Day.  This is an idea Congresswoman Jo Ann Emerson brought to us last year.  We're really excited about that.

Finally, Nancy mentioned "What's Cooking Uncle Sam", which opened on Friday.  If you haven't been, please get down the street and take a look at it; it will be on exhibit for six months.  It's an incredible exhibit about the government's role in food, and the best thing about it is that Chef José Andrés, our chief culinary advisor on the exhibit, has just fallen in love with the exhibit. So much so that he is gutting Café Atlántico and creating a pop-up restaurant for six months, cooking recipes from the records.  And the best part of it is that a cut from the proceeds come back to the Foundation for the National Archives.  So now you all know where you're going to be having your meals, right? [laughter]

ERICKSON: That's right.  Tell them about the cookbook.

FERRIERO:  And on July 1st, the Archives cookbook, which accompanies the exhibit, comes out, with my recipe for White Chocolate Mousse. [laughter]

ERICKSON:  Which he offered to serve at the next meeting. [laughter]

FERRIERO:  No, Richard promised to make it.  [laughter]

RICHARD:  I'd better start reading the recipe soon.

ERICKSON:  Thank you, David.  In May, the Association of
Centers for the Study of Congress held its annual meeting
at the National Archives, and our own Sheryl Vogt serves as
president of the association, and so I thought it would be
helpful for this group to get a report on the meeting.

VOGT:  Thank you, Nancy.  We again met at the Center for
the Legislative Archives on May 18$^{th}$-20$^{th}$, and we really do
enjoy going there as they make us feel so welcome.  We also
brought in five new institutional members to the
association, so we now have a membership of around 35
institutions, and 15 individuals.  So we are growing, and
that's really a good sign for the association.  We had an
excellent program.  We had our regular sessions, hearing
from scholars who are doing research in congressional
papers, and also heard from some former members of Congress
who have placed their papers in repositories, and what
their experiences were.

Don Ritchie led an informative session on the Senate oral
history program.  We also had a session on the
declassification of congressional records and papers, which
was very interesting to us.  And we also had the Center do
a presentation on their educational programs.  This came
out of a discussion last year at the Advisory Committee
meeting about how much they were doing on the educational
front.  Our keynote was by Peter Overby of NPR.  And the
Archivist told the group about the transformation planned
at the National Archives, and again, we were most happy
about the parity between Congress and Presidential
Libraries, and the equal recognition within that
organization.

In the interest of time, I wanted to tell you a little bit
about one session, and that was the one with political
scientists, about their interests and research. It relates
to some of the topics that we will be discussing today.
This group of political scientists talked about their

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research in archives, something that few political scientists do as they tend to be more quantitative than qualitative.  But this group really loves archives and we wanted to hear from them.  Doug Harris, who has been mentored, I believe, by Joe Cooper, is a professor at the University of Maryland.  He's been interested in organizational theory and studying legislative leadership--how Congress has changed over time, its history, its historical scope, its institutional context and how that matters.  He also studies Congress as collections of individuals and has an interest in first person accounts.  He stated that political scientists have not developed methodologies to answer their questions.  They generally know the answer before they start doing research.  But by using archives, they can study decision making, mistakes made, successes, within a larger context.

Matt Green, another political scientist, talked about the challenges of doing online research.  And this is something, I believe, that's dealt with in the task force report.  He said it's important for archives to state up front that not everything is available online.  Many researchers think that if it's not online, it's not important.  And this is something that we archivists are always dealing--with about what we should put online. Most likely, what we put online will really have an influence on future study.  So that's something we really have to consider.  Matt Green also said that online research leads to a decline in serendipity.  That is, when you're looking for X in an archives, you might discover Y.  But online you're very limited in what you can have access to.  There's also the potential for isolation from archivists if you're working online.  You miss information and could benefit from the expertise of someone who actually worked on the collection and prepared it for research.  And then a more subtle issue, he said, was the loss of connection, of substance, by not visiting where the legislator worked and lived, and understanding his constituency and local issues.  And another point made by the group was the importance of having grad students come to D.C. or to the Congressional

district to understand Congress in those contexts.  There's the challenge of cost, however.

On finding aides, the panel agreed that the more specific and descriptive the material, the better.  They want keyword searching capability. They would like a dynamic finding aid that could be sorted and resorted.  As they called it, a Burger King approach for each researcher.  They would like to have a standard finding aid, and one that could be, as they said, wikified.  So researcher comments would help build a community and attract other scholars.  So this was very interesting, I thought, because we know we cannot always deliver everything.  So it's really good to have that dialogue to know what researchers prefer.

Briefly, I would like to say, we're having Congress Week again this year.  It will be the week of September the 12th.  Our theme is "of the people, by the people, and for the people."  This year, we're going to send out posters to all congressional offices, and we will need some assistance in doing that because we don't want to have to mail those individually to the offices, so if the House and Senate offices can help us with that, it would be very good. Maybe someone from the Center for Legislative Archives could send students up to help deliver them.  I don't think the House can do that, is that right, Matt?  So we may need some help doing that, and we would appreciate that very much.

We are providing a $1,000 award for National History Day for the best paper in any category on the history of Congress.  This is a commitment we've made for the next three years and we're very excited about it.  In addition to our Ray Smock and Dick Baker Awards, which are for congressional repository staff and for researchers, we are honoring the Congressional Papers Roundtable this year on their 25th anniversary, giving a scholarship of up to $500 to attend pre-conference Congressional Papers Roundtable sessions at the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists.  This is for an archivist who has begun working on Congressional papers, and really needs access to these

pre-conference sessions, but may not have institutional
support to attend that extra day of the conference.  I
would like to say that we recognize our founding mothers in
the Congressional Papers Roundtable, now that they're in
their 25<sup>th</sup> year.  We always talk about the association of
centers as having founding fathers, meaning Ray Smock, Mike
Gillette, and Dick Baker.  So I would like to thank Karen
Paul and Cynthia Miller, who was the House Archivist at one
time, and Karyl Wynn, who was an archivist at the
University of Washington, one of our first real leaders in
Congressional Papers.  They were our founding mothers, so
we'd like to recognize them as well.

This past year, we were invited by the Carl Albert Center
for its publication *Extensions*, to prepare articles.  David
has one from his address to ACSC last year.  Ray Smock
contributed one about the history of the association of
centers, and I wrote one about the work we are doing now.
And we also have an article on Congress Week.  It's a
wonderful tool to have, not only to promote the
association, but also for those repositories to talk with
their own administrations about the importance of having
centers to save congressional records and make them
available.  And if you would like a copy, I'm sure you can
get one from Oklahoma. We will soon be putting the web
address on our website for online access to the
publication.

And just two other things.  We are starting a relationship
with the Kettering Foundation this year to make a
commitment to conduct forums of public deliberation.  We
have 12 of our institutions that will be going this first
year to start this round, and the second or third year, we
will actually be looking at how to frame issues for study
by drawing from our collections.  The presidential
libraries are doing that now.  So we're very excited about
what opportunities this brings to a lot of us to do
outreach and public programming.  A lot of our institutions
don't really have the money to do that, but this will give
them a way.  In our initial discussions with Kettering, it
was interesting to me that we all felt we had a higher

calling to promote and teach about representative
democracy.  That higher calling was something that was
outside of what our administrations and our various
institutions might think, but those of us who work with
Congressional Papers felt that we had that larger
responsibility.

