

Information For Departing Members

From Office Equipment to Your Retirement Benefits, What You Need to Know, Now

Official Expenses

The 2008 Members' Representational Allowance (MRA) is available through January 2, 2009. The Finance Office will process signed vouchers for official expenses incurred through January 2, 2009, regardless of whether the bill has been received by that date. Remember, even after leaving office, Members are personally liable for any official costs incurred during their term that exceed the official allowance.

Use of Offices

Rule 3 of the House Office Building Commission's "Rules and Procedures Governing the Selection and Assignment of Suites in the House Office Buildings" requires departing Members to vacate their office space **no later than 12:00 noon on December 1, 2008**. When you are ready to vacate the office, please call the Superintendent's office at 5-4141 to make arrangements to have the keys picked up at your office.



Alternate Work Space

An alternate work space will be available for departing Members and staff to use in B-339 Rayburn House Office Building, from November 27 through December 15, 2008. It will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday

through Friday. In order to reserve space in the Departing Member Service Center, please submit a letter of request to Carol Nichols, House Support Services, B-227 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515. A sample letter for this request can be found online at <http://housenet.house.gov> (see 111th Congressional Transition).

Each office is assigned a single cubicle for the duration of their stay. Departing Member offices should consider creating a rotating schedule for staff access to the Center since the cubicles are modest in size. Each cubicle is equipped with a telephone, networked computer, and basic supplies. Specialized supplies such as franked envelopes and other items unique to your office should be brought with staff from your current office. You may choose to have your office's main telephone line transferred to your cubicle to provide for the continuity of services to your constituency. Please contact your telecommunications administrator at 6-4101 to have your line transferred to the Center.

It is important to note that once your office suite is vacated, staff will no longer have access to the in-office server. Any files that you would like to have access to once you have vacated your suite should be transferred to CDs and brought with you to the Center. Staff in the Center will have access to the Microsoft Office Suite of applications (Word, Excel, etc.), along with e-mail and Internet access.

Many Members choose to continue most of their operations in the closing weeks from their district office(s).

District Offices

In district offices, the expiration date of Member office leases will determine the latest possible dates for moving out, but may not be later than January 2. Departing Members are not required to occupy their district offices through the end of their leases.

When closing District offices, remember to close existing utility and supply accounts.

Utilities

Utilities that serve district offices must be disconnected before the end of the term. These may include gas, electricity, water, garbage, sewage, cellular phone service, and cable. Members will need to contact each utility company directly to arrange for disconnection.

Members should work with their financial counselor to ensure cancellation of all utility accounts. If the

A Message from the Ranking Member

While you will receive various reminders from the administrative offices of the House in the weeks ahead, the following is a summary of the major areas you need to consider when closing your Washington, D.C. and District Congressional Offices.

Inside this newsletter you will find tips on what to do with your official files, details on payroll and benefits for Members and staff, and other useful tools including checklists and a tabulation of useful phone numbers.

As always, if you need further assistance, please contact the Committee on House Administration's Office of Member Services at 5-8281.

Sincerely,

Vernon J. Ehlers
Ranking Member, CHA

(continued on page 5)

Vernon J. Ehlers, Ranking Member

Committee on House Administration





Equipment and Furniture

One of the most important aspects of closing Member and District offices is dealing with equipment and furnishings. Here we've compiled some helpful tips and information to prepare for your office's transition.

Since the Member is personally responsible for all missing, damaged, and stolen items, it is crucial to pay close attention to the office inventory during moves.

Washington, D.C. Inventory

Before a Member vacates the Washington, D.C. office, House Support Services (HSS) will conduct a physical inventory of the office and ensure accountability of all equipment. HSS will contact your office to schedule the final inventory. Before the HSS inventory, please have computer equipment disconnected by the appropriate computer vendor(s) or systems integrator. At the time HSS takes its physical inventory, it will also remove all equipment (including computers and cell phones) from the office and place them in storage for the succeeding Member. The HSS inventory should be scheduled with this in mind.

All office supplies, files or other materials that you intend to leave for the succeeding member must be boxed, labeled and placed in your storeroom.

