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## ANNUAL REPORT

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FISCAL YEAR 2016

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*Congressional Research Service*  
Informing the legislative debate since 1914





# ANNUAL REPORT

Congressional Research Service  
Library of Congress  
Fiscal Year 2016

To the Joint Committee on the Library  
United States Congress

Pursuant to  
Section 321  
Public Law 91-510

Mary B. Mazanec  
Director

January 2017



# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Mary B. Mazanec, *Director*

**FY**2016 was an exciting and historical year for the Library, as Dr. Carla Hayden was nominated and confirmed as the 14<sup>th</sup> Librarian of Congress after the retirement of her predecessor Dr. James H. Billington. The Congressional Research Service (CRS) welcomed and looked forward to working with Dr. Hayden to continue to fulfill its unique mission to provide authoritative, confidential, nonpartisan, and objective research and analysis to Congress. This report highlights CRS's legislative support and the management initiatives undertaken to bolster our services during the fiscal year.

Major legislative issues this fiscal year included comprehensive energy legislation, defense reform, federal health insurance programs, immigration, Middle East turmoil, privacy, the Zika outbreak, student financial aid, and water quality. Throughout these debates and more, Congress relied on CRS expertise, placing more than 62,000 requests for custom analysis and research. The Service hosted more than 9,200 congressional participants at seminars, briefings, and training; published more than 3,500 new or updated reports; summarized more than 6,300 bills; and maintained nearly 10,000 products on its website for Congress, CRS.gov, which received over 1.7 million views. Overall, CRS provided confidential, custom services to 100% of Member and standing committee offices.

The Service is always working to optimize its operations to best serve Congress and anticipate its needs. In FY2016, we pursued several management initiatives. Notably, CRS led a project, at the direction of the House Committee on Appropriations, to survey Members of Congress and their staff regarding Library of Congress products and services and especially those of CRS. The survey yielded responses from more than 1,300 staff and 63 Members. The results showed strong support for the work of CRS. Respondents gave high ratings to CRS for its core values, consultative services, and custom products. Respondents also indicated a preference for a broad range of products

and services. The survey provided the Service with significant insights about its products and services valued by the Congress. We are using those insights to inform our strategic planning efforts.

To that end, the Service continued its strategic planning process by developing a detailed operations plan, as well as establishing a process for assessing and updating the plan. Other management accomplishments included the introduction of a new product, Infographics, which presents complex information in a visual format, and the further development of another product, Interactive Maps, which illustrates multidimensional public policy issues. CRS also continued to improve and enhance its systems and technology that support service to Congress. We contributed to the development of Congress.gov, the next-generation legislative information system; we upgraded Mercury, our customer relationship management software; and we redesigned parts of CRS.gov to make it easier for congressional clients to discover and use CRS products.

Our accomplishments in FY2016 not only confirm our dedication to the Congress, but position us to better serve Congress in the future. The Service is committed to meeting Congress's needs and exceeding expectations as Members, staff, and committees shape legislation and the nation's future. It is an honor and privilege to serve the U.S. Congress and the American people.



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## I. CRS SERVICE TO CONGRESS

**T**he Congressional Research Service (CRS) assists Congress by supporting its legislative, oversight, and representative functions. CRS provides objective, analytical research and information to all Members and committees of Congress. Principles guiding the work of the Service, in accordance with its charter, are encompassed in the CRS mission:

CRS serves Congress throughout the legislative process by providing comprehensive and reliable legislative research and analysis that are timely, objective, authoritative, and confidential, thereby contributing to an informed national legislature.

Lawmakers rely on CRS for timely, balanced analysis of all public policy issues and legislative proposals on the congressional agenda. CRS assistance includes substantive analytical written products, tailored confidential memoranda, issue-related seminars, and personal consultations and briefings.