And finally, next year our meeting will be at the Russell
Library in Athens, Georgia.  I hope to see many of you
there.  I know it's difficult to travel, because we often
have to travel here and other places, so I do hope that
many of you can come down.  We will be in our new special
collections building, so we'll have a lot to show you, and
we will be meeting in conjunction with the History of
Congress conference, which is a group of political
scientists who are on the cutting edge of research.  We
have a lot to learn from them, and they want to learn some
things from us too about doing archival research.  So it
promises to be a very good program.  Richard McCulley and
Ken Kato will be our program co-chairs.  And so we look
forward to seeing many of you there.  Thank you.

ERICKSON:  Great, thank you, Sheryl.  Does anyone have any
corrections of the minutes from the last meeting?

HUNT:  On page seven, there's three too many zero's in the
amount of pages to be declassified in the Senate materials.
Since we have half a billion pages in total at the center,
this shows a billion pages being declassified.  The correct
total should be 1,625,000 pages.

ERICKSON:  Right.  So with that correction, do we have a
motion to approve the minutes?

Motion was made and seconded.

ERICKSON:  All right, so approved.  Next, I would like to
turn to one of the mothers of the Archives, [laughter]
Karen Paul, our Senate Archivist.

PAUL:  Thank you very much, and first, I would like to
commend Sheryl Vogt for her extraordinary leadership of the
Association of Centers for the Study of Congress.  She gave
a very detailed report, and she could've given one equally
as long, just detailing what she has done in terms of
building the infrastructure and management of the
association.  She is amazing; she does all of this in
addition to her full-time duties as director of the Richard
Russell Library.  Thank you, Sheryl, very much for the
effort and dedication that you put into the organization;
we all really appreciate it.

I'd like to begin by telling you a little bit about what
we've been doing with senators' offices.  We had 18 offices
close last year, and this gave us an opportunity to observe
recordkeeping in 18% of senators' offices.  We found what
we expected, but it was, nevertheless, a bonus to be able
to acquire such a breadth of perspective in a relatively
short amount of time.  We found some offices still relying
on a lot of paper to transact business, although they were
very, very much the minority this time.  We also found some
senators using their notepads to view their daily briefing
memos.  This is in stark contrast to the now famous
briefing memos that Senator Kennedy's staff lovingly
referred to as "bag memos"--because he took so many
briefing memos home every evening that he carried them in a
bag.

We found variations in the extent of social media in use by
the offices.  Variations were found also, in levels of
understanding about preserving these files.  Staff from
LC's National Digital Information Infrastructure did a
study over the winter of senators' use of third party
websites, and reported to us that YouTube, Facebook, and
Twitter were by far the most popular.  We found variations
in understanding, even as to what an archival repository
does, and what service an archives provides.

So armed with these insights, we were able to try something
different.  And what we finally determined to do is to put
together an office archives tool kit.  And this is what it

looks like, which is also available on the Senate intranet. And as Nancy mentioned, it will be the focus of the next Secretary's brown bag meeting. It makes a really big point that from day one when an office opens, there are archives sitting there waiting for you, in the form of constituent communications. We encourage offices to be ready to begin to manage that information, really from day one. The tool kit covers items such as personal record keeping, advice for systems administrators, how to inventory memorabilia, and what to look for in an archival repository, and of course, what to keep and how to manage it. So we're excited about this, and we're using it already. There are 21 tools in it at this point, and the format allows us to keep it up to date, which we certainly need to do with electronic oriented tools.

For committee archives, in the electronic category, we continue to encourage committees to hire an archivist. And I am so pleased to be able to say that two more have been added since our last meeting. Thanks to Senator Conrad, the Budget Committee is the most recent committee to hire an archivist, Kathy Dugan. And I think Kathy started just three weeks ago. And thanks to Senator Dorgan, who retired, the Indian Affairs Committee hired Sylvia Oliver last January. So we now have a total of ten archivists on nine committees. And needless to say, this is making a huge difference in the quality of documentation for these committees.

We remain seriously concerned about losing electronic records sitting in backlogs. And during the spring, we turned to plan B, which is offering direct electronic records processing services to committees. And currently, we are now working on electronic records backlogs of six different committees, that include records dating from the early '90s. So we now have 12 standing committees, out of 17, or around 70%, engaged in archiving their electronic records. This calendar year, we have transferred over 200 GB of electronic records with substantial volumes in the pipeline. Each committee, and each transfer represents a special case, so we need to negotiate the terms of our

service, discuss our methodology on a case-by-case basis, and tailor our services to their needs.  It is a tremendous mental leap for committees to move into the realm of electronic archiving.  And we are trying at this point to make it as easy for them as we possibly can.  And I wish to thank Alison White and Elisabeth Butler, part of our archives team, for jumping into this process enthusiastically, and providing such substantial service to the Senate.

We especially thank Archivist Ferriero for his leadership and support for these endeavors by providing vital staff at the Center, by supporting the electronic records program of the Center as it grows and evolves, and for his personal involvement and commitment at the various staff meetings that we've held over the past year.  In particular, the coffee hosted by the Archivist is continuing to bear some fruit for us.  So thank you so much.

Now, least you think that we're totally in the current moment, we are still most interested in some old fashioned kinds of records.  And last fall, we were contacted by an antiquarian book seller in Alameda, California.  Vic Zoschak purchased five large ledgers last year on eBay, covering the period 1870 to 1909.  Cataloging revealed them to be either the original ledgers of the newly formed Senate Appropriations Committee, which was established in 1867, or if not that, what?  He contacted the Center, and staff determined that the committee papers in their custody did not include any systematic reporting of appropriations for each line item, and that apparently the ledgers he purchased are unique.  The volumes arrived in our office last week, after generously being donated back to the Senate by Mr. Zoschak. They provide an inventory of appropriations by item, and by Congress.  The ledgers fill a significant gap in the historical record of the committee, and we are truly delighted to have them back.

The five ledgers are divided as follows, agriculture, Army, fortifications, pensions, and Post Office.  The second is diplomatic and District of Columbia.  The third is the one,

of course, we zeroed in on immediately, legislative appropriations.  The fourth is Military Academy and Naval appropriations.  And the fifth is sundry civil appropriations.  According to a note on Senate letterhead found in the diplomatic ledger, there were originally six ledgers, and from a comparison with the then existing subcommittees, it appears that the volume pertaining to Indians and deficiencies is missing.  Perhaps this might be a future eBay discovery.  The ledgers are written almost exclusively in pen, with some notations in pencil, and some pasted-in inserts, probably from a statute or report.  And they really are the annual appropriations identified by department, and listed in exquisite and accessible detail. I understand the Center has already received requests from some of our political scientist friends who have asked to use the volumes.

The next thing I wanted to report to you on is something really new.  It's a category I'm calling IT archives management initiatives.  And this includes Archivist's Toolkit, which will be covered later.  But I think this is really a reflection of the changing nature of our business, and the archives team is really excited to have these new initiatives underway.  The first is a large file transfer system, designed to transfer the accessioning of records from us to the Center for Legislative Archives in a secure way.  With the transfer of electronic records, some of the accompanying documentation has grown tremendously in size. Elisabeth Butler on our staff headed up this project, and that's now up and running.  It also is helping us cut down on paper costs.

