

**OPERATIONAL REVIEW  
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

February 16, 1996

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**SUMMARY**

Starting on December 1, 1994 the concept of a Committee on House Oversight (CHO) providing broad policy guidance to the Officers of the House marked a fundamental change in 204 years of House operations. The relationship of the CHO to the three major Officers of the House: the Clerk, the Sergeant-at-Arms, and the new Chief Administrative Officer, has evolved and modified during the course of the 104th Congress. In particular, the multi-dimensional aspects of the relationship evolving between the Committee and the Chief Administrative Officer requires in depth review and analysis to determine if the original intent of the Transition Team has been met.

**BACKGROUND**

On December 1, 1994 the Transition Team for the 104th Congress announced a series of bold proposals which fundamentally changed they administration of services in the House. Labeled the "Open House Proposal" the changes would:

"reduce the number of officials reporting to the Speaker of the House, streamline administrative functions, beef up the office of the independent Inspector General and bring technology capabilities up to date."

Two key aspects of twelve pages of reforms was the establishment of a standing "Committee on House Oversight" and a new "Chief Administrative Officer for the House".

The mission of the new "Committee on House Oversight" (CHO) would be:

"to provide greater emphasis on developing broad policy recommendations and alternatives to House rules that govern administrative procedures. It would concentrate its oversight responsibilities on major management issues and limit its involvement in day to day administrative operations."

The mission of the new "Chief Administrative Officer of the House" (CAO) was to be:

"Responsible for the non-legislative administrative functions of the House of Representatives."

In testimony before the CHO on February 8, 1995, Transition Chair, Rep. Jim Nussle, emphasized the broad policy guidance role of the CHO.

As the 104th Congress began on January 4, 1995 the Transition Team remained in operation to oversee implementation of the Open House Proposals. On a weekly basis the key members of the Transition Team met to discuss specific actions to reform the House and the progress of implementing these reforms. This weekly team meeting included:

- \* The Chair of the Transition Team
- \* The Chair of the CHO
- \* The CAO

\* A Representative from the Speaker

This group met constantly throughout the first six months of 1995. It performed the key task of keeping the various units involved in implementing reform focused on the Transition's intent. Over time other attendees from the CHO staff were added. The press of other legislative business began to limit Member involvement by the summer of 1995. By August the Transition team met only sporadically. No formal meetings of the Transition Team have occurred since the August recess.

On February 3, 1995 a master plan comprising 75 specific reform initiatives was presented to the Transition Team. At that time the Chair of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee was included for the first time. It was the intent of the Transition Team to have the CHO approve the specific reform initiatives and to then have the financial aspects of these reforms reviewed and approved in the appropriations process.

On February 10 the staff of the CHO approved "in principle" all 75 reforms proposals. A one page memo identifying "priority reforms initiatives" was issued by the CHO the following week. During a workshop on February 24 and 25 specific action plans (including individual steps, timetables, lead offices, and resource requirements) required to implement each reform proposal were finalized within the CAO. Staff members from the CHO, Appropriations, and the Speakers Office were in attendance to help review and offer additional refinements to these detailed plans.

On March 2 the first finalized plans were presented in their final form to CHO staff. These plans incorporated CHO and CAO ideas and recommendations from the February workshop. The remainder of the finalized reform action plans were presented to CHO staff on March 10. Later that month the CHO formerly approved the CAO to take action to privatize the Barber and Beauty Shops.

It is at this point that the first signs of difficulty in the working relationship between the CHO and CAO began to manifest themselves. The CHO staff began requesting extensive detailed information to substantiate the need for each of the 75 reform proposals they had already approved and, in fact, had already designated "priority" proposals. It became clear that CHO staff was not ready to allow any of the 75 reforms to be considered by the Members of the Committee until the staff itself was "fully comfortable" with every detail of what was going to happen and why each step was necessary. Meanwhile, the CAO's own interactions with individual Members of Congress, including Members of the Committee on House Oversight, Appropriations, and House Leaders, suggested a clear interest in rapid movement to implement each reform.

At the Legislative Branch Subcommittee hearings on April 19, the Chair of the Subcommittee and several Majority Members clearly expressed their own support for rapid progress on implementing the reforms. On May 10, nine weeks after the finalized reform plans were submitted to the CHO, the Committee held a hearing to approve two reforms relating to procurement. However, two weeks later, at the May 23 CHO hearing only one new reform was allowed to be considered. In fact it was a CHO staff generated alternative parking reform proposal, one strongly opposed by the CAO. The CAO only knew about the CHO staff generated alternative a few days before the meeting. CAO officials were not allowed to comment on the CHO parking plan and were barred from attending the CHO Member caucus and the CHO staff briefings. However, at these meetings CHO staff provided their own critiques and criticisms of the CAO's original parking plan without CAO personnel present.

