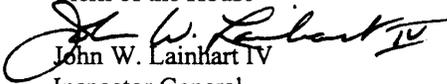


**John W. Lainhart IV**  
Inspector General

**Office of Inspector General**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-9990

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Robin H. Carle  
Clerk of the House

FROM:   
John W. Lainhart IV  
Inspector General

DATE: December 16, 1998

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Improvements Are Needed In The Management And Operations  
Of The Office Of The Clerk (Report No. 98-CLK-18)

This is our final report on the management and operations of the Office of the Clerk. The objective of this audit was to provide an operational assessment of your office during the 105<sup>th</sup> Congress. Specifically, we examined the management and direction of each Office of the Clerk office, controls over administrative functions, and program procedures and controls. We found that your office has initiated improvements in critical legislative functions supporting the U.S. House of Representatives. Also, we found that the changes you have initiated have led to improvements in the conditions reported in our previous audit report, entitled *Opportunities Exist To Improve The Management Of The Office Of The Clerk* (Report No. 96-CLK-14, dated December 31, 1996). However, we did identify three issues needing management attention and made six recommendations for improvement.

In response to our November 5, 1998 draft report, your office concurred with our findings and recommendations. The November 9, 1998 management response is incorporated in this final report and included in its entirety as an appendix. The corrective actions planned by your office are appropriate and, when fully implemented, should adequately respond to the recommendations. However, we ask that you provide us with target completion dates for all six recommendations in this report. In addition, we ask that you provide us with the target completion date for the one prior audit recommendation listed in the Exhibit (see Page 21), which has not been fully implemented or otherwise resolved. Please respond by January 15, 1999.

We appreciate the courtesy and cooperation extended to us by your staff. If you have any questions or require additional information regarding this report, please call me or Robert B. Frey III at (202) 226-1250.

**Attachment**

cc: **Speaker of the House**  
**Majority Leader of the House**  
**Minority Leader of the House**  
**Chairman, Committee on House Oversight**  
**Ranking Minority Member, Committee on House Oversight**  
**Members, Committee on House Oversight**

# Improvements Are Needed In The Management And Operations Of The Office Of The Clerk

*Report No. 98-CLK-18  
December 16, 1998*

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## RESULTS IN BRIEF

### CONCLUSIONS

Since the issuance of our report *Opportunities Exist To Improve The Management Of The Office Of The Clerk* (Report No. 96-CLK-14, dated December 31, 1996), we have noted a number of specific improvements in the operations of the Office of the Clerk, including:

- Reductions in personnel and costs including the centralization and reorganization of the Legislative Resource Center.
- Continued progress within the Document Management System, including a reduction in the volume of paper copies requested from the Government Printing Office because of electronic transfer capabilities between the Office of the Clerk and Government Printing Office and the ability of the Document Management System to generate individual documents on request.
- Reduction since the beginning of 104<sup>th</sup> Congress in the historical backlog in the production of the House journal (official documentation of all House proceedings) from six years to less than two years, with goals and plans to eliminate any backlog in the next 12 months.
- Implementation of new voting technology on the House floor, including improvements in the voting card itself, reducing costs and increasing reliability.
- In the process of rebinding over 9,000 priceless volumes of books which chronicle the House's history of over 200 years. Over 1,500 volumes of books have been completed to date. Some of the volumes date back over 200 years.

While these improvements have significantly enhanced performance within individual divisions, additional measures are needed to further strengthen the Office of the Clerk organization. Opportunities exist to improve the management process within the Office of the Clerk. Specifically, the Office of the Clerk should (1) identify a vision and a long-term strategy based on a careful analysis of the office's mission, overall objectives, general strategies, and major

resource allocations, (2) establish a position with decision-making authority on the Clerk's senior staff to oversee the Page Program, (3) establish mechanisms to improve communications with managers and staff, and (4) establish adequate policies and procedures related to areas of vulnerability, which specifically include the proper use of government resources.

The Office of the Clerk operates an in-house audio system which supports both House activities and the Official Record of the House. The Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) provides visual and audio feed for a 24-hour televised external service when the House is in session. Due to a lack of effective coordination and communication between CAO and Office of the Clerk staff regarding these functions, the service provided has been less than optimal at times. This is a direct result of the bifurcation of the management of floor activities. In addition, there is no formal service level agreement between the two offices which delineates necessary procedures and responsibilities.

There are conflicting statements concerning the safety and appropriateness of the existing Page accommodations. A number of managers and staff interviewed raised concerns regarding the condition of the O'Neill building, particularly with regard to its use as Page housing. In addition, contradictory expert reports exist which lead us to believe that there is uncertainty regarding the appropriateness of housing Pages in the current facility.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

We recommend that the Clerk (1) establish a comprehensive strategic planning process to identify Office of the Clerk's long-term (e.g., five year) goals, determine the optimum way to achieve those goals, and identify performance measures to be used to measure organizational success in meeting these goals, (2) assign clear responsibility for the Page Program to a position at the Assistant Clerk level or above to oversee its management and operations, (3) establish mechanisms to improve communications with managers and staff, (4) develop and implement more comprehensive policies and procedures regarding the proper use of official vehicles, charge cards, and computers; and adopt Committee on House Oversight approved information systems security and systems development life cycle policies and procedures, (5) work with the CAO to assess the feasibility of reassigning the appropriate camera staff to the Office of the Clerk. If transferring employees proves not to be feasible, a formal service-level agreement should be executed between the Office of the Clerk and CAO regarding communication activities on the House floor, and (6) work with the Architect of the Capitol and the House Building Commission to conduct a definitive analysis of Page housing (with appropriate technical and professional support by independent engineering and real estate resources) specifically addressing the safety, security issues, and fitness of purpose of the O'Neill building for Page accommodations.

**MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

On November 9, 1998, the Clerk concurred with the findings and recommendations in this report (see Appendix). According to the response, the Clerk agreed to (1) further develop complete strategic plans, goals, and management systems in support of the Office of the Clerk, (2) more clearly define for the Page Board the assignment of responsibilities related to the House Page Program within the Immediate Office of the Clerk, (3) better develop communications within the management structures of the Office of the Clerk, (4) better define policies related to the use of official resources, (5) work with the CAO for improved operation of the House Floor cameras focusing on the current staffing structure and the possibility of transferring resources to the Clerk, and (6) seek a study by the appropriate authorities (Architect of the Capitol, the House Building Commission, and outside experts) in an effort to identify any risks so needed actions can be documented and appropriate steps can be taken.

**OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL COMMENTS**

The actions planned by the Clerk are responsive to the issues identified and, when fully implemented, should satisfy the intent of these recommendations. However, we have requested that the Clerk provide us, by January 15, 1999, with target completion dates for implementing all six recommendations in this report.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### Background

**Election of the Clerk.** The Rules of the House of Representatives effective for the 105<sup>th</sup> Congress (dated January 1, 1998) detail the duties of the Speaker of the House (Rule I), the Election of Officers (Rule II), the duties of the Office of the Clerk (Rule III) and the duties of the Standing Committees, including the Committee on House Oversight (Rule X 1.(h) and 4.(d)(1)).

Rule II for the election of Officers states:

“There shall be elected by a viva voce vote, at the commencement of each Congress, to continue in office until their successors are chosen and qualified, a Clerk, Sergeant at Arms, Chief Administrative Officer, and Chaplain, each of whom shall take an oath to support the Constitution of the United States, and for the true and faithful discharge of the duties of his office to the best of his knowledge and ability, and to keep the secrets of the House; and each shall appoint all of the employees of his department provided for by law. The Clerk, Sergeant at Arms, and Chief Administrative Officer may be removed by the House or by the Speaker.”

Thus, the Clerk is chosen, qualified, and submitted to the House for a voice vote. The Clerk may be removed either by the entire House or by the Speaker.

**Role of the Committee on House Oversight (CHO).** The CHO has certain responsibilities detailed in Rule X 1.(h) regarding the Clerk, including:

- 1.(h)(1) “Appropriations from accounts for committee salaries and expenses (except for the Committee on Appropriations), House Information Systems, and allowances and expenses of Members, House Officers and administrative offices of the House.”
- 1.(h)(2) “Auditing and settling of all accounts described in subparagraph (1).”
- 1.(h)(3) “Employment of persons by the House, including clerks for Members and committees, and reporters of debates.”
- 1.(h)(6) “Expenditures of accounts described in subparagraph (1).”
- 1.(h)(8) “Matters relating to printing and correction of the Congressional Record.
- 4.(d)(1)(B) “Providing policy direction for, and oversight of, the Clerk, Sergeant-at-Arms, Chief Administrator Officer, and Inspector General”

Despite the inability of the CHO to directly or indirectly hire or remove the Clerk, the CHO has direct oversight of the Clerk. The CHO also has the responsibility to oversee appropriations, personnel decisions, and expenditures of the Clerk.

The CHO provides the following critical functions in relation to the Officers of the House:

- The Officers of the House work together on several administrative areas including issues related to: finance and accounting; purchasing and procurement; technology; media and support services; and human resources. The CHO provides for the oversight to ensure that the Officers work together on key cross organizational issues.
- Rule X 1.(h)(2) provides for the CHO to oversee the audit activities of the House. As such, the CHO functions as an Audit Committee to ensure that the House is accountable for its public funding.
- The CHO ensures that the goals and objectives of the Members in general, and of the Speaker in particular, are met to the extent appropriate, through the activities of the House Officers.
- The CHO operates as a bipartisan committee to provide oversight to each of the Officers. The Rules of the 105<sup>th</sup> Congress continue the initiative of the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress which replaced the House Administration Committee with the Committee on House Oversight. The new name of the Committee reflects the change in philosophy of the Committee from administration by elected officials to oversight of professional administrators by elected officials.

**Role of the Clerk.** The Office of the Clerk has certain responsibilities, detailed in Rule III, regarding its interaction with the CHO and the Speaker, including:

7. "In addition to any other reports required by the Speaker or the Committee on House Oversight, the Clerk shall report to the Committee on House Oversight not later than 45 days following the close of each semiannual period ending on June 30 or on December 31 on the financial and operational status of each function under the jurisdiction of the Clerk. Each report shall include financial statements, a description or explanation of current operations, the implementation of new policies and procedures, and future plans for each function."
8. "The Clerk shall fully cooperate with the appropriate offices and persons in the performance of reviews and audits of financial records and administrative operations."

The Office of the Clerk's specific duties include:

- Prepare the roll of Members-elect.
- Call the Members-elect to order at the commencement of each Congress.
- Accept the credentials of the Members-elect.
- Make the entries and journals of the proceedings of the House, including floor and Committee proceedings.
- Endorse bills passed by the body.

- Read the required papers in the House.
- Receive messages from the President and from the Senate on behalf of the House.
- Distribute House and Senate documents to House staff and distribute House documents to the public.
- Serve as custodian of all House staff and distribute House documents to the public.
- Serve as custodian of all House records and documents.
- Maintain the House voting machine.