When cleaning out your office and storeroom, please keep recyclable materials separate. Please call the Superintendent's Office at 5-4141 to request recycling and wet waste (trash) trucks as well as colored bags for each type of material. Recycling brochures are available, which describe the type of material to be placed in each bag.

District Office Inventory

The General Services Administration (GSA) will conduct inventories of equipment in district offices. GSA will contact the office to arrange the inventory. Before the GSA inventory, please have computer equipment disconnected by the appropriate computer vendor(s) or systems integrator. GSA is also available to assist with the removal and storage of items, if necessary.

Purchasing Inventoried District Office Equipment and Furnishings

The succeeding Member will inherit all inventoried district office equipment and furnishings. Any items removed by the new Member from the district office inventory during open season will

be made available to the departing Member prior to its disposition to GSA. Note: Members wishing to purchase items from their district office inventories need to write letters to their Office Coordinators before their departure, indicating those items they would like to purchase.

Departing Members may only use personal funds, payable to the U.S. Treasury, to purchase any available equipment and furnishings. The disposition sales price of the equipment and furnishings will be determined by the approved depreciation schedule, available from HSS. However, if money is owed on the purchased items, the remaining balance will be calculated into the disposition sales price.

Computer Database Information

It is the responsibility of the departing Member to decide whether they are going to transfer their computer database information to the succeeding Member or purge the information. If the departing Member decides to purge information from the database, offices may contact their TSRs for information on how to purge this information and the cost of removing the data.

The Member's Desk and Chair

An outgoing Member may purchase his or her standard issue desk and chair used in the Washington, D.C. office by writing to the Committee on House Administration and enclosing a personal check, payable to the U.S. Treasury. The prices for the standard desk and chair are \$1,000 and \$500, respectively. If the desk or chair does not fall within the standard issue category, the item(s) may or may not be available for purchase, subject to the Chairman's approval.

Each Member is personally responsible for the shipping arrangements and associated costs, including applicable inside shipping and storage charges. The First Call Customer Service Center can provide shipping information.

Note: If a Member wishes to purchase his/her desk and chair, the Member should do so prior to January 2. If the intent to purchase the item is not made to the Committee on House Administration prior January 2, the Member may be denied purchase of the item(s).

Official Records and Papers

Have stacks of paper that you're not sure what to do with? Need to ship books and files home? Here's a guide to dealing with your office's records and papers before you leave Congress.

All records and papers become the personal property of Members upon completion of their terms. This does not include the Member's copy of the US Code. Members may choose to keep these papers, give them to a college, university, museum or other institution, or have them destroyed. Members do not need explicit permission from anyone to do anything with their files and correspondence.

Shipping

If the Member chooses to ship official records and papers, arrangements should be made through the First Call Customer Service Center at 202-225-8000.

Step 1: The Member will need to fill out a "Notice of Intent to Ship Official Records and Papers" form for each shipment and for each location to which boxes will be sent. The forms may be downloaded from HouseNet 111th Transition Page, <http://onlinecao.house.gov/111transition/deploy-depart/departmembers.htm> or forms are available at the First Call Service Center, B227 Longworth Building.

Step 2: When completed, forms should be faxed to First Call at 202-226-8845 or delivered to B227 Longworth Building. It is recommended that offices begin the shipping process as early as possible to avoid delays.

How Items Are Shipped

Papers should be shipped in 15" x 12" x 10" file boxes, which are available for purchase from Office Supply Service. Offices are encouraged to use only one size to facilitate the "strapping" of the boxes onto skids. Boxes should be filled, weigh less than 70 pounds, and be completely sealed with reinforced tape. A completed shipping label should be attached to each box.

Step 1: Blank adhesive labels are available from the First Call



Customer Service Center, B-227 Longworth House Office Building.

Step 2: To print directly onto the adhesive label visit HouseNet at <http://onlinecao.house.gov/111transition/deploy-depart/pdf/os-caoshippinglabel.pdf>.

Step 3: Contact the First Call Customer Service Center to coordinate with the Washington National Records Center to arrange the shipments. (If destruction is authorized, the Washington National Records Center will provide witnessed disposal of the papers).

Step 4: Members should forward their completed shipping labels to the Washington National Records Center.

The First Call Customer Service Center recommends that offices limit themselves to two shipments from the Washington, D.C. office. Shipments should not be fewer than 30 boxes. The frank, Federal Express, UPS, and other services are available for shipments smaller than 30 boxes.