On May 25 the Appropriations staff, frustrated by CHO inaction, began to write major portions of the 75 reform initiatives into the FY96 Legislative Branch Appropriations. Upon hearing of this action, the CHO held a hearing on June 14, to approve seven reforms and finalize the CAO organization. This was just two days before Subcommittee mark-up on the Legislative Branch Appropriations which mandated a majority of the 75 initiatives be completed prior to, or during

FY96.

The CHO consideration of the remaining 75 CAO related reforms gradually occurred throughout the balance of 1995. However, the working relationship between CHO and CAO continued to be troubled, marked by increasing efforts on the part of CHO committee staff to conduct detailed reviews of CAO activities. Many of these reviews pressed for prior approval of administrative actions, including personnel and purchasing decisions. The working relationship was further aggravated by a series of personal attacks on the CAO in various Hill forums and an ongoing unwillingness of the CHO to publicize the achievements of the reforms.

The Strategic Plan of the CHO, submitted to House Leadership on February 6, 1996 lays the groundwork for additional areas of conflict between the CHO and CAO through the balance of the 104th Congress. Two examples of these potential conflicts are:

- \* The CHO "Review of 'reform' actions and future proposals to ensure implementation and success". The basic definition of where does policy end and administration begin needs to be clarified. In addition, there needs to be a clear mandate from all key Transition members as to how far, how fast, and what general direction the next rounds of House reforms should go.
- \* The CHO conducting "seminars, working and focus groups to listen to issues". Without clear delineation of CHO/CAO roles there would be duplication and confusion with the activities being covered through the existing CAO customer service teams and customer satisfaction measurements.

The following analysis will address the specific areas of concern relating to administrative operations of the House.

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## **ISSUES**

### **1. Policy Jurisdiction**

QUESTION: Who should chart the course of reforms in the House? How detailed should that guidance be?

The service environment of the House of Representatives offers numerous sources of guidance for continuous improvement:

#### **House Leadership**

The Speaker and other key leaders of the House, including the heads of various reform task forces and caucuses, raise ideas and issues about how the House could operate more efficiently and more openly. Whether through "Dear Colleagues" or news releases these ideas need to be incorporated into CAO related improvements.

#### **House Members & Staffs**

These are the true "customers" of the CAO. Their feedback on how services are being provided must be integral to charting CAO related improvements.

#### **Committee on House Oversight**

The twelve Members of this Committee each have various ideas for the direction, pace, and extent of reforming House operations. Individually and collectively their input is fundamental to guiding CAO related improvements.

#### **SubCommittee on Appropriations**

The eight Members of this SubCommittee each have various ideas for the direction, pace, and extent of reforming House operations. Individually and collectively their input is fundamental to guiding CAO related improvements.

#### **104th Transition Team**

This group has not formally met since August 1995. Its role in the first six months of 1995 was critical to assuring the forward movement of CAO related reforms.

Unfortunately, there has been no formal resolution of the tenure and role of the Transition (which could be marked by a final Transition Report and appropriate ceremony). There may be a value to having the structure and intent of the 104th Transition merge with those planning for the 105th Congress. In either case some indication of whether the vision of the "Open House" has become a reality and a general charting of what next would be very helpful to guiding CAO related improvements.

#### **Chief Administrative Officer & Staff**

The CAO organization itself is developing broad based ability to internally generate reform ideas. The organizational culture is growing rapidly into the crossfunctional, interactive team of 600 service professionals originally envisioned during the Transition. This means the breadth, depth, and speed at which service innovations are identified, distilled, and implemented are beginning to grow exponentially (typical of 21st Century focused organizations). How the energies of this creative and motivated workforce interact with the traditional more bureaucratic command and control structure of the CHO is a definite challenge.

#### RECOMMENDATION #1

The Transition Team for the 104th Congress should develop a final report assessing the progress made towards its vision of the "Open House" and then officially end. Broad recommendations of what can still be done during the 104th Congress, and what still needs to be done in the 105th Congress would be key elements of this document. The document would be reviewed by the CHO, Appropriations, Leadership and the CAO. All comments would be directed to the 105th Congress transition team for decision and implementation.

#### RECOMMENDATION #2

The CAO should provide the CHO and Leadership with a list of second phase strategic reform proposals. The CHO and Leadership can then provide a prioritization of which proposals should be pressed during the balance of the 104th Congress (with identified timetables) and which ones should await the new Congress. Additions and deletions from the list, with brief rationales for these actions, would also be included.