The Office of the Clerk has approximately 262 authorized positions for Fiscal Year 1999 and a combined operating budget estimated at \$15,817,000 of which \$11,754,000 is for personnel and \$4,063,000 for non-personnel expenses. The Office of the Clerk is organized into the nine following divisions:

- **Immediate Office of the Clerk.** This office is responsible for day-to-day management of the Office of the Clerk, including all personnel, budget, and operational issues. Responsibilities also include administrative management of the House Page Program; management of vacant congressional offices pursuant to Clause 6, Rule III of the Rules of the House; oversight of duties required of the Clerk for the organization of new Congresses; administrative support for the Office of the Chaplain; and other administrative and informational tasks required by regulation and law.
- **Office of Legislative Operations.** This office is responsible for the Bill and Enrolling Clerks, the Journal Clerks, the Tally Clerks, the Reading Clerks, the Daily Digest Clerk, and the Floor Action Reporting Service. This office receives and processes legislative information introduced in the House including introduced bills and resolutions, House passed measures, and the daily House Journal.
- **Office of Legislative Computer Systems.** The Office of Legislative Computer Systems manages the Electronic Voting System and all other information systems relevant to Clerk operations; electronic formatting and transmission for printing of House committee hearings; and management of the Chamber sound system. This office also serves as the liaison to House Information Resources.
- **Office of Official Reporters.** This office plans, organizes, and manages, official reporting, transcribing, and related functions to produce timely transcripts of congressional proceedings, floor activities, hearing, meetings, markups, and/or caucuses. Prepares committee activity reports for publication in the Congressional Record as it relates to the Daily Digest.

- **Office of Legislative Resource Center (LRC).** This office is the umbrella division for the previously separate offices of Records and Registration, the House Library, the House Historian, and the House Document Room. In particular, it serves as the point of entry and public disclosure center for a variety of statutes, including in part, the Lobbying Disclosure Act and the Ethics in Government Act. LRC is the depository for the official in-house collection of House documents, and serves as the reference center for all information, including printed legislation, pertaining to the House.
- **The House Service Group.** This group is known primarily as House Floor Services. It includes overall operation, management, supervision, and scheduling of the House cloakrooms and administrative support of the House Members' Family Room, Congresswoman's Suite, Member's Reading Room, and the House Prayer Room.
- **The House Page Program.** The responsibilities of this program include administrative management under the direction of the House Page Board. The House Page Program encompasses three components: the House Page School, the Page Residence Hall, and the work program. The overall Program employs youths in the eleventh grade of high school who are nominated by Members. The Pages live and work in Washington, DC near the Capital and assist Members on the Floor.
  - **House Page School.** Provides supervision, organization, and development of the House Page School instructional program to serve the academic needs of the House Pages. Provides daily administration and oversight of House Page school and school personnel.
  - **Page Residence Hall.** Provides overall administration and operation of the Page Residence Hall; coordinates and supervises residence hall tutoring schedules and programs; and provides for the safety, well being, and conduct of the Pages in the Hall.
  - **Page Work Program.** Provides various congressional support roles such as messengers, bench Pages, and assistants in the Speaker's office and cloakrooms of the House. The Chief Page Supervisor oversees legislative support services provided by House Pages to ensure services are carried out in an expeditious and superior manner.
- **Office of House Employment Counsel (OHEC).** OHEC was established in the 104th Congress as a result of the enactment of the Congressional Accountability Act. The office is responsible for providing pre-paid legal services to all House Members, Committees, and Officers in the area of labor and employment law. The office represents the same in litigation, as well as provides counsel, advice, and training in labor related matters.
- **Office of Printing Services (OPS).** This office provides management and administration of the printing and documentation production for the House, including the procurement of printing from the Government Printing Office and other private vendors. Responsibilities include overseeing and managing the Clerk's electronic publications database and publications derived from it, both electronic and printed. OPS provides publication support

on legislative and ad hoc documents for the Clerk of the House via database applications, text processing, record management, and communications software.

**Status of significant Office of the Clerk activities.** Since our prior report, entitled *Opportunities Exist To Improve The Management Of The Office Of The Clerk* (Report No. 96-CLK-14, dated December 31, 1996), we noted the following significant achievements and improvements in the operation of the Office of the Clerk:

- Reductions in personnel and costs including the centralization and reorganization of the Legislative Resource Center.
- Continued progress within the Document Management System, including a reduction in the volume of paper copies requested from the Government Printing Office because of electronic transfer capabilities between the Office of the Clerk and Government Printing Office and the ability of the Document Management System to generate individual documents on request.
- Reduction since the beginning of 104<sup>th</sup> Congress in the historical backlog in the production of the House journal (official documentation of all House proceedings) from six years to less than two years, with goals and plans to eliminate any backlog in the next 12 months.
- Implementation of new voting technology on the House floor, including improvements in the voting card itself, reducing costs and increasing reliability.
- In the process of rebinding over 9,000 priceless volumes of books which chronicle the House's history of over 200 years. Over 1,500 volumes of books have been completed to date. Some of the volumes date back over 200 years.