The second really exciting initiative is an archives server.  And this is sort of half way along at this point, but what we are envisioning is a virtual server designed to facilitate the transfer of all of these electronic records. Right now, we're in a situation having to transfer drives and other portable media, and this we envision will replace that.  Perhaps it will also help some of the committees that are not engaged in this process to move into it more easily.

And the third is working with the Center on a system to manage our loan process better.  As we move more useful records into the Archives, the number of loans back to us has grown to the point that we need to have a much better way to track all of that.  So Matt Fulgham has been working with us to move that along.  All this may be dull administrative stuff, but for us, it's really exciting, because we are moving into a new era in all of this.  And thank you to the Center for all of the assistance that you've given us in these endeavors.

Lastly, I want to talk about education and outreach.  Our Secretary has been a great proponent of this, and I want to mention a couple of things we did in the past six months.  We hosted an SAA webinar on electronic records—the next step that we unfortunately scheduled for the day after a big snowstorm—but it was well attended.  This wonderful webinar addressed how do we move from neutral to action.  It helped people feel more confident about this process.  And then in March, Don Ritchie and I did a new history of the Senate's archives lecture for the Secretary's lecture series.  I wanted to thank Don, in particular, for his leadership in helping me to do something that we've wanted to do for a while, and I think that was a lot of fun and people enjoyed it.

ERICKSON:  Thank you, Karen.  And it goes without saying how proud I am of the work that Karen, and Elizabeth, and Alison White are doing in our historical office.  I feel that we've taken archiving to a new level.  And we also have the good fortune that we now have some very veteran archivists in Member offices and in committees who are mentoring some of our newer archivists who have joined committees and offices.  We're grateful for that teamwork that we have with our committee archivists.  Next, we will turn to the House of Representatives' Archivist's report, Robin Reeder.

REEDER:  Thank you.  I just wanted to briefly talk about our activities from the last Advisory Committee meeting in

December.  We have managed through the shift in leadership in the House, and in January, at the beginning of the 112th Congress, the Clerk sent out letters to all members of the House offering the full assistance of our staff.  We also had our annual committee records forum in February, which was very well attended. It was very important given the shift in leadership, which is often accompanied by a shift in staff who will be in charge of the records.  In some cases, the staff stayed the same, but in other cases, they changed.  We also have been more proactive about contacting the committees individually, and going and meeting with them, which has been very beneficial, even just to put names to faces.

I want to recognize my colleagues Alison Trulock and Heather Burke, who have been very helpful in that endeavor. We're working on an active draft for our revised records management publications for committee staff, which should be out pretty soon.  The part that needed the most updating was on electronic records.  The last time it was published was in 2004, so there have been quite a few changes since then.  And also I'd like to thank Ashley Smoot for his help on our updated electronic records guide.

I want to go over some of the statistics of where we are from the last Advisory Committee meeting.  Since December, we've had 13 consultations with Members and seven with committees; we've transferred 1,845,750 pages of records into our care.  We've processed 75,000 pages of loans from the National Archives; and 19,500 pages from on-site storage.  We're very much looking forward to working on the next-generation finding aid with the Center, and are actively working on that.  My report's short and sweet, but we've been busy.

ERICKSON:      Thank you, Robin.

REEDER:    Thank you.

ERICKSON:  We're sorry to hear that Ashley Smoot will be leaving, I think probably no one more sorry than Richard.

HUNT:  This is his last day today.

ERICKSON:  Oh no!

HUNT:  We're getting everything we can out of him now, so ask a lot of questions.  [laughter]

ERICKSON:  Ashley came from the Senate Sergeant at Arms, and we have benefited from his services, and his perspective on Congress.  And as he goes on to work on new projects for the executive branch, I hope that he won't forget his legislative ties, and what will continue to be a resource for us.

SMOOT:  This is a temporary assignment.

ERICKSON:  All right.  [laughter]  So with that, Ashley, I'll turn to you.

SMOOT:  Thank you very much.  Yes, I will be going to work for one of the other branches of government.  I'll be a virtualization engineer at the White House, working for an IT consulting firm.  As I explained to my wife what the technology is and what I do, it's working with virtual servers, and data consolidation, turning lots of hardware into a lot less hardware, making it much more efficient. And she replied, so most of what you do doesn't really exist?  [laughter]  I said exactly.  [laughter]

When I first started over a year ago, the Congressional Records Instance was my main focus for storing and preserving the digital records of Congress.  Richard and the Center had set up an initial local ERA instance of CRI, which met the needs and requirements of Congress, which meant being able to return records within a 24 hour time period, the same as for textual records.  The permanent archive for congressional records in ERA is at a secure remote location, and at the time, when they set this up, there was no access to that location.  So it forced them --

in order to be able to meet the loan needs of Congress, to keep a local copy of the data and the records.

With the transformation, there has been a lot of changes, and a new way of thinking, and only with that support have we been able to modify the approach and design of ERA-CRI. We now propose that we have a secure encrypted tunnel from the Archives here in DC and College Park out to the secure remote location. What that will enable us to do is to have just one copy of the records of Congress. One of the challenges when I started was to maintain two separate copies, and it's especially difficult when you don't have access in real time to the remote copy, unless you get in the car and drive out there and see it. This new proposed approach will save the Archives some money, because we can have one main copy of all of the records, with remote access to them when needed.

I'll run through some of the changes that we've proposed to have secure network access. We're also proposing to move the digital records preparation area from the treasure vault to a much more hospitable room for technology and the kind of work that needs to be done with computer records. We're in the very final stage of procurement of the hardware and software for the new CRI, which should be complete in a matter of weeks, to get the equipment we need to do some large scale ingest and data preparation. Right now, we're making due with a couple of PC's and a smaller storage unit, but we currently have 31 terabytes of electronic records in our possession. When you start talking about numbers like that, you need some fast throughput and good processing capability in order to do all of the things required, including making sure the records are secure, protected from viruses, and encrypting hashes and adding digital signatures of the records. We need the more appropriate facility and equipment to do that, and we are very close to getting all of that equipment, everything the Center needs.

We also have a lot of records that have been transmitted to the Center over the years on backup tapes. This represents

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legacy equipment, and one thing we'd like to do through virtualization, which enables you to go back in time, is to run an application to extract data from an old tape or an old server. We will also be able to convert and extract data from hardware that has been turned over to the center and the Archives. In some cases, we received records on a server, and, as you know, hardware decays and dies, and we need to convert those into virtual machines. Essentially, the whole server just becomes a set of files that you could use and then run on almost anything. That's about it with the procurement and we're really hopeful that that will offer a great facility once it becomes fully operational. That's all I have for the report.

ERICKSON: On the requests that you're getting from both the Senate and the House to return records within that 24 hour period--how many requests have there been for electronic records?

SMOOT: We haven't had many or any electronic records requests yet, it's mostly been all paper.

HUNT: We actually had two requests from committees for electronic records, which we processed and returned in a few hours.

SMOOT: We've had two so far that I haven't heard about. [laughter]

HUNT: On another front, we received an independent legislative commission's electronic records of 16 terabytes, and there are committees that are using some of those records in current investigations, and we had to turn around a significant volume. It took longer than hours only because we had just brought the materials in to our custody.

