



OFFICE OF THE CLERK
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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**Deputy Clerk
U.S. House of Representatives**

Introduction

Good governance is an essential element to the attainment of sustainable development.

To ensure good governance, including transparency and accountability of institutions, and effective law and policy making,

Members of parliaments, their staff and the public need access to legislative and legal information.

Introduction (cont'd)

Today, access to any information that can help accelerate sustainable development, and particularly legislative and legal information, needs to be available online.

**This is an absolute requirement.
Public institutions can no longer publish paper only.**

Introduction (cont'd)

Parliament data should be:

- **Easily accessible**
- **Accurate**
- **Complete**
- **Described**
- **Free**
- **Permanent**
- **Searchable**
- **Timely**
- **Reusable**
- **Machine-Readable**

Introduction (cont'd)

Every parliament has the shared, ongoing challenges of

- **preparing,**
- **managing,**
- **distributing and**
- **archiving its official documents**

both on **paper and in **digital** formats.**

Introduction (cont'd)

Today's challenge is no longer

“*will* parliaments have publicly available documents”

but rather

**“*how do* parliaments and legislative bodies
modernize their systems and workflows to utilize
today's newer technologies**

to help citizens access

***free and timely* legislative and legal information ?”**

Challenge

**Parliaments should examine their
policies and practices
so that they can
support online access
to parliamentary documents such as bills,
amendments, votes and proceedings, in
structured and machine-readable formats.**

Challenge (cont'd)

A Parliament's policies and practices should support publishing documents in structured machine-readable formats.

Machine-readable formats: SGML, JSON and XML.

These are different from traditional word processing documents and portable document format (PDF) files, which are generally difficult for machines to interpret.

Challenge (cont'd)

The House's preferred standard is XML.

XML is a markup language that defines a set of rules for encoding documents in a format that is both **human-readable and **machine-readable**.**

An XML document has a structure that lends itself to automated analyses; it is not meant to just display information on a screen or on paper for “publishing” purposes, but rather for **automated “processing” of information.**

Challenge (cont'd)

Element

```
<recorded-vote>  
  <legislator name-id="C001101" party="D">  
    Ms. Clark</legislator>  
    <vote>Yea</vote>  
  </recorded-vote>
```

Attribute

```
<recorded-vote>  
  <legislator name-id="B001250" party="R">  
    Mr. Bishop</legislator>  
    <vote>Yea</vote>  
  </recorded-vote>
```

Policy issues

In 2011, the rules of the US House of Representatives for the 112th Congress called for **greater transparency and accessibility** to legislative documents.

The intention of the change was to place **electronic distribution on par with traditional printing.**

Policy issues (cont'd)

On June 1, 2012 House Report 112-511 that accompanied H.R. 5882 Legislative Branch Appropriations Act of 2013 directed the establishment of the House Bulk Data Task Force to examine **increased dissemination** of congressional information via **bulk data** download by non-governmental groups supporting openness and transparency in the legislative process.

Policy issues (cont'd)

The **Bulk Data Task Force** is a **partnership** of representatives from the various **Legislative Branch Agencies** such as:

- **House of Representatives,**
- **Senate,**
- **Library of Congress,**
- **Government Publishing Office,**
- **Government Accounting Office**

that work in a cooperative manner to coordinate and accomplish **openness** and **transparency goals**.

Civil society organizations also participate.

Policy (cont'd)

**The House uses data standards
as a part of its IT strategy.**

**The standard use of XML was implemented in
1997 by the US House and US Senate.**

Policy (cont'd)

Moving away from our own XML structure where possible.

U.S. Code now available in the XML schema called USLM (United States Legislative Markup). It was designed to be consistent with the XML Akoma Ntoso standard to the extent practicable.

In 2013, when USLM was designed, some structures of the U.S. Code were not handled by the Akoma Ntoso standard.

Policy (cont'd)

Akoma Ntoso is an international open document standard for parliamentary, legislative and judicial documents currently going through the **OASIS** standardization process.

It was initially developed by the **United Nations** in the context of a program aimed at supporting Parliaments to adopt modern information technologies.

Policy (cont'd)

Benefits of a single standard:

- **Reuse** and transformation of source documents into other formats ensuring consistency and quality
- **Improved data exchange** internally or across borders
- **Decrease amount of human error in drafting**
- **Long term preservation** of parliamentary documentation
- **More accurate search capabilities**

Policy (cont'd)

Benefits of a single standard (cont'd)

- Improved time for printers to process the document
- Easier tracking of document versions
- Unprecedented level of possibilities for **data analysis**. Interpretation and visual representation of content.
- **Wider multichannel dissemination** of information through different media, as well as facilitated access for persons with disabilities.

Implementation

More data and documents online and over time, in bulk and machine-readable format using XML standards.

Early projects:

- **2001 drafting bills and resolutions in XML**
- **2003 House votes in XML on the web**
- **2004 posting XML files on the web**
- **2011 House floor proceedings in XML .**

Implementation (cont'd)

Recent / current projects:

- **2012 - 2013 docs.house.gov**

Provides access to legislative proposals (bills and resolutions) at a crucial point in the House legislative process that was not available to Members, staff and the public previously.

Implementation (cont'd)

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying "http://docs.house.gov/". The page title is "Document Repository". The main heading reads "U.S. House of Representatives Document Repository". Below the heading are two large rectangular banners. The left banner is dark blue with the text "BILLS TO BE CONSIDERED" in white serif font, and "on the House Floor" in a smaller, italicized white serif font below it. The right banner is teal with the text "U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE REPOSITORY" in white serif font, with a large "C" at the start of "COMMITTEE". Below the banners are four horizontal lines, each followed by a text label: "Office of the Clerk", "Majority Leader", "Committee on Rules", and "Help / About this Website".

