

## Recommendation C from the Congressional Data Task Force Report about House Information Websites Submitted to the Committee on Appropriations on June 30, 2023

### *C. Support improvements related to data modernization and data exchange*

The legislative process is complex and complicated; however, strategies around centralized data sources make it easier for website managers from the legislative branch to tell the story of Congress and make information available to Members, staff, and the public.

The legislative process is a paper-driven one, and our collective challenge is to continue to build a digital layer to centuries-old print-based lawmaking processes. Legislative branch organizations working together as the Congressional Data Task Force have made great progress, but collectively and individually we have more work to do in building and distributing congressional data. Several of our successes are documented in our reports, highlighted in our meetings, and included in the Congress.gov report prepared in response to the directives included in House Report 117-389 and the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023.<sup>1</sup>

Again, more work is needed, and we suggest the House:

- **Adopt a federated data governance framework.** Like the agreements used by the Legislative Branch XML Technical Working Group to manage and approve changes to the XML schemas, the House needs a more formal framework related to data governance.<sup>2</sup> A federated data governance framework would continue to support key principles of the Task Force, such as accountability, transparency, data standards, and best practices. It would also assist all staff managing data across the House by encouraging best practices and providing tools and resources;
- **Adopt strategies that continue to support the existing publishing streams** and organizational responsibilities related to House data as it flows to Congress.gov and GovInfo. For instance, not all business units across the House should have to manage publicly available APIs (application programming interfaces) and API public key infrastructure. For publicly available APIs, the House should evaluate the feasibility of using existing API functionality provided by GPO given they fall within the scope of publishing. For internal data exchange across House and legislative branch organizations, data sources managed internally in the House should be exposed and well documented as that provides more flexibility and interoperability choices among the various systems; and
- **Continue to support current and future initiatives** including:
  - The United States Legislative Markup (USLM) road map included in reports from the Clerk of the House about adopting standardized formats for legislative documents.<sup>3</sup>
  - Improvements in the data exchange between the Office of the Clerk’s Legislative Information Management System (LIMS) and Congress.gov. Modernizing LIMS includes modernizing

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<sup>1</sup> For presentation slides, videos, and notes from Congressional Data Task Force meetings, see <https://usgpo.github.io/innovation/events/>.

<sup>2</sup> The Legislative Branch XML Working Group updated their guidelines on how they manage the USLM schema, which is outlined in an April 17, 2023, report submitted to the Committee on House Administration and available at <https://usgpo.github.io/innovation/resources/reports/Clerk-QR10-Standardized-Formats.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> See <https://usgpo.github.io/innovation/resources/reports/Clerk-QR10-Standardized-Formats.pdf>.

- several data sources that are delivered to Congress.gov and other legislative branch data partners including House organizations, GPO, and the Senate.
- Improvements in the data exchange between the Senate (Senate Sergeant at Arms and Secretary of the Senate) and Congress.gov.
  - Work in progress or proposed by cross-organizational efforts or working groups of the Task Force to include a) the Congressional Video Preservation and Access Technical Working Group, b) the Legislative Branch XML Technical Working Group, c) the working group on Digitization of Congressional Documents, (d) the Legislative Branch Data Interchange Working Group, and (e) the working group on a legislative branch-wide Online Staff Directory.