In FY2016, CRS served Congress as it considered complex domestic legislative proposals concerning federal health insurance programs, immigration, housing assistance, and pensions and retirement income. Experts offered support during congressional debate in both chambers focusing on constitutional law, environmental law, telecommunications and Internet policy, and privacy and law enforcement issues. The Service also worked closely with lawmakers as they addressed the U.S. response to the Zika outbreak, changes in student federal loans, the federal regulation and rulemaking process, and aviation security. Equally challenging situations for Congress were foreign policy issues regarding international law and treaties; implications of a changing global order; Middle East instability; the Trans-Pacific Partnership; defense reform; the Iran Nuclear Agreement; Puerto Rico's fiscal crisis; declining U.S. agricultural exports; and cybersecurity and data breaches in both private and public sectors. For all these public policy issues and more, Congress relied on the authoritative and confidential support that CRS offered at each stage of the legislative process.

## INDICATORS OF CRS PERFORMANCE AND PRODUCTIVITY

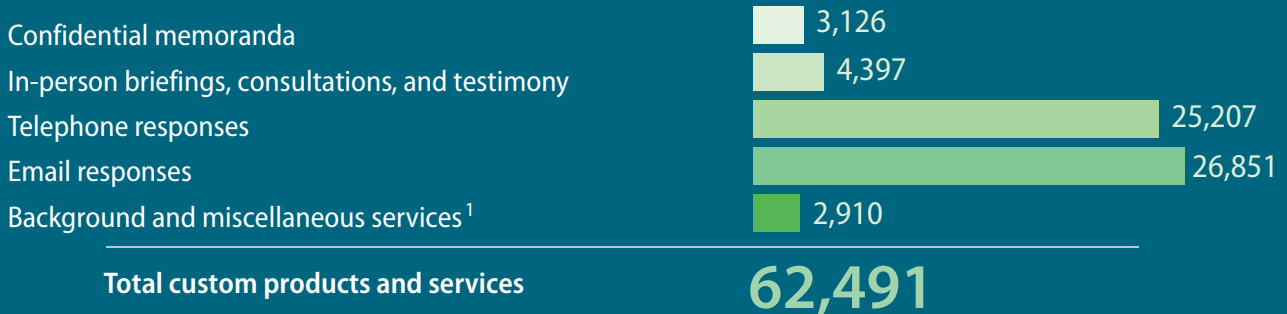
In FY2016 CRS received 563,000 requests for products and services from Members and committees, including approximately 62,000 requests for custom analysis and research. Congressional staff viewed the CRS website approximately 1,700,000 times, including 634,000 views of the Service’s reports and general-distribution products. Approximately 9,200 congressional participants attended CRS seminars, institutes, and training programs.

By the end of the fiscal year the Service had more than 10,000 reports and online products available. The Service’s appropriations status table was viewed approximately 28,000 times. CRS analysts summarized more than 6,300 bill versions for Congress.gov and the Legislative Information System. CRS served 100% of Member and standing committee offices. The following table provides more details of CRS performance.

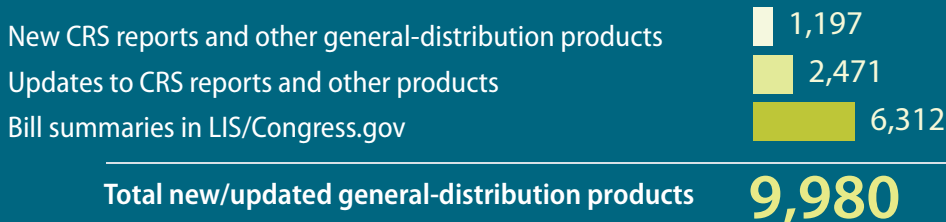
## FY2016 CRS SERVICE TO CONGRESS: A SNAPSHOT

The following are selected data on products and services provided to Congress during FY2016. These data are derived from the CRS request management system, the web metrics application, and other applications that measure output. CRS support for Congress also comes in the form of personal client interactions that may not always be captured by these systems.

### CUSTOM PRODUCTS AND SERVICES



### GENERAL-DISTRIBUTION PRODUCTS



<sup>1</sup> Summary of categories with small total counts, such as revising existing reports upon demand for a specific client, supplying DVDs of a recorded event, sending non-CRS created materials, etc.



