Congressional Reports in GPO’s Federal Digital System (FDsys)

Congressional Reports Learning Objectives

• Obtain an understanding of Congressional Reports, the types of reports available, and how they relate to the Congressional process.

• Obtain an understanding of the Congressional Reports collection on FDsys, and its capabilities and features.
Congressional reports: The Big Picture

Congressional committees issue Congressional Reports that deal with proposed legislation and issues under investigation.

Types of Congressional Reports

1) House and Senate Reports
2) Conference Reports
3) Senate Executive Reports

See examples on FDsys at www.fdsys.gov
House and Senate Reports

- Concern proposed legislation or contain findings on matters under investigation.
- Describes the purpose and scope of the bill and reasons for its recommended approval.
- May have a section-by-section analysis to explain what each section is about.
- Indicate what is being added and deleted from existing law.
- Explain Committee amendments.

Conference Reports

- Resolve differences in proposed legislation between the House and Senate.
- Is a negotiated agreement on legislation between the House and Senate conference committees.
- Printed and submitted to each chamber for its consideration.
Senate Executive Reports

- Reports of the Committee on Foreign Relations relating to Treaties between the United States and foreign nations, which have been submitted to the U.S. Senate for ratification
- Reports of various Senate Committees regarding nomination of individuals.

A quick note about treaties…

Foreign policy includes treaties, trade agreements, arms sales, and other foreign policy activities.

It is a balance between both presidential management and legislative powers.

Congress can influence foreign policy through legislation, appropriations, and Senate advice and consent on nominations and treaties.
Treaty Publications

Senate Treaty Document
Congressional Hearing
Senate Executive Report
Simple Resolution of Ratification
Senate Executive Calendar
Instrument of Ratification
Presidential Proclamation
Treaties and Other International Acts series (TIAS)

Treaty Publications

Senate Treaty Document
- Text of the treaty
- Letter submitted to the President by the Secretary of State
- Other documents deemed informational

- Senate Executive Report
  - Committee on Foreign Relations views on the treaty
Report process

1. Committee votes on a bill. They can vote it:
   - Favorably
   - Unfavorable or adversely
   - Without recommendation
   - Tabled

2. If bill is ordered to be reported out of Committee, they may file a report. A bill is officially reported in a chamber when it is filed.

3. Congressional Report options:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Bill Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Without amendment”</td>
<td>No changes made to bill as proposed</td>
<td>Retains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“As amended”</td>
<td>Includes amendment(s)</td>
<td>Retains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean bill (House)</td>
<td>Original bill (Senate)</td>
<td>New bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment in the nature of a</td>
<td>New bills including the text adopted</td>
<td>New bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>substitute</td>
<td>Committee markup</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All amendments previously adopted</td>
<td>Retains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>are included</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contents of Reports for committee approved measures...

Example of House Report 113-344:

Then what?

- Report is filed by the chair so it can go on the appropriate House or Senate calendar
- Must be on calendar for certain amount of time before the floor can take action on it (varies between H and S)
- Report is reviewed by the chamber

Why read reports?

“Committee reports are perhaps the most valuable single element of the legislative history of a law. They are used by the courts, executive departments, and the public as a source of information regarding the purpose and meaning of the law.”

(Source: How Our Laws Are Made CDOC 108-93)
Example of Existing Law

(9) CONSUMER PRIVACY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Bureau may not obtain from a covered person or service provider any personally identifiable financial information about a consumer from the financial records of the covered person or service provider, except—

(i) if the financial records are reasonably described in a request by the Bureau and the consumer provides written permission for the disclosure of such information by the covered person or service provider to the Bureau or

(ii) as may be specifically permitted or required under other applicable provisions of law and in accordance with the Right to Financial Privacy Act of 1978 (12 U.S.C. 3401 et seq.).

(B) TREATMENT OF COVERED PERSON OR SERVICE PROVIDER.—With respect to the application of any provision of the Right to Financial Privacy Act of 1978 to a disclosure by a covered person or service provider subject to this subsection, the covered person or service provider shall be treated as if it were a "financial institution", as defined in section 1101 of that Act (12 U.S.C. 3401).

(d) ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANT RULES.—

Extract of House Bill as introduced

H.R. 2571

"To amend the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act..."

Introduced June 28, 2013
(A) IN GENERAL.—The Bureau may not obtain from a covered person or service provider any personally identifiable financial nonpublic personal information about a consumer from the financial records of the covered person or service provider, except—unless—

(i) if the financial records are reasonably described in a request by the Bureau and the consumer provides written permission for the disclosure of such information by the covered person or service provider to the Bureau; or

(ii) as may be specifically permitted or required under other applicable provisions of law and in accordance with the Right to Financial Privacy Act of 1978 (12 U.S.C. 3401 et seq.).

(i) the Bureau clearly and conspicuously discloses to the consumer, in writing or in an electronic form, what information will be requested, obtained, accessed, collected, used, retained, or disclosed; and

(ii) before such information is requested, obtained, accessed, collected, used, retained, or disclosed, the consumer informs the Bureau that such information may be requested, obtained, accessed, collected, used, retained, or disclosed.

(B) TREATMENT OF COVERED PERSON OR SERVICE PROVIDER.—With regard to the application of any provision of

Congressional Reports

- FDsys – all published versions of Congressional Reports from 104th Congress forward (1995-present)
- Part of the U.S. Congressional Serial Set
- Updated irregularly as electronic versions of the reports become available
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