SMOOT: Yes, in fact, we hadn't even received the records yet, and we had to get them.

HUNT:  That was really the test run, as far as our ability to handle a significant volume of electronic records.

SMOOT:  And to speak about the requests that we've had so far, there haven't been very many, but this thing is just getting off the ground.  I think committees aren't even aware of that yet, even the ones that have transferred data.  It might still take them a while before they trust us with their records, but that will change as we can demonstrate to them that we do have the capability.  Also, I think, they may be sending us a copy of their electronic records, and keep the originals there for some time.  But as time goes by, and committees think in terms of 10, 20, and 50 years, that will change, because they will get rid of these old records from their systems, and then they will find a need, as time goes by, for access to their records.

ERICKSON:  OK, selfishly I have to ask, has Ashley's position been posted?

HUNT:  Not yet.

FERRIEO:  It will.

DONAGHUE:  Alison just sent over, or is preparing to send over, a very large collection and I requested that a copy be left with our administrator.  At least for the short term.

HUNT:  This illustrates the same point that Ashley was making, that in the short term, committees will have possession of a copy of the records.  Over time, that will not be true; however.

ERICKSON:  Right.  Any other questions for Ashley?  Thank you Ashley, for everything you've done.

SMOOT:  Thank you, thank you to the committee, it's always been a pleasure.

FERRIERO:  He is going to be a hard act to follow.  He's
been incredible, especially in this last go around with the
latest commission's records; Ashley just saved our buns
basically.  [laughter]

SMOOT:  Hey, could you tell my wife?  [laughter]

ERICKSON:  All right, now we'll have a report on the
recommendations for the Center for Legislative Archives
next-generation finding aids by Robert Horton, chair of the
Task Force on Description.

HORTON:   Thank you very much for inviting me today.  It's
a pleasure to be a part of this process, and help advance
the work on the records of Congress.  I'll be reporting for
the Task Force on Description, providing an update on the
progress so far.  At the last meeting in December, the
draft of the Center for History and New Media's report was
presented to the committee for review and comment.  Those
comments and suggestions, as well as those offered by the
Task Force itself, which met subsequently in January, were
then incorporated by Sharon Leon and her team into the
final report, which was delivered to the Center in February
2011, as stipulated by the contract.  So we would like the
committee to consider and endorse the report's
recommendations at this meeting.  All of the information is
in the briefing book.

Briefly, as the report indicates, the Center faces a
complex set of challenges.  It is responsible for a growing
volume of records, paper and increasingly digital.  It
relies now on a workflow and set of practices designed for
a smaller volume of primarily paper records.  And the
description of all of these records needs to be
standardized, as that is key both to the effective
management and the use of the records; but it is now
handled through an inefficient set of handoffs between
multiple entities, practices, and systems.  The overall
goals, as described in the Task Force report, are to
support the management and the use of this all-important
set of records from the key branch of government.  And, to

create a model for ways that the National Archives and other repositories can use new descriptive standards and tools, relying on new technologies and workflows to fulfill their responsibilities more effectively.

Five specific goals are described in the report.  And as we reported in December, testing is now underway, and we can report back on some preliminary suggestions from the experience so far.  That focus on the testing now involves two pilots looking simultaneously at goals one and two, and the pilots comprised working with records of the 75th Congress and with the records of the 95th.  The Center's experiences at standardizing and normalizing description and arrangement of content up through the 79th Congress is relatively straight forward and manageable with current resources.

That is not so with subsequent Congresses as demonstrated by a pilot with records of the 95th.  Here are some of the issues encountered.  It's a significantly larger volume of records.  And there are different practices in the House and Senate, as the Senate is a continuing body, and its records aren't closed and transferred at the end of each Congress.  And there are some additional variations that Richard and Matt can better describe than I can.  Those differences should be addressed.

There is an element of complexity to managing and providing access to similar and complementary records that are not similarly arranged.  Having two different models of arrangement and description will make it difficult for archivists to represent the content, and for patrons to understand it.  One course would be to analyze and separate the series into recognizable standardized and manageable units, which would require staff with subject matter expertise and professional experience.  And at this point, I think it's important to note that the pilots are still under way, and that more work has to be done with more analysis of what we learned before choosing a particular course.  For example, work on the technology to support these new practices is still underway.  There are all of

the usual issues involved in the integration of multiple systems, including an accessioning database, the ARC catalog, ERA, and the Archivist's Toolkit, a separate application, which will be the primary tool as now recommended for implementation in the House and Senate. That last piece especially is critical as that is where we hope to capture and manage a critical mass of descriptive information.

As that work moves forward, we'll get a better idea of how technology can support access. To an extent, the effort to standardize and to normalize a physical arrangement of the records by Congress, as noted earlier, could be complemented or even supplanted by a Google-like search of material described at the folder level for paper, and for whatever the meta data and search engine will support for digital content. Again, Matt and Richard can discuss the details on this one.

So I'll end with a very brief set of general and preliminary conclusions from the tests so far. The initial work indicates that the goals in the Task Force report are eminently achievable, but some of the work will inevitably be the function of capacity. There will have to be some investment in staff to manage the work on the larger volume of records in modern congresses, and in consultants and infrastructure to develop and integrate the technological tools recommended. Second, there is more that the Task Force can do, but the emphasis on technology suggested it could possibly be refreshed, perhaps with a new mission, and with additional members who have more of a background in technology and with experience in similar efforts underway. Goal five, for example, in the report, which aims to integrate the Center's content with that of other repositories online is a more ambitious effort than what we have addressed so far. In that context, we could certainly learn from what's happening in collaborations such as the NDIIP, the National Digital Information Infrastructure Preservation Program, and to an extent, its successor, the National Digital Stewardship Alliance, and as well, the now forming Digital Public Library of America. So I'm happy to

answer any questions you might have.  I'd be even happier
if the report's author would help me out in the process.
Thank you.

ERICKSON:  Questions, comments?  Sharon, do you have
anything to add given your role on the Task Force?

LEON:  I don't; I'm just very pleased to hear more about
the pilots that are going forward.  From what I've read
from the briefing book, and from discussions with the
Center staff and members of the Task Force, I believe we're
making great strides in a very short period of time, and I
think we should continue on that front.

ERICKSON:  Richard?

HUNT:  I will be happy to report; I believe that Bob
indicated that the committee, if it so chooses, might
consider endorsing the findings of the report.   I'll
leave it up to the chairs to determine how to proceed.

FERRIERO:  Can I suggest that we wait until your
presentation?

HUNT:  That's fine.

HUNT:  We're now going to roll up our sleeves and put you
all to work by looking at the materials in the briefing
book.  Please go to the green tab, where you will see our
implementation plan.  We've done it graphically, so
hopefully it is a little easier to follow.  I am simply
going to provide the overall context, and then Matt Fulgham
is going to lead you through the pilots themselves and the
major findings.  I must first observe that the Center for
History and New Media's report provided exactly the clear
road map and coordinated way forward that we needed to
begin to tackle this very complex and large problem.  It's
also allowed me to turn the responsibility for the
initiative over to Matt and the staff.  One of the most
encouraging signs is that we received this report in
February, and by June we're already digging in and showing

progress.  This is a five-year plan, but already the staff
buy-in and excitement about a way forward is really
tangible and very encouraging to me.