## WEB ACTIVITY

**1,742,258** Congressional Views on CRS.gov Pages <sup>2</sup>

**634,329**

CRS report and general distribution product views

**27,610**

Appropriations Status Table views

**29,449**

Legal Sidebar views

**2,160**

Find an Analyst page views

**5,856**

Video views (Video Briefs and recorded events)

**3,203** MyCRS Subscriptions (approximate active users at year end)

## OTHER DATA

**10,315**

CRS reports and product titles available at year end

**100%**

Member/Standing committee offices provided custom services<sup>3</sup>

**9,207**

Congressional participants in seminars, institutes and training programs

<sup>2</sup> Includes the selected highlights indented below plus other pages on CRS.gov such as the home page, issue pages, and event pages.

<sup>3</sup> Percentage for which at least one custom service was provided during the year, rounded to the nearest 1%.





## II. LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT TO CONGRESS

**CRS** supported Congress in FY2016 during all stages of the legislative process and across all public policy issues. This support included examining the nature and extent of problems facing Congress; identifying and assessing policy options; assisting with hearings on policy proposals and on implementation of policies; supporting congressional review of nominations and treaties; and providing products, briefings, and consultations to address issues on the legislative agenda. Highlights of the year are as follows.

## MAJOR ISSUES OF THE YEAR

***Comprehensive Energy Legislation.*** Members of Congress from both chambers met in conference to negotiate major energy and natural resources legislation. Energy issues covered by proposed bills included electric grid modernization, security, and reliability; carbon capture, utilization, and storage; renewable energy incentives; oil and natural gas supply and trade; energy efficiency; and energy sector regulation. Natural resource provisions included critical minerals supply; mineral development on federal land; funding for land acquisition and parks maintenance; various fish and wildlife management directives; and water resource management and drought relief. CRS provided ongoing support for the conference process through in-person consultations, comparisons of bill sections, analysis of provisions, new reports, and updates.

***Constitutional Law.*** Constitutional law was a central area of congressional concern during the past year, primarily because the role of the Constitution in shaping American society has been a prominent issue in the 2016 election and because the death of Justice Antonin Scalia raises the potential for significant changes to the future of constitutional interpretation by the Court. CRS attorneys provided guidance to lawmakers through a variety of formats, including efforts to prepare the decennial edition of the Senate Document, *The Constitution of the United States of America: Analysis and Interpretation*, presentation of seminars for the Federal Law Update series relating to constitutional law, the Court's criminal law cases, and the application of the Constitution's Supremacy Clause. In the wake of the death of Justice Scalia and the nomination of Judge Merrick Garland to be his successor, CRS attorneys wrote comprehensive reports to guide lawmakers with regard to the Supreme Court vacancy.

***Defense Reform and the National Defense Authorization Act.*** CRS assisted lawmakers as they debated key provisions in the FY2017 National Defense

Authorization Act (H.R. 4909, S. 2943), beginning with seminars for staff of both chambers on the President's defense budget request, always the first such overview and analysis available to Congress following the Administration's initial budget presentation. CRS analyzed legislative proposals in both chambers addressing the reform proposals to streamline security cooperation and assistance authorities, the strategic rationale for security cooperation, and policy implications of a potential shift in interagency dynamics, especially between the Departments of Defense and State. CRS experts examined proposals related to reform of the Department of Defense, addressing such issues as changing the defense acquisition process, reorganizing the Department of Defense, adapting major military personnel and health provisions, and assessing overseas contingency operation funding. As the bill entered its conference phase, more than 60 CRS analysts prepared side-by-side comparisons of the more than 1,000 provisions in the House and Senate versions of the bill.

***Environmental Law and Policy.*** Environmental law and policy were prominent areas of interest for Congress in FY2016. CRS analysts and attorneys assisted Congress by analyzing House and Senate differences regarding the Toxic Substances Control Act amendments in 2016 (P.L. 114-182), including help with questions of legal interpretation, policy developments and implications, and legislative options during the conference process and earlier legislative deliberations. When the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued its Clean Power Plan rule regulating emissions of greenhouse gases from existing fossil fuel-fired power plants in 2015, CRS analysts and attorneys briefed congressional requesters regarding the implications of the rule and provided written reports and memoranda. CRS attorneys presented a Federal Law Update seminar on environmental law. CRS also played an active role in briefing Members and committees on a myriad of other issues involving environmental law and policy.