#### RECOMMENDATION #3

The CHO and Leadership should jointly issue a set of guidelines identifying the scope of actions the CAO organization can unilaterally take in improving administrative services. Within these parameters CAO employees will be set free to innovate service improvements based on best business practices and state of the art approaches.

#### RECOMMENDATION #4

The CAO will be required, on a quarterly basis, to report to the CHO on the financial and service impacts of the employee innovations authorized in Recommendation #3.

## **2. Administrative Jurisdiction**

QUESTION: Where does "broad policy guidance" end and day to day administration begin?

**2-A. PROCUREMENT:** The procurement procedures for the House were adopted in the CHO Hearing of May 10. Since that time the guidelines have worked fairly well. However, in September 1995 the House Recording Studio proposed the purchase of equipment which would:

1. Prevent the degrading of House Floor Coverage;
2. Prevent the degrading of studio operations;
3. Enhance the ability of the smaller studio staff to provide service;
4. Reduce Member service costs.

The House Studio comprises antiquated equipment, much of it still using vacuum tubes. "Cannibalizing" equipment for spare parts has begun to reduce the reliability and flexibility of the studio. In June 1995 the CAO proposed outsourcing studio operations. The CHO at their June 14 hearing adopted a alternative plan to downsize the studio, but maintain in-house services. Studio managers, at that time, stated that new equipment would be required to maintain existing levels of service.

CHO staff review of the equipment purchase has continued without resolution for nearly five months. Early delays in a CHO decision prevented the use of the studio revolving fund prior to its abolition under the FY96 Appropriations bill. Continued delays have resulted in two signal losses on House Floor coverage and increased stress among the smaller studio staff.

The fundamental question is "what is the role of the CHO in approving procurements?" The studio equipment followed all established procedures in identifying vendors and pricing the most cost effective option. The current dialogue is focused on rethinking what the CHO wanted to do last June 14 (i.e. is the studio an incumbent "perk" or a necessary communication tool for informing constituents?), but this is being conducted by CHO staff not by the Committee Members.

### **RECOMMENDATION #5**

The CHO should have five (5) working days to review purchase requests. If they do not raise procedural concerns (directly relating to procurement regulations) in writing within this period the purchase may proceed.

**2-B. PERSONNEL:** The issue of what authorities Officers should have to manage their human resources is not new to the administration of the House. On November 24, 1993 Rep. Bill Thomas wrote to then Minority Leader Michel and Minority Whip Gingrich:

"As you know, Chairman Rose's signature is required on all official forms of the Director...payroll changes have languished since June, and the Director has a virtual "stack up" of other changes...

"At the August 4, 1993 Oversight Subcommittee meeting, I strongly advocated a policy in which the Director would have the authority, under an approved structure, to take any personnel actions he believes necessary, including selection, appointment, assignment, transfer and termination, without exception...

"I have instructed my staff that the intent here is to allow the Director to operate outside the patronage, partisan system and to run his operations as much like the private sector as is feasible."

The situation criticized by Rep. Thomas in the 103rd Congress has begun to manifest itself in the 104th. By the third week of January 1995, CHO staff began detailed reviews of CAO personnel selections withholding approval of new hires and internal transfers. The result has been periodic "stack ups" of personnel actions pending before the CHO.

The situation got worse after the CAO organizational changes were approved on June 14. On that date, the CHO unanimously approved 275 positions for the newly established House Information Resources (HIR) organization. Once existing personnel were allowed to compete into these new approved positions, 50 vacancies remained to be filled. CHO staff told HIR managers to delay submitting personnel paperwork to fill these 50 vacancies and, instead, required detailed explanations of why all fifty positions needed filling, even though both the CHO and the Appropriations Subcommittee approved all 275 positions for full funding in FY96. As service degraded because of these 50 staff shortages, a November 16, 1995 CHO memo was issued. It outlined into minutiae, what must be done before any candidates for these 50 vacancies within HIR would be approved. This generated a heated exchange of letters between the CAO and the CHO during the Christmas recess.

As recently as the week of February 5, 1996 CHO staff delays on minor internal personnel transfers and derogatory written comments critiquing CAO hires continue to exceed the role intended for the CHO by the Transition and by the comments made by Rep. Thomas, himself, in November 1993.

#### RECOMMENDATION #6

The CHO should have five (5) working days to review personnel actions. If they do not raise procedural concerns (directly relating to personnel regulations) in writing within this period the personnel action may proceed.

**2-C. BUDGET:** The role of the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch Appropriations was pivotal in 1995 for assuring timely consideration of CAO reform initiatives. In 1996 the CHO has already delayed their review of proposed CAO reorganizations by a month. The CHO has also not scheduled committee consideration of the Furniture Policy reform which was submitted in November 1995. Both sets of decisions are critical to establishing the operational assumptions for final FY97 appropriations.