### **Objective, Scope, And Methodology**

The objective of our review of the Office of the Clerk was to provide an operational assessment of the Office of the Clerk during the 105<sup>th</sup> Congress. We conducted the work during the months of September through November 1998. We examined the adequacy and effectiveness of the operations of the Office of the Clerk in the following areas:

1. Management and direction of each office.
2. Administrative controls.
3. Program procedures and controls over Office of the Clerk operations, including the Immediate Office of the Clerk, Office of Legislative Operations, Office of Legislative Computer Systems, Office of Official Reporters, LRC, The House Services Group, House Page Program, OHEC, and OPS.

We conducted our audit in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Our review included the following steps:

- Entrance interview with the Clerk and Deputy Clerk.
- Interviews and walk-through tours with each Office of the Clerk division head and other Office of the Clerk staff.
- Collection and analysis of documents related to operations, organization, staffing, policies and procedures, performance standards, and prior reviews and audits.
- Survey of employees of the Office of the Clerk and analysis of responses to determine job activities and responsibilities.

### **Internal Controls**

We assessed the control environment, including those over the management and direction of each Office of the Clerk office, administrative functions, and programs. Weaknesses in the internal control environment are described in the “Findings and Recommendations” section of this report.

### **Prior Audit Coverage**

The OIG has conducted a number of audits of the Office of the Clerk. The Exhibit of this report summarizes the current status of all prior Office of the Clerk audit recommendations which had not been previously implemented. These recommendations are contained in the following reports that were issued during the 104<sup>th</sup> and 105<sup>th</sup> Congresses:

OIG audit report, entitled *Improvements Are Needed In The Creation And Distribution Of Documents Within The House* (Report No. 97-CCS-02, dated March 17, 1997). This audit provided an assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of House procedures and policies for the creation and distribution of documents to Members, Committees, and administrative offices. We followed up on four recommendations from this report. We found that all four recommendations were fully implemented.

OIG audit report, entitled *Opportunities Exist To Improve The Management Of The Office Of The Clerk* (Report No. 96-CLK-14, dated December 31, 1996). This audit provided an operational assessment of the management and operations of the Office of the Clerk during the 104th Congress. We followed up on five recommendations from this report. We found that four recommendations were fully implemented and one was otherwise resolved.

OIG audit report, entitled *The House Needs To Integrate Planning And Financial Management To Improve Productivity, Performance, And Accountability* (Report No. 95-CCS-12, dated July 18, 1995). This audit assessed opportunities to improve planning and financial management in the Office of the Clerk. We followed up on two recommendations from this report. We found that one recommendation was partially implemented and the other was superseded by Recommendation A.1 in this report.

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## II. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Finding A: The Clerk's Management Process Could Be Improved**

Opportunities exist to improve the management process within the Office of the Clerk. Specifically, the Clerk should (1) identify a vision and a long-term strategy based on a careful analysis of the office's mission, overall objectives, general strategies, and major resource allocations, (2) establish a senior management position with decision-making authority to oversee the Page Program, (3) establish mechanisms to improve communications with managers and staff, and (4) establish adequate policies and procedures related to areas of vulnerability, which specifically include the proper use of government resources.

The management process is comprised of four basic functions: planning, organizing, directing, and controlling. Each of these fundamental management practices is dependent on the effectiveness of the preceding practice, much like the placement of building blocks—that ultimately are judged on their adequacy as a whole. The success or failure of an organization is dependent upon how well the organization is managed.

### **The Office of the Clerk needs to establish a strategic planning and performance measurement process**

Planning, which is the first step in the management process, consists of establishing goals and objectives in conjunction with one of the most effective planning devices—the budget. Planning requires setting clear goals and then determining the optimum way to achieve those goals. Performance measures are developed and used to evaluate organizational success in meeting these goals. Short-term planning focuses on the activities in the next year and is usually done concurrently with the formulation of the following year's budget. Long-term planning focuses on activities beyond the next year's cycle—typically a 5-year period. Successful planning allows the organization to answer the following questions:

- What is our mission?
- What strategies will we use to accomplish our mission?
- How will we allocate resources to achieve those strategies?
- Have we been successful?

The Office of the Clerk needs to develop a more clear mission statement, identify long-term goals and objectives, and establish performance measures. The Office of the Clerk submits a semi-annual report to the CHO outlining past achievements and future initiatives. However, although future initiatives are outlined, the required resources to accomplish these initiatives have not been documented.

A strategic plan would assist the management of the Office of the Clerk by identifying its long-term (e.g., five year) goals and how those goals will be achieved (i.e., strategies and resources).

It should address long-term goals and objectives related to all aspects of the Office of the Clerk's operations, including document management, media technology and management, Page Program, information technology, financial management and budgeting, acquisitions, performance measures, staffing, recruiting, and training. In addition, as part of the strategic plan, the management of the Office of the Clerk would benefit by developing performance measures to assess performance in relation to goals and objectives. Without a strategic plan the future direction of the Office of the Clerk may not be properly focused and may lose opportunities to improve its operations and better serve the House.

Our prior audit report, entitled *The House Needs To Integrate Planning And Financial Management To Improve Productivity, Performance, And Accountability* (Report No. 96-CLK-14, dated July 18, 1995), identified that the Office of the Clerk lacked a formal strategic planning and performance measurement process to provide vision and direction for the management and operations of the Office of the Clerk. Recommendations were made to establish a strategic planning and performance measurement process. The Clerk fully concurred with the finding and recommendation, however, has made limited progress toward developing a comprehensive strategic planning and performance measurement process.

### **The Page Program needs additional management oversight**

The second step in the management process involves organizing to effectively and efficiently accomplish the plans, goals, and objectives of the organization. An organizational structure should be in place to establish oversight and accountability for all mission-critical activities. Management should ensure that all managers and staff in the organization know their roles relative to their functions. In addition, all personnel should have sufficient authority to exercise the role and responsibility assigned to them.