We have taken action, since February, on six of the
recommended activities, and there's a twofold focus to
those efforts.  The first is getting the proper people,
training, and tools in place.  And the second is conducting
those two descriptive pilots to find the lower level of
description that we can achieve for different volumes and
types of records.  If you look at the improvement goal
number one chart, you'll see that there are three
activities ongoing.  The first activity is to hire a well
qualified digital archivist.  The Task Force was
particularly helpful on that front, since there was no
existing position description within the National Archives
that fit the requirements for such a position, but the
wider community answered, and I got dozens of different
variations of position descriptions for digital archivists.
This allowed me pick and choose the types of skill sets we
needed for this particular position.  We have received
funding from the Archivist for the position; we've created
a PD; and it's about to go out on the street soon. When
it's announced, I will rely upon you to get it into the
right hands and to the right institutions, so we get a good
candidate.  Many of the activities, such as using
Archivist's Toolkit, and pursuing some coding changes to
AT, will wait until that person is onboard.  This person
will be the team lead for this effort, so it's a very
critical position to us.

The second activity outlined in orange is the training that
we have taken and provided for our staff.  Many of those
have been SAA webinars.  We've sent staff out to SAA
workshops as well, and we have another one coming up.  This
training activity stemmed from an observation that Sheryl
Vogt made at the last meeting, encouraging us to get our
staff up to speed and get them trained.  We're making
progress on this front.  Those sessions have included our
colleagues in the House and Senate Archivists offices, so
we're establishing a common shared base of knowledge.

On another front, recorded in activity number three, Ashley and Shannon have been working with the House and Senate archivists to develop electronic transfer forms so that we can circumscribe the problem by capturing metadata and descriptive information upfront from committee staff and archivists. This activity will significantly increase the pre-description information we receive.

On chart two, showing our progress on improvement goal number two, please note activity number seven--track records used by researchers. In response, we've created a research use database that has been in place for about four months. We have hundreds and hundreds of entries, giving us data that should assist us in deciding what records we should describe more fully, what we should digitize, and how we can focus those activities.

Under activity four--collating existing description for the 75$^{th}$ Congress--is where we're taking existing description from many sources and putting that information into a single searchable source in ARC. The last major pilot project is recorded under activity number two, where we are looking at a modern Congress, records from the 95$^{th}$ House and Senate. The first step is to do an initial analysis of the records, deciding corrective actions we take to provide better description, how deep that description goes, and how many resources it takes. I would like to invite Matt Fulgham to the table to walk us through the two pilots.

FULGHAM: Good morning everyone. We should now all be at the yellow tab in the briefing book, looking at the collating existing description project. I want to remind you that the goal of this pilot is to combine description that already exists on records from the 75$^{th}$ Congress (1937-1938) because we already have detailed description from preliminary inventories and printed guides that had been done years ago. Before this effort, you'd have to come to the National Archives to view these sources. Our effort is to take that great descriptive information and convert it to make it available online through ARC. Sharon's report

provided a great guide to mapping the data into the fields in ARC, and so we've been working on that effort.

Note that the volume of records for the 75$^{th}$ Congress, if you look at the slide, is a relatively small volume for us. It's a total of approximately 550 cubic feet, or 1.4 million pages for the House and Senate. For comparison, when we look at the 95$^{th}$ Congress, that total is only 8% of the volume we have for the 95$^{th}$ Congress. Our approaches to the different descriptive challenges are determined by the volume of records we're looking at. If you flip to the next page, you'll see our existing description. Look at the example of the Committee on Military Affairs, and our existing description only provides a very high level overview. If you were searching in ARC, this is generally all you'd find. If you look below on the page, you see the kind of data that we already have in our existing preliminary inventories. You can see the great level of detail we have on the records of the Committee on Military Affairs. So if you search in ARC, and you're interested in the Philippine Islands, or the Tennessee Valley Authority, these topics would show up in a search result. And the beauty of this is that someone not actively searching for congressional records would learn about records relevant to their topic in our holdings. What's also important to note is that great level of detail describes four inches of records. So in this case, you essentially have a folder title list that's provided for the records from this early period. There's something else of interest on the page. Richard, do you want to talk about that?

HUNT: Yes, as I was scanning down the page, I saw that the National Archives is an entry under records of the Committee on the Library from 1937. So I sent the staff out to see what we had in the files. And there's memorandum number one from the first Archivist of the United States, R. D. W. Connor.

FERRIERO: My hero.

HUNT:  Just think, this is at the very beginning of the
National Archives as an agency.  And the memo cites a
debate in the House of Representatives on Monday, May 8,
1935, when the organization was variously referred to as
the National Archives Establishment, the National Archives,
the National Archives Department, and as a bureau; and the
question was asked from the floor of the House, what is the
correct designation for this office?  Archivist Connor
notes that the confusion about the proper designation of
the organization in the debate is indicative of the
confusion in the minds of many people as to the correct
status and function of the National Archives.  He points
out that it is more important for a new organization than
for an old well-established one that such confusion be
avoided by the use of correct terminology when referring to
it.  He directs all staff, therefore, to refer to the
agency as The National Archives, end of story.  [laughter]

FULGHAM:  I also find it interesting, and this shows you
there's always some bias in doing description, that if you
look at the Committee on the Library entry it says its
records are arranged by agency, but the only one they list
is the National Archives.  So the folks who described the
records made sure that the Archives made it into the
description.

On the next page, you see an example of the description
that already existed for the 75$^{th}$ Congress loaded into ARC,
thanks to the help of our friends on the ARC staff.  This
description is live and you could actually go in and search
this today.  To summarize our actual work process, we
created an Excel spreadsheet where we mapped this
information from the preliminary inventory and then the ARC
staff loaded it into ARC. A student who is here for the
summer, Johanna, who's sitting in the back has done much of
the work on this front. I think she started with the
descriptive information on the 15$^{th}$ Congress and has already
completed the conversion for a few Congresses.  So we're
making great progress in conversion.  We're also checking
and adding the volume at the file unit level, which we had
not done before, which is very useful information. One

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early lesson learned, as Bob had alluded to, is that we
believe we can do this part of the project with no
additional staff.  We'll be able to report in December as
to how much of the first 79 Congresses we've been able to
convert into ARC that would be searchable.  I think we
still face a challenge as far as how we best present all
this new data, however.  We've already begun conversations
with the ARC staff about ways we might present the data in
new and effective ways, but this is a challenge to face
after all the data is converted.

HUNT:  Just so that everyone understands, let me state that
what you are seeing is information at a file unit level for
one committee for one series.  For the pilot, we have
completed conversion of descriptive information for all of
the records for this committee, and for all of the records
for all House and Senate committees for the two-year life
of 75th Congress.  So that entire universe of records now
has a very granular and focused description, as opposed to
the committee's records from the beginning of time until
now.  We are now providing user-friendly, more precise, and
more searchable data.  What we've concluded is that we'll
be able to do this conversion of existing data for every
Congress from the 1st through the 79th by either the next
meeting or soon thereafter.  That yields millions and
millions of bits of descriptive information about a large
universe of records.  So we've gone from very general
description to something very specific.

