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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

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September 10, 2003

The Honorable Devin Nunes
U.S. House of Representatives
1017 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: CRS Pilot

Dear Representative Nunes:

The Committee is initiating a new service for making CRS research products available to the public, on a selective basis, through Member and committee web sites. At the same time we are ending the pilot program in which you have participated. Let me first thank you for assisting in the testing of an innovative use of technology to facilitate the communication of valuable congressional information. Your participation in the pilot was critical in paving the way for resolving some of the technical problems associated with providing Members access to electronic versions of CRS products that are frequently updated.

Under the new service, House Members and committees are directed to the CRS web site, where products are organized by issues of current anticipated legislative interest and action and are subject to enhanced word search capability. The Committee believes that this site offers the best opportunity for Members and committees to identify the most relevant products of their choosing for their web sites. Once a product and its product number have been identified through the CRS Web site, the office can then create a link on its Web site to that product. This link points to a server maintained by House Information Resources (HIR). After this link is established, anyone selecting that link from the Member or committee Web site will obtain the latest version of that CRS product as all updates are forwarded on a daily basis to the HIR server.

In the Committee's judgment, this new service represents a resolution to the challenges posed to this body regarding CRS product availability to the public. First and foremost, this resolution maintains the direct relationship between Members and their constituents by enabling Members to learn directly of constituent concerns, and by providing constituents with information that Members personally deem useful. This modified

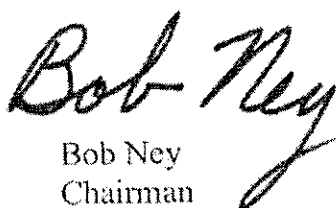
approach also preserves the principle of selective dissemination and avoids legal and institutional dangers posed by wholesale publication of CRS products.

The CRS Web Site has undergone significant enhancements since the pilot was initiated, including development of a more robust search engine as well as the creation of a new service that ties selected CRS Reports to issues of current legislative importance. By utilizing the CRS web site to select products, congressional offices can more quickly and with more specificity select those products that are most suitable and appropriate for access by their constituents. Through this service, more CRS products will be accessible to Members and committees than were available under the pilot.

This new service will be available as of September 17, 2003, at which time the pilot project and the method of access afforded participants will end. In order to provide the opportunity for a smooth transition for the offices which used the pilot system, the Committee has asked HIR to maintain existing electronic links until October 10, 2003, to allow time for these offices to adjust their Web sites to the new service. After this date the existing electronic links will no longer function. In addition, HIR is available throughout this period to provide technical assistance for making the transition as smooth and expeditious as possible.

The Committee trusts that you will share its enthusiasm over this initiative, and looks forward to your continued participation and support.

Sincerely,


Bob Ney
Chairman


John B. Larson
Ranking Member