Overall, the Office of the Clerk has been organized appropriately along functional lines. In addition, during the 105<sup>th</sup> Congress the Office of the Clerk centralized and reorganized the Legislative Resource Center, which established a more effective organizational structure to better serve the needs of the House. However, there is no senior-level manager position with decision-making authority overseeing the Page Program. As a result, important Page Program issues may not be adequately addressed. For example, two management studies<sup>1</sup> have been completed by consultants over the past two years. However, no one in the Office of the Clerk has been assigned the responsibility of tracking the implementation of the studies' recommendations. The Chairperson of the Page Board expressed concern that not enough attention was being given to implementing the recommendations. She stated that the Clerk needs someone on her senior staff in a decision-making position to oversee the Page Program.

The Office of the Clerk had one mid-level manager, who had the responsibility, as a collateral duty, to oversee the Page Program. However, that individual had little or no active involvement in the Page Program. Recently, modifications to this position were made and it is now solely dedicated to overseeing the operation of the Page Program. This action should assist in allowing the position a more active role in the Page Program.

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<sup>1</sup> *O'Neill House Office Building Study* completed by the AoC in June 1997; and *Charting A Future Course For The House Page Program - US House of Representatives Page Program Strategic Planning Project* completed by Andersen Consulting in March 1998.

Nevertheless, because of the visibility of the Page Program and the unique responsibility for ensuring the safety and well-being of the young people in the program, the Office of the Clerk needs to act to eliminate confusion related to program responsibilities, and implement procedures to improve senior management oversight in the Page Program.

### **Improvement in communications within the Office of the Clerk is needed**

Directing is the managerial process that provides the leadership and motivation to ensure that individuals within the organization clearly understand and support the planned goals and objectives within the established organizational structure. Communications is the most important ingredient to successful leadership and direction.

While most managers were generally satisfied with the leadership and direction from the Clerk, some managers and a number of staff members expressed disappointment about the level of communication from the Clerk. According to one manager, the Clerk has not held a staff meeting in over a year. The concern about not having staff meetings was also echoed by several other staff members. The Clerk agreed that improvements in office communications would be beneficial. Without adequate communication throughout the organization, teamwork, staff morale, and overall quality of service to the House suffers.

### **Policies and procedures related to areas of vulnerability need to be established**

The last step in the management process involves setting up control mechanisms. By doing so, management acquires the ability to ensure that its plans, goals, and objectives are achieving desired results. Establishing policies and procedures is critical to establishing adequate control mechanisms. Management should assume full responsibility for formulating, developing, documenting, and promulgating policies covering general aims and directions. In addition, compliance procedures for ethical, security, and internal control standards should be established by top management.

The Clerk has issued policies and procedures that cover most administrative activities within the Office of the Clerk. In addition, the Clerk requires all employees to acknowledge the receipt and review of the policies and procedures, which include: (1) *Clerk's Office Supplemental Policies And Procedures* (dated July 1996), which are supplemental to the House Rules or applicable law, and include primarily personnel-related policies and procedures; (2) *Officer's and Inspector General Leave Policies and Procedures Manual*, dated March 1996; (3) *House Ethics Manual*, dated April 1992, and (4) *Rules of the House of Representatives*, dated January 1998, and (5) *Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, Computer Policies and Procedures*.

While the Office of the Clerk has established general policies and procedures, it has not established adequate policies and procedures related to certain particularly vulnerable areas. There are little or no policy and procedures governing the proper use of government vehicles, charge cards, computer equipment, and other government resources. Specifically, there is no guidance prohibiting personal use of such resources. Without adequate policies and procedures in this area, the Office of the Clerk is vulnerable to abuse and misuse.

For example, the Office of the Clerk has three official vehicles assigned to the office—for Page activities and for delivering and picking up documents and other materials to and from other government agencies, such as the Government Printing Office and the White House. The Clerk issued two memorandums, the first on November 12, 1997 and the second on August 28, 1998, to her staff on the care and operation of these official vehicles. However, the memorandums only cover safety, maintenance, and administrative issues relative to the use of these vehicles. They did not cover the authorized purposes for which the vehicles are allowed to be used.

As another example, the Office of the Clerk has two charge cards—an American Express card for official travel and an Exxon card for gas and maintenance of the Office of Clerk's government vehicles. However, there are no policies and procedures governing the proper use of these government charge cards.

The Office of the Clerk does have a manual on computer policies and procedures, which addresses the care, protection, and security of personal computers and the Office of the Clerk's local area network. In addition, it addresses restrictions regarding the use of the Internet. However, the manual does not address personal use of computers. Also, the manual has not incorporated CHO approved information systems security and systems development life cycle (SDLC) policies and procedures.

### **Recommendations**

We recommend that Clerk:

1. Establish a comprehensive strategic planning process to identify Office of the Clerk's long-term (e.g., five year) goals, determine the optimum way to achieve those goals, and identify performance measures to be used to measure organization's success in meeting these goals.
2. Assign clear responsibility for the Page Program to a position at the Assistant Clerk level or above to oversee its management and operations.
3. Establish mechanisms to improve communications with managers and staff.
4. Develop and implement more comprehensive policies and procedures regarding the proper use of official vehicles, charge cards, and computers; and adopt CHO approved information systems security and SDLC policies and procedures.