**Federal Aviation Administration.** In FY2016 both the House and Senate addressed legislation to reauthorize civil aviation programs, encompassing everything from regulation of unmanned aircraft to subsidized air service to small communities. A key issue in both chambers was whether to reorganize Federal Aviation Administration air traffic control operations as either a private entity or an independent government-owned corporation. CRS responded to congressional requests for analysis as the two chambers considered provisions relating to aviation security, hiring of air traffic controllers, and maintenance of control towers at small airports. After temporary extensions, legislation enacted in July 2016 reauthorized aviation programs through September 2017.

**Federal Health Insurance Programs.** The Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (P.L. 114-10) introduced the most substantial modifications in decades to how the Medicare program pays physicians. CRS provided Congress with briefings and helped develop policy options to address potential implementation challenges. CRS experts examined the potential effects of the FY2016 Social Security cost-of-living adjustment on Medicare Part B premiums, analyzed legislative options, and provided technical assistance to Congress as legislation was enacted to address Medicare beneficiary concerns and the program's long-term financial viability. CRS testified at a congressional hearing on Medicaid financing and assisted Congress in understanding federal funding for the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and its affiliated health centers.

**Financial Regulation.** The Dodd-Frank Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-203) responded to the financial crisis of 2008 by increasing regulation of financial institutions. Some have seen this regulation as a drag on the economy, and Congress responded with numerous hearings and bills aimed at providing regulatory relief to financial institutions. CRS analyzed and explained the legislative proposals and helped lawmakers understand the tradeoffs in proposed legislation as the costs posed by regulation were weighed against potential benefits

to consumers or against the stability of the financial system. CRS assisted as Congress considered securities-related proposals that in many instances would have focused on corporate regulatory relief. CRS attorneys also addressed Wells Fargo's creation of 2 million unauthorized debit and credit card accounts, fair lending issues, matters of international finance law, and the effect of the nuclear agreement with Iran on the Export-Import Bank's operations.

**Housing Assistance.** The 114th Congress enacted the first significant reforms to the nation's largest rental housing assistance programs, public housing and Section 8 housing choice vouchers since 1998. Enactment of the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act (P.L. 114-201) followed from the work of at least seven Congresses. In FY2016, as in previous years, CRS analyzed proposals ranging from administrative updates to expanded deregulation and changes to the programs' core structures, such as how benefits are provided and who is served. CRS examined the proposals from all angles — from distributional effects to practical and technical considerations.

**Immigration.** Immigration remained a major focus during the 114th Congress, largely because of the Supreme Court's review of the challenge that Texas and approximately two dozen other states brought against the Obama Administration's 2014 proposal to grant relief from removal and work authorization to up to 40% of the total "unauthorized alien" population. CRS attorneys prepared numerous products in anticipation of and response to the Court's decision. CRS attorneys and policy analysts also played a significant role in providing Congress with legal analysis and information about the resettlement of Syrian refugees in the United States, the immigration consequences of changes in the United States' relationship with Cuba, and the potential imposition of "visa sanctions" on foreign countries that do not cooperate in the return of their citizens or nationals who are ordered to be removed from the United States.

***Implications of a Changing Global Order.*** Global events in the last several years are creating a fundamentally new global environment that poses new, unfamiliar, and profoundly daunting challenges to the United States. Through an integrated set of forward-looking discussion programs, CRS highlighted the scope and complexity of the critical global changes underway, examined the intensity of the interactions of key factors generating that change, identified the difficult immediate and long-term questions to which such analysis leads, and articulated their implications and the tough policy choices Congress will face as a result. Among the issues addressed were the general trends shaping the new environment, implications for national security and defense, the changing contours of the global economy, radical transformation in the Middle East, the global refugee challenges, the future of Europe, the “new” geopolitics of Asia, and emerging nuclear challenges.