U.S. House of Representatives
Document Repository

BILLS TO BE CONSIDERED
on the House Floor

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE REPOSITORY

Office of the Clerk Majority Leader Committee on Rules Help / About this Website

Implementation (cont'd)

Recent / current projects:

- **2013 Bills in bulk**
- **2014 Bill Summaries in bulk**
- **2014 Member data in XML**
- **2014 Data Challenges**
- **2015 Bill Status in bulk (*coming soon*).**

Implementation (cont'd)

While not an official record, [video](#) helps to tell the story of the House and its committees:

- **2010: House Proceedings Video – [HouseLive.gov](#)**
- **2012: Committee Video – centralized strategy for webcasting committee video proceedings and provides consistent public access and archiving on [Congress.gov](#).**

Implementation (cont'd)

LEGISLATIVE DAY OF JUNE 16, 2015 - Jun 16th, 2015 - Mozilla Firefox
houselive.gov/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=11276

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
OFFICE OF THE CLERK



00:00:34 / 09:49:54

LEGISLATIVE DAY OF JUNE 16, 2015

Index Share Download

- The House convened, starting a new legislative day.
- The Speaker designated the Honorable Randy Hultgren to act as Speaker pro tempore for today.
- MORNING-HOUR DEBATE - The House proceeded with Morning-Hour Debate. At the conclusion of Morning-Hour, the House will recess until 12:00 p.m. for the start of legislative business.
- The Speaker announced that the House do now recess. The next meeting is scheduled for 12:00 P.M. today.
- The House convened, returning from a recess continuing the legislative day of June 16.

Floor Summary ▼

LEGISLATIVE DAY OF JUNE 16, 2015
114TH CONGRESS - FIRST SESSION

The House adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on June 17, 2015.

On motion to adjourn Agreed to by voice vote.

Mr. Gohmert moved that the House do now adjourn.

SPECIAL ORDER SPEECHES - The House resumed Special Order speeches.

Mr. Burgess filed a report from the Committee on Rules on [H. Res. 319](#).

SPECIAL ORDER SPEECHES - The House has concluded all anticipated legislative business and has proceeded to Special Order speeches.

ONE MINUTE SPEECHES - The House proceeded with further one minute speeches.

The Clerk was authorized to correct section numbers, punctuation, and cross references, and to make other necessary technical and conforming corrections in the engrossment of [H.R. 2596](#).

Motion to reconsider laid on the table Agreed to without objection.

On passage Passed by recorded vote: 247 - 178 ([Roll no. 369](#)).

On motion to recommit with instructions Failed by recorded vote: 183 - 240 ([Roll no. 368](#)).

The previous question on the motion to recommit with instructions was ordered without objection.

Floor summary: DEBATE - The House proceeded with 10 minutes of debate on the Dingell motion to recommit with instructions. The instructions contained in the motion seek to require the bill to be reported back to the House with an amendment to require the Director of National Intelligence to share with all appropriate federal agencies all information on new and constantly changing threats used by terrorists to evade airport screening and to update the terrorist watch list. Amendment also requires the Director of National Intelligence, in coordination with the heads of each element of the intelligence community, to prioritize efforts and dedicate sufficient resources to uncover and foil attempts to steal the private personal information of all Americans.

Mrs. Dingell moved to recommit with instructions to the Committee on Intelligence (Permanent).

The House adopted the amendment in the nature of a substitute as agreed to by the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

The previous question was ordered pursuant to the rule.

The House rose from the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union to report [H.R. 2596](#).

Implementation (cont'd)

Redesign of the THOMAS system by the Library of Congress.

Combining the functions of the internal Legislative Information System (LIS) with THOMAS the public system.

One system for everyone (Members, staff, and the public) at [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov)

Implementation (cont'd)

The screenshot shows the top portion of the CONGRESS.GOV website. At the top is a browser address bar with the URL https://www.congress.gov. Below the address bar are navigation links for LOC.GOV, CONGRESS.GOV, and COPYRIGHT.GOV, along with the LIBRARY OF CONGRESS logo. The main header features the CONGRESS.GOV logo, a 'Looking for LIS?' link, and a 'Sign In' button. A navigation menu includes links for Legislation, Congressional Record, Committees, Members, Browse, About, Glossary, Resources, Help, and Contact Us. A search bar is prominently displayed with a dropdown menu set to 'Current Legislation' and a search query: 'Examples: hr5, sres9, "health care"'. To the right of the search bar are links for 'Advanced' and 'Tips'. Below the search bar, there are two columns of content. The left column is titled 'Most-Viewed Bills | Top 10' and lists three bills: H.R.1314 [114th] Trade Act of 2015, H.R.213 [114th] Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act of 2015, and H.R.2546 [114th] Firearm Risk Protection Act of 2015. The right column is titled 'Bill Searches and Lists' and includes links for 'Search by Number', 'Introduced [114th] | Active Legislation (Senate.gov)', 'Public Laws | U.S. Code', 'Appropriations | CRS Appropriations Status Table', and 'Give Feedback'.

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Current Legislation

Examples: hr5, sres9, "health care"

Advanced | Tips

Most-Viewed Bills | [Top 10](#)

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THANK YOU

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