### **Management Response**

On November 9, 1998, the Clerk concurred with this finding and the recommendations (see Appendix). According to the response, the Clerk agreed to (1) further develop complete strategic plans, goals, and management systems in support of the Office of the Clerk, (2) more clearly define for the Page Board the assignment of responsibilities related to the House Page Program within the Immediate Office of the Clerk, (3) better develop communications within the management structures of the Office of the Clerk, and (4) better define policies related to the use of official resources.

**Office of Inspector General Comments**

The actions planned are responsive to the issues identified and, when fully implemented, should satisfy the intent of the recommendations. However, we have requested that the Clerk provide us, by January 15, 1999, with target completion dates for implementing the four recommendations.

**Finding B: Coordination of the House Floor Sound and Related Systems Should be Reviewed by the Clerk and CAO to Improve Future Operation**

The Office of the Clerk operates an in-house audio system which supports House Floor activities while the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer operates a similar system that supports visual and audio feed for a 24-hour televised external service when the House is in session. As structured there is duplication of some activities and improved coordination might be achieved if the entire House Floor sound and related broadcast systems were under the control of one manager. Furthermore, there is no formal service level agreement between the two offices which delineates necessary procedures and responsibilities.

The Office of the Clerk is responsible for management and operation of support legislative activities on the House Floor. While the Office of the Clerk controls the internal audio system on the House Floor, the television cameras and other audio equipment used to provide the external video feed are maintained and operated by CAO employees from the Media and Support Services unit.

While the paper text (*Congressional Record*) is clearly the official record of the House, the visual picture is the popular record. House proceedings are currently available through the Office of the Clerk. As well, the archival research copies are forwarded by the Clerk to the Library of Congress and the National Archives as part of the House historical collection.

In January 1995, the House administrative functions were formally reorganized, and the Office of the Clerk was delegated responsibility for administrative activities of the legislative process. The newly formed CAO was delegated responsibility for non-legislative administrative functions of the House. In this re-organization, control of the House Recording and Television Studio was re-assigned from the Office of the Clerk to the CAO due to the high level of customer service provided by the studio to Members relative to radio and satellite feeds (not related to the House Floor), which was deemed to fall under the CAO's jurisdiction. The House Floor sound system was transferred to the Clerk from the Architect of the Capitol on September 26, 1996.

As a result of these actions, control over the House Floor sound system and the television cameras/related sound system continues under two separate managers. This division of activities has raised issues relative to the need, possibility or benefit of operating these systems under a single manager. Furthermore, there is no service level agreement between the two offices which delineates the necessary coordination procedures, integration of communication activities, and management and staff responsibilities.

**Recommendation**

We recommend that the Clerk and CAO jointly assess the feasibility of re-assigning the operation of the House Floor camera and audio systems under a single manager. If transferring offices or employees does not prove feasible, the Office of the Clerk and CAO should formalize communication procedures relative to House Floor operations and scheduling to avoid the possibility of errors or service failures.

**Management Response**

On November 9, 1998, the Clerk concurred with this finding and recommendation (see Appendix). According to the response, the Clerk will work with the CAO for improved operation of the House Floor cameras focusing on the current staffing structure and the possibility of transferring resources to the Clerk.

**Office of Inspector General Comments**

The action planned is responsive to the issue identified and, when fully implemented, should satisfy the intent of the recommendation. However, we have requested that the Clerk provide us, by January 15, 1999, with a target completion date for implementing this recommendation.

**Finding C: The Condition Of Page Accommodations Needs To Be Addressed**

There are conflicting statements concerning the safety and appropriateness of the existing Page accommodations. A number of managers and staff interviewed raised concerns regarding the condition of the O'Neill building, particularly with regard to its use as Page housing. In addition, contradictory expert reports exist which lead us to believe that there is uncertainty regarding the appropriateness of housing Pages in the current facility.

The Office of the Clerk has administrative responsibility for the Page Program and works with the Page Board and CHO to design, implement, and manage a safe, educational, and valuable program which benefits both the Pages and the House. The Clerk, on behalf of the House, also acts *in loco parentis* to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of program participants, who are all minors, during their stay in Washington, DC.

**There are conflicting statements concerning the safety and appropriateness of the existing Page accommodations**

A number of managers and staff interviewed raised concerns regarding the safety of the O'Neill building, particularly with regard to its use as Page housing. To corroborate these concerns, our review of previous analyses demonstrated that there are conflicting statements concerning the safety and appropriateness of the existing Page accommodations within the O'Neill Building. The Architect of the Capitol (AoC) issued an internal report in 1997 which stated:

*“In terms of economic, functional and aesthetic considerations, the O’Neill HOB should be torn down and replaced. Even though the structural system would probably provide adequate support for normal office use and for other less demanding uses such as residential/hotel, meetings and training, present mechanical and electrical systems are totally out of date and cannot be redeemed. Present-day building code requirements, OSHA standards and accessibility guidelines under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are not being met. As examples, fire egress stair dimensions are improper and related signage and signaling systems need improvement. Also, indoor air quality needs improvement. Any serious attempt at renovation would trigger full compliance with all codes and standards; this would necessitate a full building renovation at substantial cost. The result would still be highly compromised space use and flexibility as well as systems that would be poorly configured and integrated, mainly due to the limitations of the structural system and minimal floor-to-floor dimension throughout.”*

A second report, issued in 1998, prepared by an independent consultant conducting an overall assessment of the Page program and based on an AoC official claiming: *“The building is absolutely safe”*, concluded that *“the accommodations, while old, are sufficient to provide a safe and secure living environment.”*

The Clerk concluded that the O'Neill Building is not a risk to the Page Program based on the most recent 1998 consultant report. Since that time no further analyses have been conducted.