***International Law.*** CRS attorneys provided research and analytical support through briefings and written products on a number of foreign affairs and international law issues, including the Paris Agreement made by parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action regarding Iran’s nuclear program, resolutions issued by the United Nations Security Council, and various treaties submitted to the Senate for its advice and consent. The attorneys also researched the status of the settlement claims against Iran and assisted as Congress enacted the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act (P.L. 114-222), which may facilitate lawsuits against foreign entities for alleged involvement in terrorist acts. Other legal assistance included support on issues related to ongoing military operations against Al Qaeda and the Islamic State organization (ISIS) and a CRS Infographic that visually illustrates international commitments taking the form of executive agreements.

***Iran Nuclear Agreement.*** At the start of 2016 the United States and the international community adopted the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with

Iran to cap Iran’s alleged nuclear weapons program. The plan brought congressional attention to a range of issues bearing on both the agreement (such as implementation milestones and the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in monitoring Iran’s compliance) and broader implications. CRS offered assessments of the agreement as well as of the Iran sanctions regime and was frequently called on to help evaluate the extent and effect of sanctions relief stemming from the JCPOA as well as new legislation Congress was considering. CRS also supported Congress with ongoing and multidimensional analysis of the Iranian political arena and its foreign policy implications.

***Middle East Turmoil, Terrorism, and Instability.*** In FY2016 Congress focused on the turbulent Middle East and North Africa, especially ISIS, as the region experienced ever-deepening crises. CRS provided Congress with in-depth analysis and authoritative information about ISIS and the international struggle against it and other terrorist groups in Iraq and Syria as well as Libya, Yemen, Egypt, and beyond the region to Europe and Asia. CRS analyzed a new Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and Israel aimed at enabling Israel to defend itself effectively in the midst of regional instability and Israel’s continued concerns about threats from Iran. CRS also conducted detailed investigations of the failed July coup in Turkey, whose aftermath has had significant ramifications for U.S.-Turkey relations, including for U.S. forces and assets based in Turkey to counter ISIS. That event was also important with regard to Turkish-backed operations to counter Syrian Kurds operating as important anti-ISIS ground forces and as opponents of the Assad regime in Damascus.

***Pensions and Retirement Income.*** Of continued concern to legislators were the implications of a 2014 law that allowed multiemployer-defined benefit pension plans in poor financial condition to apply to the U.S. Treasury to reduce benefits to plan participants, including retirees currently receiving benefits. Cutting current retiree



benefits was seen by many as an unprecedented move. As the U.S. Treasury considered the application of a large multiemployer plan, CRS consulted with lawmakers and provided briefings. After the application was denied, Congress called on CRS for consultative support on the projected insolvency of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, which insures participants' pension benefits. CRS also analyzed the controversial fiduciary rule issued by the Department of Labor that expands the definition of investment advisers in retirement plans, holding more advisers to a higher standard.

**Poverty.** During the past year the issues of poverty and economic mobility continued to be of interest to Congress. The year also marked the 20th anniversary of the 1996 welfare reform law (P.L. 104-193), which provided additional focus on the role of government programs in the economic well-being of the poor. CRS examined the extent to which families are eligible for need-tested benefits, the population that receives need-tested benefits, and the amount of benefits they receive. Experts also addressed the share of those eligible who receive benefits from selected need-tested programs. The analyses were based on census household surveys and a microsimulation computer model that estimates eligibility for benefit programs. CRS also produced analyses of trends in poverty, trends in pre-transfer (before government benefits) poverty over the period from 1968 to 2014, and persistently poor counties.

**Privacy.** Numerous legal issues rose throughout the year concerning privacy, law enforcement interests, and private commercial interests. Increased concerns regarding data privacy resulted from a surge in cyberattacks and related liability issues. CRS attorneys reported on cybersecurity legislation, organized and held briefings, and prepared legal memoranda on cybersecurity information sharing. Following a ruling from the European Union Court of Justice that voided an agreement on transferring electronic data between the United States and Europe, CRS addressed the decision and the implications for U.S. law. CRS also

prepared a legal analysis of the Microsoft Ireland decision that initially rebuffed the Department of Justice's attempt to seek the content that Microsoft email communications stored on servers overseas. Other legal assistance supported the debate surrounding encryption and the government's ability to access encrypted data, transnational data sharing as a part of law enforcement investigations, reform of the Electronic Communications Privacy Act (H.R. 283, S. 356), and the Federal Communication Commission's issuance of the proposed Privacy Rule for Broadband Internet Service Providers.

