

House IT Policy 003.0

The United States House of Representatives Information Technology Policy for Official Domain Names

Version: 1.0
Approved: December 2008
Approval Authority: The United States House of Representatives
Committee on House Administration

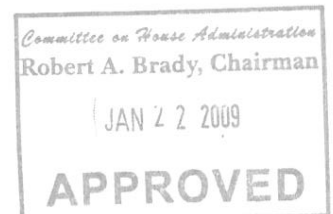


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1 Introduction

Establishing and adhering to a standardized naming convention for all official U.S. House of Representatives (House) websites located within the House intranet and internet is critical to simplifying and improving accessibility of House information to its intended audience. This policy supplements the domain name guidance provided within the House Member and Committee Handbook.

The House Member and Committee handbook will always supersede this policy and any forthcoming policies.

1.1 Scope

This document sets forth requirements for the creation and use of domain names in the House of Representatives. This policy is applicable to all House entities as defined in section 2.2 regardless of the service or intended use.

2 Definitions

2.1 House Entity

As it relates to this policy, a “House entity” is any organization that utilizes the House’s information technology (IT) infrastructure, within the House’s assigned internet protocol (IP) range, to deliver IT services and web content both internal to the House and external to constituents and other organizations. These organizations generally include all Members, Committees, Leadership, Officers and institutional support offices of the House.

2.2 Employing Authority

As it relates to this policy, an “Employing Authority” includes any personal Office of a Member of the House, a Committee of the House, or any other House Entity headed by a person with the final authority to appoint, hire, discharge, and set the terms, conditions, or privileges of the employment of an employee of the House of Representatives.

2.3 Website

Websites are a collection of files or information on a particular topic that includes a default location called a home page. For example, most organizations that operate a website publish a single address that directs visitors to their home page. Navigation on the home page provides a mechanism to browse all of the information and files on the site. For

example, the website for U.S. House of Representatives has the home page address of <http://www.house.gov>.

2.4 Domain Names

Domains names provide a user friendly, easy to remember name to help locate services or resources over the internet or network. Domains can also be sub divided into smaller domains, often called sub domains. Examples of domain names used in the House include *house.gov*, *clerk.house.gov*, and *speaker.house.gov*. *clerk.house.gov* and *speaker.house.gov* are also considered sub domains of the broader *house.gov* domain.

2.5 house.gov Domain

The House of Representatives has registered the domain *house.gov* with the General Services Administration (GSA), which is the organization responsible for managing the top-level .gov domain. The House has full control over the *house.gov* domain and can create any number of sub domains that reflect the various entities and organizations that encompass the House.

For example, the House has created the domain names *cha.house.gov* for the Committee on House Administration and *cao.house.gov* for the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer.

2.6 Virtual Directories

Virtual directories are shortcuts created on a web server to assist with subdividing a website into different entities or subordinate sites. In the *house.gov* domain, virtual directories perform a similar function as sub domains by helping to uniquely identify an Office's website. For example, the House created the virtual directory <http://www.house.gov/cha> for the Committee on House Administration.

For the purpose of this policy, virtual directories created immediately under *House.gov* must adhere to the same conventions and restrictions as domain names.

3 Policy

3.1 Domain Name Conventions

Effective immediately, all new domains created under this policy shall be in the form of *OfficeName.house.gov* or *ServiceName.house.gov*.

For example:

- *cao.house.gov*
- *member.house.gov*

- *cha.house.gov*

Domain names may be further subdivided into sub domains provided those names are compliant with the restrictions and polices outlined within this document.

For example:

- *gop.cha.house.gov*

3.2 Domain Name Restrictions

All domain names created under this policy must:

- be recognizably derivative or representative of the name of the entity requesting the domain¹
- not be a slogan
- not imply in any manner that the House endorses or favors any specific commercial product, commodity, or service

3.3 Location of the house.gov Domain and House Websites

The house.gov and all sub domains must be located within the House's assigned internet protocol (IP) range. The external hosting of house.gov domains is not permitted.

All House websites must be located within the house.gov domain.

3.4 Requesting House domain names

Any Employing Authority may request a unique domain name within house.gov to provide an address for their website or other service. The Committee on House Administration must approve all requests for a domain name that does not conform to the standard naming convention.

3.4.1 Joint Committees and House Commissions

Joint Committees and House Commissions that encompass a membership beyond just the House institution may also request a unique domain name within house.gov through a sponsoring House Employing Authority.

3.4.2 Subcommittees

Under this policy, Subcommittees are not considered Employing Authorities. The Chair of the full Committee may request a sub domain of the existing

¹ An exception to this restriction is that Officers of the House may request domain names to support the House as an institution, or to provision a mandated service to the House or to the general public. Existing examples of this exception include mail.house.gov and lobbyingdisclosure.house.gov.

Committee domain name to identify the Subcommittee as part of the full Committee.

For example:

- *SubcommitteeName.CommitteeName.house.gov.*

3.4.3 Minority Committee Offices

Under this policy, Minority Committee Offices are not considered Employing Authorities. However, Ranking Members of the full Committee may request a sub domain name of the existing Committee domain to identify the Minority office as part of the Full Committee.

For example:

- *Minority.CommitteeName.house.gov*
- *PartyName.CommitteeName.house.gov*

3.4.4 Congressional Member Organizations (CMO's) and Congressional Staff Organizations (CSO's)

CHA recognized and approved Congressional Member Organizations (CMO's) and Congressional Staff Organizations (CSO's) are not permitted to create or operate independent websites. Furthermore, they are not permitted to request a unique domain name directly under house.gov.

However, Employing Authorities may request a sub domain of their existing domain name to support a CMO or CSO that they have sponsored.

For example, a Member may request that *CaucusName.MemberName.house.gov* be assigned to the section of their website dedicated to caucus activities.

3.5 Internal Domain Names

Some House Entities may wish to deploy Intranets or other services that are only accessible internally within the House network using an internal domain name. The same policies that apply to external domain names also apply to internal domain names, with the following exceptions.

1. Officers of the House may deploy Intranet websites and services that use domain names derivative of the service they are providing (e.g., housenet.house.gov and us.house.gov).
2. CHA recognized and approved Congressional Member Organizations (CMO's) and Congressional Staff Organizations (CSO's) may request unique internal domain names directly under the house.gov domain for internal use.

4 Compliance

All official House domain names, excluding previously approved domain name exceptions, must comply with this policy.

No additional top-level (GSA issued) .gov names, other than those used to identify the House as an institution, will be approved.

5 Authority

The Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, House Information Resources (HIR) serves as implementing authority for all House domain name requests.

Appendix A – House Approved “Grandfathered” Domain Names

The following domain names have been granted prior exception to House policies related to domain name conventions and are “grandfathered” from the domain name convention established herein. No other domain name exceptions will be approved.

- democraticwhip.gov
- dems.gov
- gop.gov
- gopleader.gov
- housedemocrat.gov
- housedemocratic.gov
- housedemocrats.gov
- housedems.gov
- jct.gov
- majorityleader.gov
- majoritywhip.gov
- republicans.gov
- speaker.gov
- democraticwhip.gov
- democrats.gov
- dems.gov
- gop.gov
- housedemocrats.gov
- majorityleader.gov
- majoritywhip.gov
- republicans.gov
- speaker.gov
- csce.gov