#### RECOMMENDATION #7

The role and procedures of the CHO as the "authorizing committee" for the CAO and other House Officers needs to be revised so as to assure timely review of appropriation submissions. A task



group comprising representatives from the CHO, the Appropriations Committee, Leadership and House Officers should be created to recommend a set of guidelines, including timetables, to assure FY98 and future appropriations are reviewed and authorized in a timely and thorough manner.

**2-D. OPERATIONS:** The conflict over where does "broad policy guidance" end and administrative operations begin has been at the root of most CHO/CAO conflicts during the 104th Congress. This issue is not unique to the House as "policy versus administration" delineations have been debated since ancient Rome and are the subject of lively scholarly discourse in the current field of public administration.

It is useful to review two examples of the ways the CHO/CAO roles have operated in 1995:

**\* Parking Reform**

One of the major concerns of the Transition was the need to completely rethink the way parking was allocated. Many rumors persisted that lobbyists and former Members were using official spaces. Other concerns included employees storing cars and gross misallocations of parking among Member staffs.

One of the 75 reforms proposed on February 3 was a fundamental overhaul of parking and the possibility of opening one lot as a paid public parking lot. CHO staff was intimately involved in every detail and every step of the CAO's development of a new parking allotment and set of operational policies. Every piece of data developed by the CAO was immediately shared with CHO staff. All CAO analysis and options were also immediately shared with CHO staff. In his April 7, 1995 speech on the end of the 100 Days, Speaker Gingrich promised the American public a paid lot near the Capitol by summer.

By late March debates arose between the CHO and CAO over specific parking allocations and which lot should be opened to the public. As the May 25 hearing was scheduled to approve a parking policy it was learned that CHO staff had developed, without the knowledge of the CAO, both a devastating critique of the CAO proposal and a full scale alternative plan of their own. CHO staff presented their critique of the CAO proposal and their alternative plan to Committee Members and their staff while refusing to allow CAO personnel to attend. The final version of the CHO proposal was shared with the CAO only days before the hearing. In fact, the final version of the resolution on parking was not available until 10 minutes into the May 25 hearing.

The end result of the adoption of the CHO staff version of the parking allocation and policy was reassigning parking operations to the Sergeant at Arms with allocation decisions residing in the CHO. Nine months later, there is still no public lot near the Capitol. One distant lot under the Southwest Freeway was returned to the city of Washington, is used by tenants of House Annex 2. The city of Washington collects the parking fees from this lot.

**\* Auction**

During December 1994 the Transition toured the Star Warehouse Building. They found an amazing collection of broken, obsolete, and surplus furniture and publications. It was decided that something had to be done to rid the House inventory of all the worthless personal property and to end the \$235,000 a year lease for the building. By June 1995 the CAO had determined that an open auction of all property stored in the warehouse would be the fastest, and cheapest way of meeting the intent of the Transition. In early August the CHO signed off on a CAO decision memorandum on moving forward with an auction.

The CAO took the decision memorandum as a mandate to do whatever it took to make the auction a success. The CAO outsourced the auction administration and aggressively marketed the "House

Yard Sale" to maximize receipts. The result was a one week media barrage generating an auction crowd of 7,000. Media coverage of the event led all local and national news shows that evening. Final profits totalled \$141,000. The warehouse was vacated at the end of September and the lease was terminated.

Discussions with the CHO after the auction were contentious. There was great staff concern that the CAO made little effort to involve the CHO in the details of the auction. One staffer noted "We authorized an auction and the next thing we know its done." Two months later, after all receipts were reconciled, the CAO provided the CHO with a full report, accounting for each piece sold.

#### RECOMMENDATION #8

Leadership and the Transition need to specifically outline their own understanding of the way the CHO is to provide "broad policy guidance" to the CAO. It also needs to specifically outline its intent of how much involvement the CHO should have in dictating the day to day way the CAO carries out the detailed implementation of CHO decisions. It is well documented that Member interest in the administrative and operational details of CAO projects is not as intense as that of the CHO staff, therefore Leadership must decide how much they want CHO staff specifically involved in the day to day details of CAO operations.

### **3. Internal Communications:**

QUESTION: What is the proper role of the CAO and the CHO in planning and providing information to House Members and employees?

The communicating of information within the administrative service infrastructure of the House is fundamental to everyone who works for the Congress. Without timely, accurate, and clearly presented information everyone suffers. The efficiency, and effectiveness of House operations can be dramatically enhanced if communications are properly planned and operated.