What Items May Be Shipped

Official books, records, papers, and files that would otherwise be permissible for mailing under the frank may be shipped under the frank before the end of the Member's term. Remember that personal items are not frankable and may not be shipped under the frank. Shipment may take several weeks; for this reason, papers or financial records that may be needed prior to delivery should not be included in shipments.

Where Items May Be Shipped

Papers may be sent to any location within a Member's district, such as universities or colleges. The approval of the Committee on House Administration is required to ship to any location outside the district. Members seeking the Committee's approval must make such requests in writing to the Committee on House Administration.

Archives

At a Member's request, the National Archives will return, destroy, or prepare the boxes of material that a Member has deposited at the Washington National Records Center. The Member should send a signed letter authorizing the appropriate disposition, which includes the accession numbers and container numbers, if appropriate. Please note that disposition must be completed before the end of the Member's term.



Payroll and Benefits

One of the areas that Members often have questions on even after leaving office is their benefits. Here are the basics you need to know, and where to find more information if you need it.

Paychecks and W-2 Forms

It is important that the House be able to reach Members and staff after Members have left office. Staff should notify the Payroll Office of their forwarding addresses for their final paychecks and W-2 forms. Members should send their forwarding address to the Clerk of the House, the Sergeant at Arms, CAO Office of Members' Services and House Postal Operations.

Postal Operations

Departing Members should submit forwarding orders with their local post office in their districts to have district office mail forwarded. Departing Members should submit forwarding instructions to House Postal Operations Help Desk, B-240 Longworth House Office Building, on x6-3764 for their D.C. office mail.

Health Insurance

Members and staff will continue to receive health benefits through the last day of the month in which termination occurs. Coverage will continue temporarily for 31 days after enrollment ends.

Members and staff have the option of continuing coverage for up to 18 months after termination. However, Members and staff must pay both the employee and government shares of the premium, and a 2% administrative charge.

Life Insurance

Life insurance enrollment under the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) ends 31 days after the date of termination. Coverage will continue temporarily for 31 days after enrollment ends. Members and staff may elect to convert existing policies into individual policies.

Retirement Benefits

Members and staff who do not qualify for an immediate annuity may choose to leave Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) contributions on deposit in the retirement fund, or may request a refund of those contributions. If

contributions are left on deposit, they will continue to accrue interest. If the funds are withdrawn, all credit for prior service will be forfeited.

Members and staff who contribute to the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) may either leave contributions on deposit or request a refund. If the funds are withdrawn, any future annuity that had been established based on Federal service will be forfeited.

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)

Members and staff with less than \$200, and more than \$5 on deposit will receive an automatic refund of contributions and earnings, unless the TSP Service Office is notified of another preference. The contributions and earnings of Members and staff with more than \$200 on deposit will remain on deposit, unless the TSP Service Office is notified of another preference. Funds may be left on deposit, where they will continue to accrue earnings, transferred to an Individual Retirement Account (IRA), or used to purchase an annuity. CAO Office of Members' Services and the Office of Personnel and Benefits will mail TSP withdrawal information directly to Members and staff.

Personal Transitions

The Office of Employee Assistance (OEA) is available for both DC and District staff to help them adjust to and plan for their transitions to new jobs or careers. The OEA staff is available to meet with House staff individually or as a group to discuss resume development and career planning. For more information, please call x5-2400.

Need More Information?

For Members and staff who still have questions, the specialists in the CAO's Human Resources department are there to help.

For questions regarding Member payroll and benefits, please contact Member Services at 5-3644. For assistance with staff inquiries, please contact Human Resources' main line at 5-1435.

Franking & Subscriptions

Use of the Frank

During the 90-day period immediately following the end of their term, departing Members are permitted, on a restricted basis, to use the frank. During this period, use of the frank is limited to matters directly related to the closing of the congressional office. The House will pay the costs of mailings sent under the frank after the end of the Member's term.

Please note that the frank may not be used during this period for postal patron mailings, newsletters, questionnaires, or other mass mailings, unless they are in direct response to inquiries or requests. As always, all mailings sent under the frank must meet franking requirements.

