



The Select Committee’s Recommendations to Increase Staff Capacity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Retaining experienced and diverse staff and providing them with the tools necessary to succeed in their roles will strengthen member offices, committees, and help Congress reclaim its full Article I responsibilities. These reforms will ultimately result in a more effective institution for the American people.

In the 116th Congress, the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress (“Select Committee”) adopted several recommendations designed to improve recruitment, diversity, and retention ([Select Committee report, Chapter 3, “Improve Congressional Capacity”](#)).

The Select Committee continues that work in the 117th Congress. The hearing titled [“Improving Staff Professional Development, Increasing Retention And Competing For Top Talent”](#) explored tools the House could employ to make long-term career in Congress more palatable for staff. The Select Committee also held a hearing titled, [“Recruiting, Empowering and Retaining A Diverse Congressional Staff”](#) to examine ways to bolster staff diversity on Capitol Hill.

On July 29th, the Select Committee advanced the following recommendations to increase staff capacity and diversity:

1. **Personalized Job Training & Management Skills:** Supervisors should receive formal, personalized management training that includes, but is not limited to, management skills, strategic planning, cultural competency, and how to support an inclusive work environment. Additionally, training offerings should include opportunities for ongoing one-on-one skills coaching.
2. **Update and Align Staff Benefits to Increase Retention:** The House should establish and maintain a “Task Force on the House Workforce,” led by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and comprised of the Office of House Employment Counsel, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Office of Employee Assistance, House Wellness Center, and any other House office as may be necessary to make ongoing policy recommendations on updating benefits to increase retention.
3. **Real Time Payroll Information:** The House should create a searchable database of anonymized average staff compensation information, by position, using available information on staff salaries and payroll data.



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4. **Mentorship Match Program:** The House should initiate and facilitate a formal mentorship program for matching more experienced staff interested in serving as mentors to less experienced staff seeking mentors.
5. **Professional Certifications:** The House should allow Member, committee, and leadership (MCL) offices to pay for certain professional development opportunities for staff that include a certification.
6. **Onboarding Information:** The CAO should provide offices with an expanded standard onboarding packet that includes comprehensive information on available resources and benefits.
7. **Employee Assistance for Contract Employees:** Where feasible, the House should work with contractors to ensure they provide their Capitol campus employees assistance services comparable to those offered by the House through the Office of Employee Assistance.
8. **Supporting the Office of Employee Assistance:** The Office of Employee Assistance (OEA) should seek to retain a diverse workforce, offer access to bilingual services, and retain staff capable of providing the various forms of trauma services. OEA should be allocated additional resources to provide outreach and awareness of services.
9. **Tuition Assistance:** The House should expand the Student Loan Repayment Program to include a Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) that assists House employees in paying for higher education programs. Participation in a House TAP should include a retention requirement set by the participant's employing office.
10. **Talent Acquisition Software:** The CAO should provide access to industry-leading talent acquisition software to assist House offices in managing their recruitment and hiring process.
11. **Collecting Demographic Data:** The CAO should work with the ODI to improve the collection of anonymized demographic data through an optional form at staff onboarding that requests a broad range of data including but not limited to race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, veteran status, geography and disability for House staff and interns.



The Select Committee's Recommendations on Internships and Fellowships

Congressional internships serve as a key source of talent recruitment and as an extremely educational experience for many Americans. However, low intern stipends make it challenging for some to participate in these experiences, especially those in economically disadvantaged or historically underrepresented groups.

That is why the Select Committee has explored ways to ensure that these experiences are more accessible and educational for all interns by examining stipends and management practices within offices.

In a hearing titled, "[Professionalizing & Enriching The Congressional Internship And Fellowship Experience](#)" the Select Committee examined how Congress could expand and strengthen internship programs. On July 29th, the Select Committee advanced the following recommendations to address the current deficits in Hill internship and fellowship programs:

1. **Assessing Intern Cost of Living:** The CAO should provide information to congressional offices on the cost of living for interns to help inform intern stipend levels.
2. **Intern & Fellowship Program Office or Coordinator:** The House should establish an Intern & Fellowship Program Office or Coordinator that helps with onboarding, training individual office internship and fellowship coordinators, developing educational curriculum, and providing professional development opportunities for interns and fellows.
3. **Fellows & Detailees Use of Equipment:** Congress should clarify rules and regulations to allow fellows and detailees to receive the same resources (phones, laptops, etc.) as professional staff.
4. **Remote Internships:** The House should study the feasibility of permanently allowing remote internships. This study should include recommendations for meeting internship educational requirements (including through robust online programming), procedures for maintaining an inventory of equipment, and ensuring proper cybersecurity protocols.
5. **Committee Internship Stipends:** Committees should be provided a program allowance, separate from their budget, for compensation of interns.



The Select Committee's Recommendations on Accessibility

While many Americans have the opportunity to engage with Congress, access to the People's House remains a challenge for many Americans. At nearly 200 years old, the U.S. Capitol is home to narrow hallways and steep winding steps with many more physical barriers throughout the complex that hinder disabled Americans' ability to be part of the full legislative process.

Non-physical barriers also limit access for persons with disabilities. Whether individuals are working within or interacting with Congress, the Capitol complex and our legislative branch need to be equally accessible for all Americans.

The Select Committee held a hearing to barriers within facilities and technology that inhibit accessibility for Americans titled ["Making the House More Accessible to the Disability Community"](#)

On July 29th, the Select Committee advanced the following recommendations to ensure Congress is accessible for all Americans that hope to engage with, and work within, the institution:

1. **ADA Drop off/Pick up Zone:** As part of ongoing security and accessibility studies, the House should designate a drop off and pick up zone near an accessible entrance for members of the public with mobility impairments and develop a well-understood process for accessing and utilizing the new drop-off point.
2. **Security Screening for those with Disabilities:** Visitors and staff with disabilities should have access to information on standard screening techniques they will encounter upon entering the Capitol complex.
3. **Doorway Accessibility:** The House should improve accessibility around the Capitol complex by prioritizing the installation of additional automatic or power-assisted doors and replace door hardware that cannot be grasped easily with one hand or requires tight grasping, pinching, or twisting of the wrist to operate.
4. **Accessible Websites:** The House should promote awareness of accessibility requirements for Member and Committee websites and provide training and tools for staff to help them properly maintain and update those sites.



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Committee Background and Members

The Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress (“Select Committee”) was established by H.Res. 6 on January 4, 2019, and is tasked with investigating, studying, making findings, holding public hearings, and developing recommendations to make Congress more effective, efficient, and transparent on behalf of the American people.

In the 116th Congress, [the Select Committee passed 97-recommendations](#), which passed unanimously in committee. These reforms focused on improving transparency in Congress, streamlining constituent engagement, cultivating staff diversity and retention, and revitalizing its Article I responsibilities bestowed in the Constitution.

One third of those reforms have already been implemented through H.Res. 756, making the Select Committee the first reform committee in recent history to see its recommendations acted on and implemented.

The Select Committee is one of the only truly bipartisan committees in Congress, with an equal number of Republican and Democratic members. The Following members were appointed to the Select Committee for the 117th Congress:

Chair Derek Kilmer (WA-06)

Zoe Lofgren (CA-19)
Emanuel Cleaver (MO-05)
Ed Perlmutter (CO-07)
Dean Phillips (MN-03)
Nikema Williams (GA-05)

Vice-Chair William Timmons (SC-04)

Rodney Davis (IL-13)
Bob Latta (OH-5)
Dave Joyce (OH-14)
Guy Reschenthaler (PA-14)
Beth Van Duyne (TX-24)

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