There are a number of communications issues which have been sources of contention between the CHO and the CAO:

**3-A Customer Feedback:** A service organization remains viable only if it listens to its customers. Since the beginning of the 104th Congress this basic business practice has been key to both CHO and CAO operations. The CAO has a Customer Liaison Office, which surveys offices on customer satisfaction and handles various unique issues (such as disaster assistance to District Offices) and customer complaints. The CAO also has ONECall, which provides answers and service coordination for hundreds of telephone queries, daily.

The CHO has a "Member Services" unit which takes incoming Member and staff calls on a variety of issues. Many of these calls are forwarded to relevant CAO offices for follow-up.

The problem is that very little of the service data from these operations is shared. The CHO states that it "screens" the CAO from Member complaints by "running interference". However, the CAO, while spared possible angry customer calls, is deprived of the opportunity to resolve issues real time and to develop valuable trend and pattern analyses from this data. At times having the CHO handle complaints prevents continuous improvement. One example was an August 28, 1995 memorandum from the CHO to the CAO's Special Events Office. The memo laid out severe criticism of the handling of summer intern briefing sessions and attached a list of specific instances ranging back to June 6. If these issues had been raised after each event there would have been the potential of resolving the concerns as the summer intern program progressed. As it was, the summer program was over before the CAO knew there were issues to address.

The question must be raised as to whether the Member Services unit within the CHO duplicates CAO operations. Data indicates that part of the original intent of the CHO unit was to provide interpretations of House administrative rules for Members and staff. In reality many of these calls are eventually referred to the CAO's Administrative Counsel by the personnel of the CHO unit for resolution.

#### RECOMMENDATION #9

The CHO Member Services Unit, its duties and personnel, should be transferred to ONECall within the CAO. All routine calls on service issues, customer feedback (including complaints, and suggestions), and service questions should be directed to ONEcall. All calls relating to the interpretation of House Administrative Rules should be directed to the CHO legal counsel.

#### RECOMMENDATION #10

The CAO should report quarterly to the CHO on customer service questions and service indicators.

**3-B Informational Mailings:** There is an ongoing issue of how written information on administrative services should be coordinated between the CHO and CAO. Currently, the CHO issues "Dear Colleagues" while the CAO issues "Memorandum for Members, Committees and Staffs". The CHO contends that its "Dear Colleagues" are explaining policy issues, not administrative details. However, some of these CHO communiques do impact daily operations. Three recent examples provide insights on what impact this situation has on service operations:

\* On December 19, 1995 the CHO issued a "Dear Colleague" on "Computer & Software Purchases". This communication outlined the first of the benefits of the CyberCongress initiative (formerly called "Office 2000") which was the provision of a pentium class IBM compatible desktop computer for each office. HIR was not consulted on this communication nor notified. The result was an unexpected surge of questions to Technical Service Representatives and ONECall about when the computers would arrive. Confusion and premature customer expectations could have been avoided had better coordination existed.

\* On January 29, 1996 the CHO issued a "Dear Colleague" on "Travel Reimbursement" which outlined direct billing services for travel. The Inspector General, the CAO's Finance and Internal Control Offices, and Price Waterhouse were not consulted or informed of an arrangement that may fundamentally impact the resolution of a number of internal control issues raised in the House audit and specifically contradict 95-CAO-16; Finding E, Recommendation 2.

\* On January 14, 1996 the CHO issued a "Dear Colleague" on "Computer Massaging Proof of Concept Update" which outlined progress on the CyberCongress initiative and announces a series of meetings which will provide customer feedback for the final massaging decision. A CHO staff contact is provided for further information. HIR was not consulted on this communication nor notified. The result is that those within HIR who were in the process of initiating their own series of customer focus groups and service indicators among the test offices were concerned as to whether the CHO now had the responsibility for compiling operational data. HIR is uncertain as to what role their data will now have in the final decision.

#### RECOMMENDATION #11

Leadership and the Transition need to specifically outline their own understanding of what communications represent CHO "broad policy guidance" for the House. Leadership and the Transition should specifically list the topics and scope of those communications for which the CHO has the exclusive lead role in designing and distributing and which ones the CAO has the lead role.

**3-C Informational Briefings:** The major changes in House service operations and policies have sometimes been communicated to Members and staff through formal briefings. A major ongoing issue between the CHO and CAO is that these briefings rarely include speakers from both the CHO and the CAO.

One example is the series of briefings relating to the termination of folding services in the House. No CAO employee was allowed to participate in the CHO sponsored sessions. The result was numerous questions went unanswered and the accuracy of some statements were found to be flawed. The Systems Administrators Association (SAA) met with the CAO shortly after these sessions to complain about the briefings and that the flawed and partial information was causing confusion and costing Member offices money. The executive board of the SAA wondered why no effort was made to bring all knowledgeable personnel to these important sessions. Similar criticisms have been voiced by attendees at sessions relating to financial operations, compliance, and the CyberCongress initiative.