Subscriptions

In most instances, subscriptions to newspapers and periodicals will expire at the end of a Member's term. However, Members may want to make sure that all subscriptions to newspapers and periodicals will expire, are cancelled, or are transferred to the incoming Member by the last day of their term.

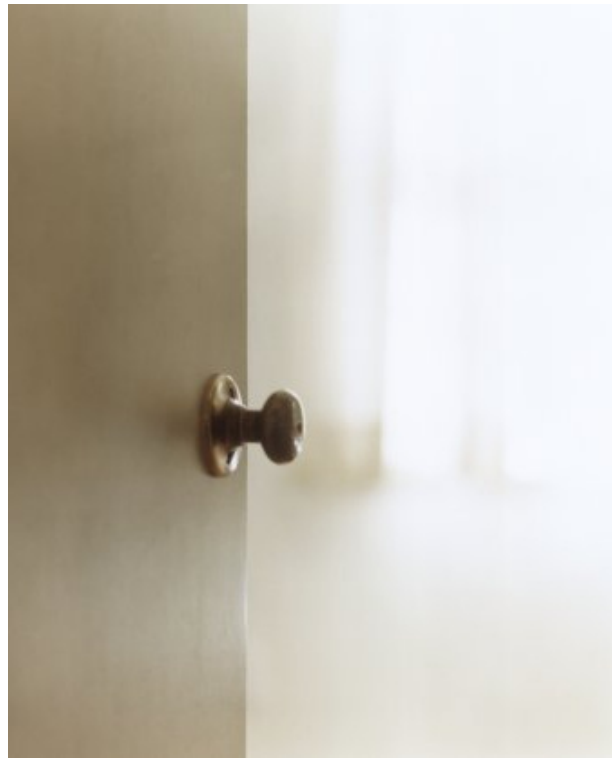
If the Member chooses to cancel subscriptions, the office may seek a refund for the remaining portion of the subscription. The refund should be forwarded to the Finance Office for deposit in the U.S. Treasury for credit to the Members' Representational Allowance.

Information for Departing Members (continued from front page)

Member paid a security deposit for utility service, the utility company must reimburse the Member.

District Office Accounts

Many district offices have established accounts with area companies such as office supply stores, printers, or gasoline companies. Since these accounts are official House accounts, they must be closed at the end of the Member's term. Official purchases made on these accounts prior to January 2, 2009, are reimbursable from the MRA.



Before you go...

...a few last-minute reminders:

- (1) DC office keys must be turned in to the House Superintendent in B-341, Rayburn House Office Building. While there, Members may also wish to leave successors a memorandum on any supplies that have been left in the storeroom, details relating to the office, equipment and files, and the name and phone number of a former staff member who could be contacted to answer questions, etc.
- (2) Staff identification cards must be returned to the Sergeant at Arms (Office of Identification Services, 321 Cannon).
- (3) House Floor Tour Identification Cards must be returned to the Office of the Sergeant at Arms in room H-124 of the U.S. Capitol Building.
- (4) Try to complete all vouchers on or before the day the office is closing. If there are vouchers which need to be processed after that time, please arrange with the House Postal Operations Help Desk, B-240 Longworth House Office Building, on x6-3764, to forward any bills to a new address, and then submit the vouchers to the Finance Office for final payment.
- (5) Please check to ensure that you have not left any items at the Dry Cleaners, Shoe Repair or Staff Fitness Center.

Important Telephone Numbers

The following telephone numbers may prove useful while you prepare to close your offices:

Committee on House Administration Republican Office	5-8281
Clerk's Office	5-7000
Finance Office	6-4650
First Call Customer Service Center	5-8000
Franking Commission	6-0647
General Services Administration	202-501-0563
HIR Computer Support/Call Center	5-9276
Office of Telecommunications	6-4101
CAO Office of Members' Services	5-3644
Office of Employee Assistance (Human Resources)	5-2400
Office of Identification Services	5-3820
Office Supply Service	5-3321
Office Services	5-3994
Payroll (Human Resources)	5-1435
Personnel & Benefits (Human Resources)	5-1435
Postal Operations	6-3764
Records Center (Archives)	301-713-7340
Sergeant at Arms	5-2456
Superintendent of Buildings	5-4141