**Recommendation:**

We recommend that the Clerk work with the AoC and House Building Commission to conduct a definitive analysis of Page housing (with appropriate technical and professional support by independent engineering and real estate resources) specifically addressing the safety, security issues, and fitness of purpose of the O'Neill building for Page accommodations.

**Management Response**

On November 9, 1998, the Clerk concurred with this finding and recommendation (see Appendix). According to the response, the Clerk will seek a study by the appropriate authorities (AoC, the House Building Commission, and outside experts) in an effort to identify any risks so needed actions can be documented and appropriate steps can be taken.

**Office of Inspector General Comments**

The action planned is responsive to the issue identified and, when fully implemented, should satisfy the intent of the recommendation. However, we have requested that the Clerk provide us, by January 15, 1999, with a target completion date for implementing this recommendation.

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**EXHIBIT**

**Status Of Implementation Of Prior Audit Report Recommendations**

Recommendation Number	RECOMMENDATIONS ACTIONS COMPLETED TO DATE ACTIONS NEEDED FOR CLOSURE	STATUS TARGET DATE
<b>Audit Report No. 97-CCS-02, entitled <i>Improvements Are Needed In The Creation And Distribution Of Documents Within The House</i>, dated March 17, 1997:</b>		
B	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> We recommend that the Clerk and the Chief Administrative Officer develop a proposal, for approval by the Committee on House Oversight, to establish a centralized legislative and non-legislative document control system which would (a) provide all House offices with a list of categories and types of documents available within the House and give all House offices the opportunity to request needed documents, (b) disseminate completed document requests to the Committee and offices responsible for creating documents so that House offices are placed on appropriate document distribution schedules, and (c) provide House offices only those documents requested through the document control system.</p> <p><b>ACTIONS COMPLETED TO DATE:</b> The Clerk has taken several steps by consolidating offices, employees and functions with a view to centralizing legislative document distribution. In addition, instructions have been posted on the Intranet and Internet on the process for congressional offices and the public to obtain various official publications, forms, and information. The dissemination duties of the House Historian, House Library, Records and Registration, etc. have all been consolidated into one public dissemination point—the Legislative Resource Center.</p>	Actions Completed
C2	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> We recommend that the Clerk train the Journal Clerks on how to insert information from the Congressional Record into the Daily Journal.</p> <p><b>ACTIONS COMPLETED TO DATE:</b> Various electronic formats and programs have been developed and deployed to assist the Journal clerks in the creation of the House Journal. Currently, the journal clerks have access to the electronic version of the Congressional Record and cut out everything but the Parliamentary processes for inclusion in the House Journal. However, the clerks still sit in on the House floor while they are in session and record longhand, in a journal, all of the Parliamentary processes. This longhand recordation serves two purposes, (1) as a cross-check of the Congressional record, and (2) to continue a tradition which began in the 1700's of keeping a longhand journal of Parliamentary processes. Publication of the House Journal is almost current.</p>	Actions Completed
C3	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> We recommend that the Clerk revise the current House Journal production process to reduce the proofreading requirement.</p> <p><b>ACTIONS COMPLETED TO DATE:</b> The duplicative proofing procedures described in the finding have been eliminated, as the softbound copy of the House Journal has been eliminated.</p>	Actions Completed
D1	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> We recommend that the Clerk of the House continue to maintain a Member database for the House and provide the Chief Administrative Officer access to this database for administrative uses.</p> <p><b>ACTIONS COMPLETED TO DATE:</b> The Office of Legislative Computer Systems (an office within the Office of the Clerk) has developed a common electronic tracking list for the official list of Members, etc. This list is the formal and</p>	Actions Completed

**EXHIBIT**

Recommendation Number	RECOMMENDATIONS ACTIONS COMPLETED TO DATE ACTIONS NEEDED FOR CLOSURE	STATUS TARGET DATE
	official list of the House and is available on the House intranet and internet services. Other offices may or may not still maintain their own separate lists; however, this list is the official list of the House.	
<b>Audit Report No. 96-CLK-14, entitled <i>Opportunities Exist To Improve The Management Of the Office of The Clerk</i>, dated December 31, 1996:</b>		
A	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> We recommend that the Clerk evaluates the staffing levels by conducting a position management study of the two cloak rooms and develop a proposal, for approval by the Committee on House Oversight, to eliminate the following positions, if supported by the evaluation: (1) the assistant manager position in each cloak room; (2) a maintenance position in each cloakroom; and (3) the assistant food manager or food manager position in each cloakroom.</p> <p><b>ACTIONS COMPLETED TO DATE:</b> A personnel reorganization was submitted to the Committee on House Oversight to adjust position/pay grades. This reorganization acknowledged the Office of Inspector General (OIG) recommendation and the Clerk’s review on the need for personnel. The Committee on House Oversight approved the Clerk’s proposal on May 8, 1998. The approved reorganization did not result in a staff reduction. The Clerk notes that this recommendation was made while the House was not in session, and therefore, the recommending body was unable to observe the personnel “in action”.</p>	Actions Completed
B	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> We recommend that the Clerk perform a position management study to review the OGC staffing and develop a proposal, for approval by the Committee on House Oversight, to restructure the staffing of the OGC and eliminate at least the Paralegal position.</p> <p><b>ACTIONS COMPLETED TO DATE:</b> The OGC was transferred and became an independent office (no longer part of the Office of the Clerk) on September 1, 1997.</p>	Otherwise Resolved
C	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> We recommend that the Clerk perform a more detailed study of the Page Program to further quantify and refine the economic impacts associated with Page room and board, and submit a proposal to the Page Board for their review and action. The study should consider whether the \$300 amount Pages pay per month for room and board should be increased, and if so, by how much.</p> <p><b>ACTIONS COMPLETED TO DATE:</b> A consultant reviewed the House Page Program through the Winter/Spring 1997-1998. The report reviewed this specific recommendation. The study concluded that several options were available, but concluded an increase in fees would result in pressures to increase the Page pay levels. The Page Board reviewed this recommendation on March 26, 1998, and again on September 16, 1998. During both meetings the Board re-affirmed its desire not to increase the fee above the current \$300 level.</p>	Actions Completed
D	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> We recommend that the Clerk perform a more detailed study of the Page School staffing levels and submit a proposal to the Page Board for their review and action. The study should weigh the effects of increasing the ratio of students to teachers against potential cost savings.</p> <p><b>ACTIONS COMPLETED TO DATE:</b> In response to the OIG study and the desire to identify other Page program issues/options, a consultant reviewed the House Page Program through the</p>	Actions Completed