#### RECOMMENDATION #12

Leadership and the Transition need to specifically outline their own understanding of what communications represent CHO "broad policy guidance" for the House and therefore should be the responsibility of the CHO to organize and implement. The CAO should have the lead in all briefings directly related to the details of service operations. CHO and CAO personnel should be included as resources at each others briefing sessions.

**3-D Distance Learning & Channel 25:** The House has a unique and challenging audience. Its nearly 10,000 employees not only work highly pressured and unusual hours, there are also a third of them who work part or full time outside of Washington, DC. These factors severely limit the effectiveness of traditional methods, such as scheduled briefings, in imparting information and training to this audience.

The information age has provided a number of new tools to reach this scattered and diverse workforce. Channel 25 has the potential of becoming one of the greatest of these tools. Channel 25 programs can reach a larger audience by providing flexibility of broadcast hours which more closely match the availability of House employees and repeating shows until all the targeted audience has had an opportunity to watch. With over 10,000 potential television outlets in the House and future linkage to computer screens via video conferencing, Channel 25 can become, as in many private sector work environments, the primary and preferred method of informing and training House employees during the next decade. The Channel also creates the opportunity to develop a videotape or CD-Rom library for distribution to District Offices. Eventually this library could be used for orientation of new Members and staff for the 105th Congress and beyond. Despite this great educational potential, the operation of Channel 25 has already become an issue between the CHO and the CAO.

Channel 25 was authorized on June 14, 1995. The intent of the resolution was to have the CAO develop programs, for the CHO to approve the programs, and for the CAO to then run them. This operational partnership has faltered since Channel 25 began operation on January 25:

\* CHO staff have twice called the Architect of the Capitol to stop broadcast, in mid-program, of

CHO authorized tapes as staff have changed their minds.

\* CHO staff have begun to require justification, in mid-program, of why some CHO authorized tapes are boring and how much longer are they going to run.

\* CHO staff are requesting detailed program schedules and justifications for the showing of CHO authorized tapes even though the CAO has indicated that audience feedback would determine frequency and scheduling. Given Channel 25's operation has just begun, audience data will be limited until viewership increases.

\* CHO staff have delayed approval of any tapes which have CAO personnel in them, even though the showing of taped information briefings related to administrative services is exactly what Channel 25 was designed to do.

#### RECOMMENDATION #13

An editorial board needs to be established for Channel 25 empowered to authorize programs, review schedules, and assess audience feedback. The Board would include representatives from: Leadership, the Transition (104th or 105th), the CHO, the CAO, the Clerk, the Sergeant at Arms, and the Minority. A majority vote would be enough for a program to run. Review of tapes and written comments could be the main process for tape approval. Monthly meetings would provide strategic direction and prioritization of program development.

#### RECOMMENDATION #14

The CHO should approve the establishment of the "Office of Communications Services" (OCS) which will consolidate Member communication services, allow for strategic planning of internal communications relating to administrative services, and for coordination of implementing these plans. The OCS package was originally submitted to the CHO in September 1995. A revised version, based on CHO comments, has been before the CHO since December 1995.

#### **4. External Communications**

QUESTION: What is the proper role of the CHO and the CAO in informing the public of the progress of House Reforms?

The Speaker has made it very clear that House Officers should not directly initiate external news media coverage. It was initially the role of the Transition to handle all media inquiries regarding House Officers. When the 104th Congress began, the Speaker's Office directly handled new media issues related to House Officers and the implementation of the "Open House". As the 100 day agenda and large scale legislative initiatives became the priorities, external media relations for the "Open House" moved down and then off the Leadership action list.

The ending of direct Leadership involvement in external news media related to "Open House" reforms left unclear which office should handle these news stories. It was also unclear if there was a strategic plan for promoting the historic improvements in the House's integrity and accountability.

The result was a series of missed opportunities:

\* June 1995: Barbershop Press Conference.

After the June 14 Hearing the CHO announced a news conference which would be held in the Rayburn Barbershop to announce various privatization initiatives. The Chair of the CHO, who organized the session and agreed to preside, did not show. No talking points or releases were available to the media. The Transition Chair, the Chair of the Legislative Branch Appropriations, and a Member of the CHO did attend and answer questions.

\* July 1995: Price Waterhouse Report Released.