FULGHAM:  Absolutely.  If you move to the blue tab in the
briefing books, this is when it gets fun.  This focuses on
the 95th Congress pilot project and we're following similar
methodology, trying to take our existing description and
use that as a baseline for additional description.  When we
look at the more modern congresses such as the 95th, from
1977-1978, most of our existing description exists in the
Holdings Management System, which is basically a location
database.  This captures accession-level description, so
it's at a higher level of description.  The volume also
increases greatly.

See the first chart on the top, and you'll see another
challenge that we're presented with.  For the first 79
congresses or so, the records are arranged, primarily, by
each two-year congress.  Once we get into more modern
records on the Senate side, because it is a continuing
body, we have a wider span of records included in each
accession, or clumps of records as Richard likes to call
them. So the great challenge we have on the Senate side is
describing records that may cover a broader period of time
and multiple congresses. For the 95$^{th}$ Congress, 92% of
Senate records come in as multiple-Congress accessions.
This pilot explores how we address that challenge as well
as other associated challenges.

Let's talk about the House records, represented by the
chart on the bottom of this page. You can see the growing
volume, where for the 95$^{th}$ Congress we have just over 3,000
cubic feet of records.  We began with the Ways and Means
Committee.  So if you flip the page, you can see a print-
out from the Holdings Management System that lists each of
the different entries included for the 95$^{th}$ Congress.  We
chose Ways and Means Committee because a large percentage
of these records--87%--were listed as multiple series.  We
figured this was a great opportunity to go in and see how
we could improve upon that. If a researcher requested these
multiple series, it would be difficult to assist him.

We went into the stack areas with these reports, did a
visual inspection of the records, and we found that in most
cases, we were able to convert this from multiple series
into more specific series, into limited bill files,
legislative files, oversight files, etc.  And so we were
able to convert a very general description into more
specific ones.

This situation exists primarily because until the last few
years we did not have an electronic records location
database for our holdings. We only had beginning and ending
location data, by Congress and committee. One of the things
that we've learned, if you flip to the chart on next page,
is that many of the generic multiple series were bill

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files, which is now the largest volume series replacing what had been multiple series.

We think that on the House side, because we tend to get records by Congress, that the model we've established for the earlier Congresses of describing records by each two-year Congress will continue to apply for modern House records. What we would like to do, between now and the next meeting, is survey all of the House committee records for the 95$^{th}$ Congress so we have a better idea of the amount of time this effort takes, and how much we can gain in more specific description.

What we also did in going in and looking at the records-- and yes, I was actually in the stacks, and that needs to be on the record too since I don't get out there as often.  In fact, Richard and I were together in the stacks on Friday, which marks a momentous occasion.  But one of the things we discovered, if we had a set of bill files, we would open the boxes to confirm that they were bill files. We also found in a few cases where multiple boxes had the same bill number.  So we would open those boxes and take a look using the fat file theory, to add subject terms. For this one, we found income tax reform, which generated a lot of documentation, and another one on Medicare.  So we added those terms as tags to make them searchable.  That summarizes the model that we followed for the House.

So I'm going to switch to the Senate side. We applied the same methodology. We went in with the reports of the Holdings Management System, with all of the different entries for committee records that might include the 95$^{th}$ Congress.  As you look at the chart on the bottom of the page, you'll see that there's quite a span of Congresses included.  Some of these are bound volumes, and that's part of the reason that you see the especially wide span.  For Appropriations, for example, you'll see that the range that includes 95$^{th}$ Congress records can go all the way back to the 48$^{th}$ Congress in 1883.  So we have a span of 123 years in that particular set, extending to 2006.

The committee that we chose to start with is the Judiciary Committee.  And I will note that for records that may include the 95th Congress, the Judiciary Committee's records alone are 300 cubic feet larger than all of the Senate records for the 75th Congress, just to put the challenge in perspective. If you'll flip to the next page, you see a printout, essentially, of all of the different Senate Judiciary Committee series or clumps of records that may include the 95th Congress.  This is where we start, and these records are scattered throughout the building.  So it's a different challenge as far as actually going in and doing the work.

If you'll flip to the next page, you will see a summary of our findings. As we had done on the House side, we tried to identify subjects and subject terms useful to researchers. What we also tried to do, if we could, was to identify discernable boxes of records by specific Congress if that could reduce the multiple congresses entries a little bit. And that's probably the biggest difference that we faced in going in and looking at Senate records.  But both sets of records were very rich and I think it does present a great opportunity for us to get more descriptive information out to researchers online than we currently can.

It's going to be a challenge with these multiple congresses, as far as how we present that information to researchers.  We had what I called a "no duh" moment, realizing we often try to force things into the way it's always been.  We realize we have to use a new model for Senate records since they just won't fit into the single Congress model.  And that's what we're going to work on with ARC staff—to find ways we can present that information.  One challenge we do face is that with these records, we are going to have a mix of open and closed records.  And so how we manage description of open and closed records will be a challenge that we'll have to work on as well.

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Our goal, by the next Advisory Committee meeting is to look at the rest of the Senate committees for the 95th Congress to get some sense of how much time this takes, and what kind of resources we're expending.  Right now, we haven't tried to do a folder title list, which is extremely time-consuming.  But one of the things that we may consider, and I'd like to open it up for questions at this point, is perhaps taking a few of the committees and trying to do a folder title list to see how much we gain, and how much time it takes to do a folder title list.  And Richard's right, I think the staff is excited, especially for the more modern records, to have a better handle of what we have, and to share better descriptive information about really valuable records with the research public around the world.  Any questions at this point?

VOGT:  I would like to know how many of your staff members are you using in the pilot projects?

FULGHAM:  We probably had five or six different people going in at different times.  With our schedules, and with the different responsibilities that we face, we don't have anybody focused right now on just doing this.  And so it's a matter of when staff has two or three hours to head into the stacks, heading in together, and doing that.  There's no dedicated staff to do this.  And one of the things we're looking forward to with the addition of a digital archivist is having somebody thinking full time about this, and then having assignments for staff when they don't have reference responsibilities, or screening responsibilities, or taking in accessions. We need someone dedicated to guiding the project and moving forward.

VOGT:     That was my concern when you said that you could do it with the staff you had, was it taking them from other work that they had to do that has to be done?

FULGHAM:  Yes, and that's a really good point.  With the staff we have, we should be able to do the conversion of the first 79 or so congresses into ARC.  But I think it will be a challenge for us to get as much done as we can as

far as the modern records pilot. Remember we're talking about one congress, and so it'll be a very small piece of all that we hold. I think the overall figures for the open minimally described records as we call them, are about 50,000 cubic feet of records. The breakdown for the earlier records, where we're doing the conversion of the existing description from the first through 79 is only 32,000 cubic feet, but they're very well described. And then, we haven't touched as much on what is not yet open to researchers, which is 62,000 cubic feet. We've had great conversations with Karen and Robin about information included in the transfer documentation so that the percentage of records that are closed and minimally described doesn't continue to grow. But it will be a challenge even with that, because we do have multiple things to do.

HUNT: The conversion of data is more of a mechanical process, and we can now outline that process and use interns, students, and others to capture the data to go in and add to ARC descriptions.

