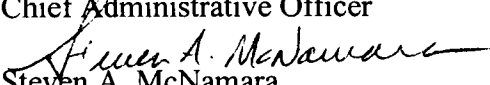


Office of Inspector General  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-9990

MEMORANDUM

TO: James M. Eagen, III  
Chief Administrative Officer

FROM:   
Steven A. McNamara  
Inspector General

DATE: March 23, 2005

SUBJECT: How to Improve District Office Transitions (Report No. 05-CAO-01)

On September 27, 2004 members of a joint review team orally presented the results of the District Office Transitions review to the Committee on House Administration (CHA) staff. The objective of this review was to determine if the processes and procedures for District Office transitions efficiently and effectively address personnel, office equipment, communications, furnishings, and service support needs. During this review, a joint team of Office of Inspector General and Chief Administrative Officer employees identified the successes and problems faced by Members during the establishment of District Offices during the 107<sup>th</sup> transition period. In the oral report, the team made specific recommendations for corrective actions most of which are in various stages of implementation.

Attached are the Power Point slides which were used to brief the CHA. These slides explain the problems that were encountered and the initiatives that have been started or completed to address them. We believe the corrective actions taken and planned by your office are appropriate and, when fully implemented, should adequately respond to the recommendations.

We appreciate the courtesy and cooperation extended to us by your staff during this joint review. If you have any questions or require additional information regarding this report, please call me or Jim Cornell at (202) 226-1250.

Attachment

cc: Speaker of the House  
Majority Leader of the House  
Minority Leader of the House  
Chairman, Committee on House Administration  
Ranking Minority Member, Committee on House Administration  
Members, Committee on House Administration



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# **How to Improve District Office Transitions**

Results of Joint Review  
by CAO and OIG  
Presented To

The Committee on House Administration

Report No. 05-CAO-01

September 27, 2004

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# Overview

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- ✍ Approach to Review
- ✍ Objective
- ✍ Scope/Methodology
- ✍ Challenges
- ✍ Successes
- ✍ Opportunities for Improvement
- ✍ Main Contributors to Problems
- ✍ Improvements Initiated by CAO
- ✍ Solutions



# Approach to Review

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- ✍ Identify Strengths and Weaknesses of Current Process
- ✍ Work Jointly with CAO to develop solutions to weaknesses
- ✍ Brief CHA on Results in time to have corrective actions in place for 109<sup>th</sup> Transitional Moves



# Objective

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Review Processes and procedures to determine if Member needs are addressed efficiently and effectively for:

- ✍ Personnel
- ✍ Services Support
- ✍ Communications
- ✍ Office Equipment
- ✍ Furnishings



# Scope/Methodology

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## Scope

District Transitional Moves of 108<sup>th</sup> Congress

## Methodology

Interviews with Members and CAO Staff

Sample: 15 Republicans & 15 Democrats; 20 Freshman & 10 Seated

Criteria:

- Equal number from each Party
- Members that opened or relocated the most offices
- Offices where there were indications of problems.
- Judgmental selection of 30 Members plus 4 replacements, if needed.



# Scope/Methodology

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This review was conducted in accordance with Government Auditing Standards as implemented in the Office of Inspector General Policies and Procedures Manual.



# Challenges faced during 108<sup>th</sup> Congressional Transitions

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## Technology Choices

- Telecommunications –
  - Phones - Equipment and Service
  - Data – Equipment, Connections, LANs, Network connections to DC
- Other – Office took actions outside of the norm/HIR recommendations

 **Expectations** — Some expected to get offices operational sooner

 **Redistricting** — Every 10 years

 **Guidance** - Multiple sources





# Guidance Examples

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- ✍ Members Congressional Handbook
- ✍ HouseSmart
- ✍ HouseNet
- ✍ CAO Welcome Binder
- ✍ User's Guide to Equipment, Software, and Related Services
- ✍ Fact Sheets on Leasing Space, Equipment, and Furniture
- ✍ Setting Course: A Congressional Management Guide
- ✍ HIR Sample Letters



# Successes

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## ✍ Successful Areas:

- Personnel: No complaints. Support is the same as in DC.
- Service Support: New Members' briefings, one on one meetings, and personal assistance from CAO staff (HIR and HSS)

## ✍ Reasons for Successes (Conveyed by Interviews):

- Moved into previous Member's office space
- Assistance provided by House Information Resources, Administrative Counsel, and General Services Administration
- Prior Experience among Member's staff
- Persistence/Perseverance/Patience



# Opportunities for Improvement

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## ✍ Communications

- Problems getting connected to House network
- Setting up phones and computers took too long
- No DSL/Cable available in some rural areas
- Not able to contact HIR or did not know whom to contact
- HIR did not have a point of contact in Member's office

✍ Office Space: Finding appropriate leased space with adequate wiring, outlets, and security

✍ Office Equipment: Departing Member's equipment too old

✍ Office Furnishings: Hard to find good furniture from GSA



# Main Contributors to Problems

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- ✍ CAO staff had no point of contact – people who attend orientation often were different from the ones who eventually set up the district offices.
- ✍ Guidance for opening district offices was scattered in various documents/locations.
- ✍ Members deviated from suggested course of action.
- ✍ Offices “going it alone” needed assistance after the fact.



# Improvements Initiated by CAO

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- ✍ HSS is developing booklets for Opening and Closing District Offices to put all guidance in one place with checklist and contact information.
- ✍ HIR staff was proactive in contacting Members offices that had not contacted them.
- ✍ Started Telecomm and Data connection actions on “Member-elect” letterhead to get an early start on the six-week window.
- ✍ HIR staff was proactive in “piggy-backing” on System Integrator set-up visits to District Offices to get data connection work done.



# Solutions for District Office Transitions for the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress

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- ✍ HSS continue to develop booklets for Opening and Closing District Offices.
- ✍ Disseminate information and guidance in multiple ways (hard copy, CD's, Intranet).
- ✍ Provide reasonable expectations as to when district offices should be operational.
- ✍ Explore the feasibility of establishing move coordinators to assist with district office transitions using the D.C. moves as a model.
- ✍ Encourage Members to give House support staff a point of contact as soon as possible to work with throughout the district office transition process.
- ✍ Inform Members that the quickest and most efficient transitions occur when new Members assume the departing Members leased space.