**Puerto Rico.** Puerto Rico's fiscal difficulties raised a broad range of policy issues, including economic, governance, legal, and social welfare aspects of the crisis. CRS created an array of products on a number of platforms, including seminars, briefings, and written analyses, to help lawmakers understand the situation in Puerto Rico and develop possible solutions. CRS experts addressed proposals including legal and operational issues related to debt restructuring mechanisms, oversight boards, the revitalization of key sectors of the island's economy, potential environmental consequences, and federal health care program financing on the island. The proposals culminated in the enactment of the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act (PROMESA, P.L. 114-187). Subsequently, CRS provided ongoing support to a congressional task force on economic growth in Puerto Rico mandated by PROMESA.

**Regulations and Rulemaking.** Congress relied on CRS expertise as it focused on the issuance and implementation of rules promulgated by federal agencies. Much of this assistance involved explaining and evaluating the executive orders and statutory requirements that govern the current rulemaking process. CRS analyzed legislative proposals pending before the 114th Congress that would change the rulemaking process. CRS briefed Congress on how to track particular regulations that may be of interest. For

example, CRS explained how to identify specific types of regulations such as “major” or “economically significant” regulations. CRS analysts and attorneys also assisted with analysis of the Congressional Review Act (P.L. 104-121).

***Response to the Zika Outbreak.*** Emergence of the Zika virus in the Western Hemisphere and its toll of birth defects resulted in a CRS-wide response. Analysts and attorneys across the Service reported on policy concerns affecting countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the United States and its territories. These concerns included access to maternal and child health services, shortages of Zika testing supplies, the effectiveness and safety of both historical and novel mosquito control measures, the safety of the U.S. blood supply, and possible effects of the outbreak on the Rio Olympic and Paralympic Games. CRS helped Congress as it considered measures to fund Zika response efforts and assisted in understanding Zika funding requests in relation to the status of appropriated funds for the previous Ebola crisis. Congress repeatedly turned to CRS legal, policy, and budgetary experts as it deliberated an aid package to support domestic and international efforts to contain the outbreak.

***Russia, Ukraine, and NATO.*** Numerous challenges posed by Russia’s foreign policies, particularly in Ukraine and Syria, and Russia’s reported use of elements of “hybrid” warfare such as disinformation, cyberattacks, and support for Euro-skeptic political parties and movements in Europe, continued to be of concern to Congress. Russia’s solidification of its annexation of Crimea and its deepening involvement in a pro-Russia, separatist uprising in eastern Ukraine resulted in the renewal several times of economic and other sanctions imposed on Russia and the continuation of financial and material support to Ukraine to maintain that country’s independence and sovereignty. Congress drew on CRS expertise to help understand the complexity of the implementation of the Minsk-2 peace agreement, the reform movement within the government of Ukraine,

military tension in eastern Ukraine, the question of renewed or additional sanctions, and the motivations and long-term goals of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Congress also called on CRS regarding NATO’s evolving role, including the outcome of NATO’s July Summit in Poland that resulted in additional commitments by the United States.

***Student Financial Aid.*** CRS has been heavily involved in supporting the development and refinement of proposals to assess aspects of the quality of institutions of higher education using student outcome measures. CRS provided expertise as Congress considered the comprehensive Higher Education Act of 1965 (P.L. 89-329 as amended) reauthorization proposals, modifications to student loan repayment benefits, alterations to the design of Pell Grants, and changes to the federal student aid need analysis formula. Support included simulating the distributional effects of varied changes to the need analysis formula and Pell Grant award rules and estimating the effects of making changes to income-based student loan repayment plans on borrowers’ monthly and total repayment amounts. CRS also outlined the reasons the Department of Education withdrew recognition of the nation’s primary accreditor of for-profit colleges and universities, highlighted potential consequences of this action, and identified available options for federal student aid recipients attending such institutions.