RITCHIE: I just wanted to say that, for all of the years of planning on this, it's really wonderful to hear about actual implementation. And this is a huge leap forward, and it's just great. Understanding that this is going to be incremental for a long time, what kind of mechanisms are you thinking about of alerting researchers as pieces of it open up, as the pilot program moves to the point where researchers can actually access this information. It seems to me that you can't wait until the very end after you've done the entire congress; you're going to have to have some stages to alert the research community, and I wondered if you have any plans for that.

FULGHAM: I think there are a few things we can do. One, the National Archives has regular meetings with researchers, some of our most frequent ones, and we can certainly bring this up as a topic and have conversations about that. Part of the recommendations that we haven't gotten to yet, and will probably not occur until we have

the digital archivist on board, is to revamp our website. The National Archives also has a newsletter that comes out monthly or quarterly, with news about records, and we can spread the word that way as well.  Those are just some initial things that I've thought about.  But we'd welcome any suggestions as far as expanding it.

HUNT:  We will publish as we go.  It will end up in ARC descriptions as we get the data.

FULGHAM:  Correct. So the 75$^{th}$ Congress information is in ARC and searchable now.  But you're right, we need to alert people. I'll be at SAA this summer, and so I can speak of it there, and find ways to spread the word through the listserv as well.

FERRIERO: Our best success in these kinds of announcements is telling a story.  So using some discovery, you talk about the citizen archivist thing, about using that kind of thing to hook a story for national press coverage.  That's the kind of thing that our national press people will be doing.

BIRDWHISTELL:  I would also like to commend you in the progress you're making.  And if I understood you correctly, you said you're trying to decide about a folder-title list approach?

FULGHAM:  Yes, whether in some cases we do a folder-title list.  Right now, our description for the modern congresses is at the series level, which could be 50 or 60 boxes.  So the example I gave is that if you have 60 boxes that are all bill files, which are arranged by bill number, is that enough with a few examples of subjects tagged? Or do we try to in other cases, with existing staff, add folder-title level lists? Even if we tripled our staff, doing folder-title list would be very challenging.  But I'd like to see what difference they make and the resources required to do some. The other thing that we haven't alluded to is when we get into more modern records, the transfer documentation gets a lot better, thanks to the efforts of Karen and

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Robin.  And so for some of that, we currently have folder-
title lists in paper form. A lot of times you'll see a
folder title list attached to a transfer.  And so I think
in those cases, that's certainly something that we plan on
doing.

PAUL:  I am wondering, as you have the opportunity to take
a closer look at some of the older accessions, if you are
building in the notion of appraisal of some of those
records--whether or not they should remain in the
collection.

FULGHAM:  That's a very good question.  I think it's
something that we will keep in mind.  The other thing that
we are noting is preservation concerns.  So as we're
looking through these, we see if they need reboxing or
refoldering. But yes, if we encounter printer's proofs and
things like that that have come over, you know, years ago,
we will absolutely be in communication with the House and
the Senate to recommend disposal. Since we need space, if
there's something that's clearly non-record, we'd be more
than happy to do that, and that's something that we'll
certainly be taking a look at.

PAUL:  And also to follow up on your comment about
contemporary documentation, one of the things that we are
paying more attention to are document types in the series,
and so are you looking at that as you look at the older
collections too?  Because I think that would really tie
into appraisal, and a researcher's ability to know whether
or not there was anything unique in that series.

FULGHAM:  Sure, we have, and in fact, I found something
that I'd never seen before, which were polls of committee
members on certain topics.  And so we certainly made a note
of that, which was very unusual. It was from an
investigative committee, and they were deciding whether to
have an open hearing, or to hold hearings in a certain
city, and each of the members would vote, and I had never
come across anything like that.  As part of our description
of the records, we often will say that it includes bills,

correspondence from the public, and other document types. So we do include that in our description, and it's a good suggestion.

LEON:  I just had a question about the way that the gathering of data from current researchers is supplementing this process.  I don't know what percentage of your researches are working with the modern records, but whether you're putting into the workflow a way to capture the kinds of folder-level descriptions and other pieces of interest generated by existing researchers that you can shoot back into your description to try and lessen the staff burden by capitalizing on the work of your existing researchers.

FULGHAM:  Yes, that's something we'd like to do.  To be honest, we haven't incorporated that very well yet.  I know that when we have someone working on a longer term project, a dissertation topic or a book, that Ken Kato and Richard McCulley often have long conversations with them about the results that they're finding. What we'd like to start doing, and we have a few examples on our website, is have them write short blog-like pieces to advertise their findings. Only if they want to, because not all researchers want to advertise what they found quite yet.  But it's something that we need to work on.

The researcher database that we started at the beginning of the year has been very helpful as it records research topics. If someone calls, or emails, or walks in, we're capturing what their topic is, and what records they've looked at.  And so the other question that I'd like our staff to start asking is how did you find us? As we put more online, are we finding that it makes a difference? I think right now people come to us by referral from other units, and through our House and Senate guides, which have been online for years but don't really provide great in-depth description.  But it's a good point, and it's something that we'll have to talk more about of how we systematically offer the opportunity to describe our records.  I think it's something the National Archives in

general is thinking about, ways to capture information from our researchers.

FERRIERO: It's called Citizen Archivist.

FULGHAM: Exactly.

ZINK: I have an additional question, and it may change considerably over time, as far as redundancy of copies, what's been included as appendices and hearings, and published materials that you're finding within the files. Do you have any sense of how that's changed? Because it would seem that one couldn't, for example, assume that all staff working files were there. They might have gone with the papers of a Congressman or Senator.

FULGHAM: We haven't really, I think, done enough work to determine that, but I think it's a really good question. I think especially as we get into the more modern records, where you do see more and more staff working files, we need to understand exactly what is included. It's something we'll definitely keep in mind, but at this point, I think there's really not too much I could say at this point.

ZINK: I know from when I was in my earlier life a historian with the Congressional Information Service, the CIS Index, which went back and detailed what was in a hearing, it was a revelation what was included in the hearings. Of course, before that, there was nothing quite like that.

ERICKSON: Do we have a motion to approve the next-generation finding aids recommendations and implementation?

M: So moved.

ERICKSON: Is there a second?

M: Second.

ERICKSON: Great.

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FERRIERO: Can we discuss?

ERICKSON: Yes.

FERRIERO: I love what I see, and I'm really impressed with the pilots, and the status of how much progress we've made. What's missing for me are resource implications. So what is this going to cost? I can certainly endorse this in principle, but I need more, as you know, more concrete information about resource implications. In order to be successful here, what's it going to cost us? What's the investment here?

ERICKSON: Right.

HUNT:    We need more data and analysis of that data before I can provide resource estimates.

ERICKSON: With that caveat. [laughter]

HUNT:  We need more data to be able to tell you.

FERRIERO: I know you do.

HUNT:  I don't think the report suggests an iron-clad commitment to a number of additional staff resources. It really falls back to me to report the findings to the committee and to give you resource estimates.

ERICKSON: Yes.

LEON:  I think that by the next meeting we'll have a much better sense of what that might look like.

ERICKSON: All right, so we have a motion and a second with that caveat that we'll get a report on the resource requirements.  All in favor?

ALL: Aye.

ERICKSON: The ayes have it.  The motion is passed.  Thank you, Matt, for your work on this.

ERICKSON: As we conclude our meeting, I just want to inquire if there are any other issues, new business, or current issues that members of the committee would like to discuss?