On July 7 and again on July 12 the CHO staff assured Leadership that they would lead all efforts to publicize the historic Price Waterhouse audit of House operations. Repeated offers of assistance from the CAO and Leadership were declared unnecessary as the CHO "had all the resources we need". The report release received minimal media coverage. CHO staff stated that the "story was not that big after all". The CAO, as part of a media test, worked with only one newspaper, the Wall Street Journal, which ran one news story, two "Op Ed" pieces, and a featured editorial about the report.

\* September 1995: House "Yard Sale".

The CAO was given authorization by Leadership to promote wide attendance at the auction of House furnishings. During the exhibition period a local television weather commentator broadcast live from the warehouse, as did CSPAN and CNN. Members were provided with opportunities to be interviewed in the warehouse and the House recording studio provided taping resources to Members. On the day of the auction 7,000 people attended as did twelve news crews. That evening, the auction led all national television news shows and was featured in all major daily papers and wire services the next day.

\* October 1995: Postal Window Operations Opening.

The CHO took the lead in working with the U.S. Postal Service in organizing a ribbon cutting for new window operations in the Longworth Building. One hour after pledging to Leadership that the CHO had the resources to handle all aspects of the ceremony, the CAO's ONECall received a request to handle all arrangements.

\* 1996: One Year Anniversary.

Several news organizations have expressed interest in presenting stories on how the 104th Congress has changed things after one year. Media contacts have approached the CAO stating that the CHO has discouraged these overtures. On February 14, 1996 a Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) crew requested that the CAO provide some file tape for a show which will feature Members discussing the 104th Congress. Eyewitnesses state that CHO staff, upon hearing of the taping, were actively searching for the crew to stop the filming.

**RECOMMENDATION #15**

Leadership should develop a strategic plan for how they want the implementation of the "Open House" portrayed to the American Public. Specific assignments should be given, including timetables, to those individuals and offices Leadership would like involved in this effort.



## **5. CHO Operations:**

**QUESTION:** What procedures need to be developed to assure that the CHO provides a fair hearing of reform initiatives? What procedures need to be developed to assure that the intent of CHO actions is clearly documented?

During the 104th Congress CAO personnel have been excluded from briefing CHO Members and their staffs on reform initiatives. The text of CHO resolutions have been withheld from Members and the CAO, in some cases until the Committee meeting was underway. CHO agendas and requests for witnesses are often not communicated until the day of the meeting. CHO witnesses have been denied the ability to correct and certify their remarks. Copies of hearing transcripts are not available, one can only review them in the CHO offices. Photocopying of CHO transcripts is forbidden.

### **RECOMMENDATION #16**

Leadership should review the operations of the CHO and provide clear guidance on improving the procedures used to develop and communicate "broad policy recommendations and alternatives to House rules that govern administrative procedures."

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER  
STRATEGIC PLAN  
1996

**OVERVIEW**

The first session of the 104th Congress witnessed a fundamental rethinking of administrative services in the House. In addition to consolidating all nonlegislative services into the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), a service sector business model was used to organize and provide services within this new office. Thinking of the House as 500 separate business units (Members, Leadership, Committees) requiring support services, the management team in the CAO drew from service models relating to large office buildings (like the World Trade Center), large conference hotels (like the Ritz Carlton), and conference centers (like the Xerox Center and Lansdowne).

During 1995 the operational changes of the CAO were dramatic, some services were abolished, others were outsourced (privatized). The intent was to build a core of high performance service professionals managing the provision of services for the 500 business units of the House. Management principles of continuous improvement, crossfunctional problem solving teams, and task driven, "ad hoc", teams were written into a service Credo and Contract with the House.

In 1996 the CAO organization plans to continue implementing and institutionalizing the business sector service model:

**1. Business Process Reengineering.**

Fundamental rethinking of service operations, with input from performance measures, customer feedback, and "best practices" drawn from the private sector will continue to drive what services should be provided by the CAO and how the provision of these services should be configured. Current priorities for 1996 include:

- \* Whether to outsource the stationary and gift shops. Analysis due in April.
- \* Whether to pursue an "Employee Stock Ownership Plan" (ESOP) with the carpentry workshops. The proposed furniture policy reforms, pending before the CHO are critical to pursuit of this option.

**2. Technology Applications.**

The fundamental focus of 1996, and possibly 1997, is the transfer of CAO operations and data into electronic formats. This is both the great promise and challenge of the CyberCongress initiative. When completed, the array of new information age operations will establish the House as a world leader in 21st century management:

- \* An INTRA-NET system for House communications, including messaging, voice, video conferencing between offices, districts, and Members, E-Mail, and INTER-NET access. There was a 310% increase in electronic based communications in the House in 1995. It is anticipated that usage will at least double in 1996 and continue to grow at this rate of increase over the next decade.