***Telecommunications and Internet Policy.*** Policy analysis and assessment of telecommunications and Internet technology were of great interest to Congress during the past year. CRS policy experts provided written and oral support to Congress on a wide range of issues, including the complex matter of transferring the sole authority of control for Internet domain names from a national to an international purview. CRS analysts provided a series of targeted explanatory memoranda and assisted with hearings on related telecommunication and Internet issues.



***Trans-Pacific Partnership.*** CRS devoted substantial resources to analyzing and supporting Congress in its consideration of the completed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) free trade agreement (FTA) — the largest and most complex FTA the United States has ever negotiated. The TPP, which governs the United States and 11 other Asia-Pacific countries, would reduce and eliminate barriers to trade in goods, services, and agriculture; formulate trade rules on a range of complex issues; and establish new commitments to enforce core international worker rights and trade-related environmental provisions. CRS analysts and attorneys supported Congress in a multifaceted manner, focusing on issues from the agreement’s economic and geopolitical strategic implications to assessments of individual provisions such as those relating to agriculture, digital trade, intellectual property rights, dispute resolution mechanisms, and parts of the agreement that break new ground in FTAs pertaining to such issues as cybertheft and state-owned enterprises.

***Water Quality.*** In a year when the lead contamination in the drinking water in Flint, Michigan made national headlines, CRS provided assistance to Congress on water quality issues. While much of the focus was on the situation in Flint, CRS addressed broader concerns about drinking water quality, including issues of funding, health standards, and delegation of statutory responsibility. CRS analysts and attorneys addressed regulations issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the EPA defining the scope of waters protected under the Clean Water Act (P.L. 92-500). Legal challenges to the rule continued to be litigated, and a stay halted implementation. The Service provided extensive support to Congress in helping to understand the scope and potential implications of the proposal and assisting Members as they debated legislative options to address the rule.

## FOREIGN RELATIONS, DEFENSE, AND TRADE

***Challenges in U.N. Peacekeeping.*** Congressional concern intensified in FY2016 with hearings addressing reports of abuses perpetrated by U.N. peacekeepers in various missions overseas. Although charges of misconduct were not a new phenomenon, renewed controversy erupted over numerous reports of recent allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation by peacekeepers serving in the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and elsewhere. Both the House and Senate considered legislative proposals to increase accountability and abuse prevention in peacekeeping. CRS provided research support on U.N. peacekeeping in general as well as on recent charges and the multiple policy dimensions of the issue, including U.N. system efforts to address the problem and U.S. efforts to hold the perpetrators accountable.

***Europe.*** CRS experts assisted Congress with extensive congressional oversight related to Europe, increased terrorist incidents in France and Belgium, and the impact on Europe of the migration of refugees fleeing conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Libya, and elsewhere. CRS also supported Congress during various inter-parliamentary exchanges in which Congress engages, including the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the Transatlantic Legislator’s Dialogue, and the British-American Parliamentary Group.

***Export-Import Bank and Other Economic Challenges.*** Reauthorization and reform of the U.S. Export-Import Bank, the official U.S. export credit agency, continued to be a focus of congressional attention. CRS provided authoritative research and analysis to support the work of Congress on the issue, both in the lead up to reauthorization and its ongoing operations and implementation of mandated reforms. CRS supported Congress with analysis of the evolving global economy and its growing complexity and impact on the United States by addressing slower growth in Europe and in emerging economies such as China and Brazil, exchange

rate and market volatility, and major transformations in international trade and investment.

***Latin America and the Caribbean.*** Three key issues in the Latin America and Caribbean region were the focus of congressional attention: the peace process in Colombia, the evolving U.S. policy toward Cuba, and ongoing security issues in Central America. CRS experts provided background on various options, including legislation to address both U.S. involvement in these issues as well as the potential impact on overall U.S. Latin America policy. Other issues for which CRS provided support included U.S. relations with Mexico; Brazil’s political upheaval and its economic challenges as it hosted the Summer Olympics; and Haiti’s continuing political, economic, and social problems. Throughout the year CRS continued its participation in the congressionally sponsored program series “Latin America on the Rise,” first launched at the beginning of the 113th Congress. CRS recommended speakers and served as moderators of the many sessions that addressed such issues as education, freedom of the press, rule of law, private investment, and U.S. engagement in the region.