**EXHIBIT**

Recommendation Number	RECOMMENDATIONS ACTIONS COMPLETED TO DATE ACTIONS NEEDED FOR CLOSURE	STATUS TARGET DATE
	<p>Winter/Spring 1997-1998. The report reviewed this specific recommendation. The study concluded that several options were available relative to Page School staffing and highlighted the need to increase the teaching/exposure time of the teaching staff to the Pages and that reductions in the teaching resources would have a detrimental impact on the quality of education provided by the school. The Page Board reviewed this issue and the OIG recommendation on March 26, 1998, and again on September 16, 1998. During both meetings the Board re-affirmed its desire to maintain the teaching strategy in an effort to increase the amount of time the teaching staff spends with the Page class.</p>	
OM	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> We recommend that the Clerk work with the Chief Administrative Officer and the Sergeant at Arms to establish a consistent system for tracking and managing the implementation of prior audit recommendations.</p> <p><b>ACTIONS COMPLETED TO DATE:</b> The Clerk is currently using the tracking system provided by the OIG.</p>	Actions Completed
<p><b>Audit Report No. 95-CCS-12, entitled <i>The House Needs To Integrate Planning And Financial Management To Improve Productivity, Performance, And Accountability</i>, dated July 18, 1995:</b></p>		
A	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> We recommend that the Chief Administrative Officer, in conjunction with the Clerk of the House and the Sergeant at Arms, develop a proposal, for approval by the Committee on House Oversight, to implement policies and procedures to established a coordinated, strategic planning, and performance measurement process.</p>	Superseded by Recommendation A1. in this report
B	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> We recommend that the Chief Administrative Officer, in conjunction with the Clerk of the House and Sergeant at Arms, develop a proposal, for approval by the Committee on House Oversight, to integrate budget formulation and financial management into the planning process.</p> <p><b>ACTIONS COMPLETED TO DATE:</b> The Office of the Clerk works with the CAO in budget formulation and the budget is submitted to the CAO with a semi-annual report. The existing process does not formally address strategic planning nor does it specifically take account of new initiatives.</p> <p><b>ACTIONS NEEDED FOR CLOSURE:</b> Work with the CAO staff to develop an integrated budget formulation and financial management/planning process.</p>	<p>Limited Progress</p> <p>To be determined</p>

ROBIN H. CARLE  
CLERK

JEFF TRANDAHL  
DEPUTY CLERK

Office of the Clerk  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-6601

November 9, 1998

Mr. John Lainhart  
Inspector General  
H2-485, Ford House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear John:

Attached please find a copy of my official responses to the three findings in your office's audit of my operations entitled, *Improvements are Needed in the Management and Operations of the Office of the Clerk*.

I hope you find this list complete. Should you have any questions or thoughts, please feel free to get back in touch with me.

With warm regards,

  
Robin H. Carle

Attachment

ROBIN H. CARLE  
CLERK

JEFF TRANDAHL  
DEPUTY CLERK

**Office of the Clerk**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-6601**

**November 9, 1998**

**Responses to Draft Audit Report Entitled**  
***Improvements are Needed in the Management and Operations***  
***of the Office of the Clerk***

**Finding A — Clerk's Management Process**

1. Concur: The Clerk concurs with the recommendation to further develop complete strategic plans, goals and management systems in support of the Offices of the Clerk.
2. Concur: The Clerk concurs with the recommendation to more clearly define for the Page Board the assignment of responsibilities related to the House Page Program within the Immediate Office of the Clerk.
3. Concur: The Clerk concurs to better develop communications within the management structures of the Offices of the Clerk.
4. Concur: The Clerk concurs with recommendations to better define policies related to the use of official resources.

**Finding B --- Control of House Cameras**

Concur: The Clerk will work with the CAO for improved operation of the House Floor cameras focusing on the current staffing structure and the possibility of transferring resources to the Clerk.

**Finding C --- Page Accommodations**

Concur: In light of the potentially conflicting information provided by the AoC in this finding, the Clerk concurs on the need to review the structural safety of the Page Residence Hall. The Clerk will seek a study by the appropriate authorities (AoC, the House Building Commission and outside experts) in an effort to identify any risks so needed actions can be documented and appropriate steps/authorization for implementation taken.