- \* A Pentium based computer structure in each Member, Committee, and Leadership office. This will allow for paperless transactions from "Dear Colleague" letters, to Whip operations, to financial record keeping, purchasing, and work orders.
- \* A decision support center allowing for virtual caucuses, virtual committee meetings, and strategic planning meetings accessing distant users.
- \* A complete upgrade of CAO support based on information age technology. This will include all financial data, human resource data, and personal property inventory data being available electronically. It also will allow for desk top procurement and other forms of electronic commerce.

### **3. Knowledge Based Management.**

The focus of 1996 and beyond is the use of increasingly comprehensive and reliable, real time data to drive management decisions. The CAO already has daily, weekly, and monthly measurements which track process cycle times, accuracy, and customer satisfaction. Refining this information and making it usable and accessible to everyone within the CAO is a top priority.

### **4. Empowering and Enabling the Workforce.**

By March 1996 all 600 CAO employees will have completed two courses on quality management principles. Training is already underway to make each CAO employee fully capable in the following core competencies:

- \* Knowledge of House Operations
- \* Knowledge of customer service and communication
- \* Knowledge of Problem Identification and Solving
- \* Knowledge of Measurement
- \* Knowledge of how to work in teams, including self directed work groups

By May 1996 each CAO employee will have a performance agreement which will be a "contract" between manager and employee to mutually work together to make each a success. Part of this "contract" is an "Individual Development Plan" (IDP) for all 600 CAO employees. These IDPs will guide educational experiences so that each CAO employee can become a high performance service professional.

### **5. Building a Quality Culture.**

As of February 1996 the Quality Improvement Process is now fully underway:

- \* Formal and informal recognition systems are in place.
- \* Ongoing awareness sessions on world class business practices are operating, including reading circles on business articles and "Brown Bag University" luncheon discussions on the latest in customer service, led by the employees themselves.
- \* Field trips to "best practice" work sites in the Washington

area have been part of monthly staff development since April 1995.

- \* Orientation for new employees which introduces each to the entire CAO operation and to the House environment are now an integral part of their first weeks on the job.
- \* The CAO management principle that "anyone can talk to anybody about anything, at any time" is moving the entire CAO toward one large service team.

## **6. Customer Service.**

The CAO is continuing to build a proactive service relationship with all 10,000 employees of the House. Priorities for 1996 include:

- \* A second edition of "House Smart" a user friendly directory of services. The new version will include Clerk, Sergeant at Arms, and Architect services.
- \* Continued use of ONECall and Meeting Planning services.
- \* The development of TEAM-ONE which allows cross-functional teams to work directly with Member offices to provide proactive, coordinated service.
- \* The development of a Customer Service DataBank which will track all services provided to each office in the House. The intent is to better inform CAO employees of unique issues rising from service operations and for the CAO to better understand emerging patterns and trends in customer needs.
- \* Orientation of new employees of the House on how to access and use administrative services.
- \* Development of programs for Channel 25 which will inform customers of services and proper procedures, including forms to use in accessing administrative services. This will reach a larger audience, more flexibly and more cost effectively. These programs will also be available to District Offices through videotape or CD-ROM. It is also anticipated that many of these programs may be made available to incoming Members and staff for the 105th Congress transition.

## **6. Master Space Planning.**

The CAO plans to support the House Building Commission and the Architect of the Capitol, in developing proposals for more efficient and customer friendly use of space within the House complex:

- \* Longworth Basement  
Development of a food court and arcade which may have additional customer services like: dry cleaning, one hour photo, photocopying, sundry, and take-out food or groceries.
- \* Cannon Basement  
Expand carryout operations to include seating.

- \* Cannon 5th Floor  
Consolidate non-legislative functions to the 5th floor and move Freshman offices to rooms more easily accessible to the House Floor.
- \* Rayburn 1st Floor  
Consolidate catering operations which would allow for expansion of committee meeting space.
- \* O'Neill Building  
Assess the future of this building, including possible vacating.
- \* Workshop areas  
Continue to consolidate from other buildings and develop a central receiving facility.

### **7. Continuous Improvement.**

The next phase of improvement within the CAO will be accumulating "small victories". This means solving individual problems and looking for patterns and trends which prevent them in the future. It also means finding savings and preventative solutions every time a purchase order is reviewed or a contract is renewed. The use of the "Cost of Quality" analysis, starting in March 1996, will allow for wasteful, duplicative and avoidable costs to be reduced in a systematic ongoing manner. Having CAO employees constantly informed about the evolving state of the art in service operations and maintaining open lines of communications which encourage creative thinking and action will continue to drive service improvement into the future.