FERRIERO: I forgot to mention in my opening remarks the work of David McMillen and Richard McCulley on the legislative research fellowship.  They performed yeoman's duty in getting the proposal together and reviewing applications.  So thank you, thank you very much.

ERICKSON: When you make a selection, Richard, if you wouldn't mind emailing the committee?

HUNT:  The world will hear.

ERICKSON: The world will hear.  [laughter]  Right.  That's great.  Any other issues to discuss?  Terry?

BIRDWHISTELL:  I'd just like to take the opportunity to thank Senator McConnell for reappointing me, and to say how much I enjoy working with this group and playing some small role in trying to move it forward.

ERICKSON: We appreciate that, we appreciate your contributions.  And Senator McConnell's office, I might add, has been a real leader in the Senate on the archiving front.  Nan Mosher I know was here and had to leave, but their actions speak volumes as to the priority that they place on records management and archiving.  Sheryl?

VOGT:  Yes, Nancy, I have something that I want to ask about, but I also want to thank you for reappointing me, it's so nice to follow through on work that you've been involved in for the last couple of years.  What I wanted to talk about for just a few minutes is the problem of the use of proprietary systems in electronic records in the House and Senate. These files come to repositories, and of

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course, some of them come to the National Archives as well.
We, at the Russell Library, are having a problem right now
with one of these companies that does our governor's
electronic records system, and we understand this company
also provides some of the proprietary software for
Congress.  What we have come across is that this company
does not want to help us in getting access to these files;
they're willing to give us what they call a dump of the
files.  They would like for us to buy the software, which
is around $10,000.  Our academic institutions cannot afford
to do this.

ERICKSON: Right.

VOGT:  And the problem we're having with the governor's
office also is that these files are public records, they
belong to the people of our state, and this company doesn't
care too much about that.  They don't really understand the
relationship that we had in bringing these records forward
for making them available to the public, and what we have
to do with that.  And it's really concerning to us because
if we start getting representatives' papers that use the
same software, I don't know what we're going to do.  I
mean, we can get a dump, but we can't use it, there's no
way we can access the files in that.  And I really think
that it's going to have to be at this committee level, I
think, for us to get any kind of change in what's
happening.  Because these offices, you know, they take a
contract for this, they think they're doing the right thing
to do what they have to do for their office, but if we look
at the long term picture of what's going to happen once
these files come to us, then we really do have a problem in
saving the record that we're trying to save.

ERICKSON: Interesting.  Do our archivists have any comment
on that; Robin, Karen, in terms of strategy for addressing
this issue?

PAUL:  It's our understanding that when offices close that
the dump is in an open format, in ASCII.  And that it is
possible to repurpose that into a database that the

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Archives is using.  So I'm not sure what company or what
system, but our procedures in the Senate is to transfer
that to you.

VOGT:  Right, and we have received some files like that

PAUL:  And those are difficult as well?

VOGT:  Well yes, there's difficulty with that.  And you're
not going to have the same system that you had in the
congressional offices.

PAUL:  No.

VOGT:  It's not going to be the same.  And then there's
also a question of are we really going to be an accredited
digital archives in that we can say that that record is
accurate as it was used in that office.  And we could look
at that as well.

PAUL:  Well, we're told that the files that leave the
Senate have been verified and checked.

VOGT:  OK.

PAUL:  And, you should be receiving a codebook that
explains Readme files and so on.  They are very large.

VOGT:  It may be this particular company. And so they have
met with our state attorney, and they're not feeling very
compassionate about this.  We're at an impasse, that
meeting was about six weeks ago, and I don't know how it's
going to turn out for us.  But I think that they are at a
point in their corporate history, that they could be
philanthropic, but we're not seeing that.  [laughter]  So I
don't know what the answer is to this, but I think it's
something we should really keep in our minds as we move
forward.

ERICKSON: Definitely, I agree.

SMOOT:  I did talk with Sheryl a little about this before, it is a common interest to Senate and House offices, because about 50 offices use this product.  It's also not a software problem.  It's complicated by network and security infrastructure issues.  It's very difficult to duplicate that environment, and that's the kind of strategy you need; it's not just licensing the software, but getting a working product that you can use to access the data, which is difficult.  It can be done, and it is basic database migration, but then there's a lot of complex frameworks, and relational databases that are intermixed that make these things difficult to move around.  It's not an easy problem to solve.

VOGT:  And you have to realize that we don't all have Ashley working for us.  [laughter] And so while we are fortunate to have someone with the designation of electronic archivist, so many of our congressional repositories do not have any kind of IT assistance.  So this is a major concern.

REEDER:  I know too, Sheryl, we've had this problem in the House, and at points, we've asked if the office at least could generate reports out of the software to include with the papers, but often, if an office has three weeks to close, that's just not possible.  I know a while back, we had toyed with the idea of asking the companies to produce some viewers.  So at least it would be something where you at least can view the records, which might be a good idea in terms of that way they couldn't change the records, but I don't know if that's something we could pursue.

SMOOT:  One approach to take as you look at this problem is rather than duplicating the entire system you have to be strategic and pick out the parts of the information that needs to be preserved. Talk with the record creators about how the system was used, because a lot of these systems, there's a lot of data there that's just useless pointers. Find out what is the core primary data, and focus on that, because that can be a lot easier to digest and import it to

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some other system, and put it into some kind of
architecture that you can use.

PAUL:  That's the intent of our IT staff, to give you the
full package of documentation, then you select out the
elements that you want to reactivate in a contemporary
database situation.  And in fact, that's what they do when
they receive the dump.  They move that all into, I think,
an access database to run all of their checks on that.  But
you would need someone, they tell us that you really do
need someone who's capable of scripting that into a new
database.  But Ashley's right, you would want to be very
selective.  For example, you might want names, topics, and
zip codes, or something like that, so you can manipulate
that part of the data. He's correct in saying a lot of
those fields are really not useful for research purposes
anyway.

SMOOT:  Data like social security numbers, for example.

VOGT:  Right.

SMOOT:  There's a lot of security sensitive information,
and you don't want to have that.

VOGT:  Right, we're aware of that.

PAUL:  And increasingly, offices are scanning and including
the actual communications as well, so there's substantive
material in addition to the name, address, topic of
interest. The actual communications are in the system also.

VOGT:  But I think when we're even considering that, if
this is the only way we're going to get this material, we
might as well not take it, because there's nothing we can
do with it.  And so I think increasingly, a lot of this
material, this information, will be lost, even the good
stuff, because institutions don't have the resources to
handle it. I mean, we're worried about resources for what
Richard does, but out in the other states, it's very

difficult and it's something that we really are concerned about.

ERICKSON:  Thank you for the briefing on that issue, and I think this is something that we really need to monitor, and you can imagine that for the majority of centers who are facing budget cuts that this is going to be an issues of big concern.

FERRIERO: Could I suggest, at the next meeting--I'm still stunned by the five volumes that have turned up--can I suggest that we talk about mechanisms for being on top of what's missing, and activities for reclaiming what's ours?

ERICKSON: OK.

FERRIERO:  Because it's something that we spend a lot of time worrying about at the Archives.

ERICKSON: Good.  That's a good suggestion.

Motion to adjourn made and seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 12:03.