Committee on
House Administration

Republican Staff - Member Services and Franking Office
1216A Longworth House Office Building | Washington, D.C. 20515-6157
t: 202-226-0647 | f: 202-226-0047 | <http://gop.cha.house.gov>

Departing Member Checklist - D.C. Office

Before closing your D.C. office, please take note of the status of the following items:

- Computer equipment disconnected by vendor(s) or systems integrator
- HSS physical inventory completed/ Place all inventoried equipment in storage for the incoming Member
- Send letter and check to the Committee on House Administration, prior to departure, indicating the Member's desire to purchase his or her desk and chair, if applicable
- File "Notice of Intent to Ship Official Records and Papers" with First Call, if applicable
- Ship official records and papers, if applicable
- Authorize appropriate disposition of National Archives materials
- Move material for the succeeding member to your storeroom and consider recycling of materials when cleaning out your office.
- Notify the Clerk of the House, the Sergeant at Arms, Members' Services and the House Postal Operations of forwarding address for the Member
- Notify House Payroll Office of forwarding addresses for staff
- Submit forwarding instructions to House Postal Operations for D.C. office mail
- Have the Member and all staff address their options on:
 - Health insurance
 - Life insurance
 - Federal Employee Retirement System
 - Civil Service Retirement System
 - Thrift Savings Plan
- Contact the Office of Telecommunications to coordinate the disposition of all telecommunications equipment, accounts, etc.
 - Set up voice mail to handle calls between the date the Member vacates the office and the date the incoming Member takes office, if desired
- Consult HIR Technical Service Representative regarding office computer requirements

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Departing Member Checklist - D.C. Office (cont'd)

Before closing your D.C. office, please take note of the status of the following items:

- Cancel or transfer all newspaper and periodical subscriptions to the incoming Member
 - Seek refunds for the remaining portions of subscriptions, if applicable
- Call the Superintendent's office at x5-4141 to make arrangements to have the keys picked up at your office
- Return staff ID cards to the Sergeant at Arms (Office of Identification Services)
- Complete and submit all remaining vouchers to the Finance Office
- Draft memo for successor regarding supplies left in storage, contact information for a former staffer, details about equipment, files, and other matters, if desired

(see next page for District Office checklist)

Departing Member Checklist - District Office

Before closing your District office, please take note of the status of the following items:

- Close utility accounts
 - Electricity
 - Gas
 - Landline phones
 - Cellular phones
 - Water
 - Garbage
 - Sewage
 - Cable
 - Other _____
- Close out supply accounts
 - Stationery/ Office Supplies
 - Gasoline
 - Other _____
- Computer equipment disconnected by vendor(s) or systems integrator
- GSA physical inventory completed/ Place all inventoried equipment in storage for the incoming Member
- Write letter to HSS, prior to departure, indicating the equipment and furnishings the Member wishes to purchase (with personal funds), if applicable
- File notice of intent to ship official records and papers with First Call, if applicable
- Ship official records and papers, if applicable.
- Authorize appropriate disposition of National Archives materials, if applicable
- Notify Payroll Office of forwarding addresses for staff
- Submit forwarding instructions to the appropriate local post offices for district office mail

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Departing Member Checklist - District Office (cont'd)

Before closing your District office, please take note of the status of the following items:

- ❑ Have all staff address their options on:
 - ❑ Health insurance
 - ❑ Life insurance
 - ❑ Federal Employee Retirement System
 - ❑ Civil Service Retirement System
 - ❑ Thrift Savings Plan
- ❑ Contact the Office of Telecommunications to coordinate the disposition of all telecommunications equipment, accounts, etc.
- ❑ Set up voice mail to handle calls between the date the Member vacates the office and the date the incoming Member takes office, if desired
- ❑ Consult HIR Technical Support Representative regarding office computer requirements
- ❑ Cancel or transfer all newspaper and periodical subscriptions to the incoming Member
 - ❑ Seek refunds for the remaining portions of subscriptions, if applicable
- ❑ Return staff ID cards to the Sergeant at Arms (Office of Identification Services)
- ❑ Complete and submit all remaining vouchers to the Finance Office
- ❑ Draft memo for successor regarding supplies left in storage, contact information for a former staffer, details about equipment, files, and other matters, if applicable and desired