***North Korea.*** North Korea has presented U.S. policymakers with some of the post-Cold War period’s most persistent foreign policy challenges. Although the primary focus of U.S. policy toward North Korea has been Pyongyang’s nuclear weapons program, other issues also populate the U.S. policy agenda, including North Korea’s missile programs, cyber capabilities, human rights abuses, and implications of possible North Korean attacks against South Korea and Japan. CRS provided briefings, analyses, and tailored products to ensure Members of Congress were fully informed of North Korea’s domestic conditions, political situation, international relations, and nuclear diplomacy. Lawmakers relied on CRS expertise to identify and understand possible U.S. policy approaches following two 2016 nuclear weapon tests by Pyongyang,

and CRS analysts worked closely with Congress in analyzing and developing the legislative basis for U.S. economic sanctions.

***Strategic Transformation in South Asia.*** For the past decade the United States and India have been pursuing a “strategic partnership” based on shared values and apparently convergent geopolitical interests, and many analysts characterize India as a potential counterweight to China. CRS examined these developments, including their implications not only for bilateral relations, but also for dynamics in the region. Moreover, as India’s economy and capabilities have grown, Pakistan, among the leading recipients of U.S. foreign assistance in the post-9/11 era, increasingly appears to be looking to China to counter Indian dominance. CRS analyses examined regional issues including links between Pakistan and indigenous U.S. terrorism, Pakistan-India tensions and conflict, nuclear weapons proliferation, human rights protection, and economic development. Other CRS experts evaluated issues elsewhere in South Asia, including the Islamist militant threat in Bangladesh and reform and reconciliation in Sri Lanka, where 2015 presidential and parliamentary elections brought a domestic policy shift toward a new era of democratic governance, with implications for regional geopolitics and U.S. interests.

***Terrorism, Conflict, and Political Instability in Africa.*** Members of Congress have increasingly been concerned about the threat posed by emerging terrorist groups in Africa as well as the Middle East, and some have pressed the Administration to focus greater intelligence and security resources on these groups. CRS supported Congress by providing analysis on possible approaches to groups such as Boko Haram in Nigeria and al-Shabaab in Somalia. CRS supported multiple congressional activities centering on destabilizing attempts by Sub-Saharan African regimes to retain power through undemocratic means. For example, CRS provided a variety of analyses on the situations in Burundi, Rwanda, the Republic of the Congo, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Analysts also addressed

political, security, and humanitarian crises associated with internal armed civil conflicts in South Sudan, Somalia, the Central African Republic, and Mali.

***Terrorist Financing.*** Congress drew on CRS expertise as it examined the multidimensional challenge of countering the financing of international terrorism. Support included assistance with hearings that ranged in focus from ISIS to trade-based money laundering, to the interagency process to counter emerging terrorist financing threats. Throughout FY2016 CRS analysts and attorneys collaborated across several subject disciplines: transnational crime, international and U.S. financial systems, and geographic regions. This work included analyses of general U.S. and international measures to counter terrorist financing and money laundering; ISIS financing, including revenues generated from oil and antiquities smuggling; trafficking in persons; the nexus between transnational organized crime and official corruption and trafficking, including wildlife trafficking; and emerging complex schemes and new technologies supporting terrorist financing and measures to counter them.

***Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and “Brexit.”*** CRS worked with Congress on a major trade agreement as it entered its fourth year of negotiation, the U.S.-EU Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). Given the size of the bilateral economic relationship between the United States and the European Union, this proposed, comprehensive free trade agreement has significant implications for the United States, the EU, and the broader global trading system. CRS regularly updated Congress on the status of the negotiations, the priorities of the respective sides, and the outstanding issues that remained to be resolved before the agreement could be concluded. A related policy issue for Congress was the United Kingdom’s decision to leave the European Union. CRS supported Congress as it expressed increased interest in the vote’s outcomes, particularly the trade and economic implications, including the impact on

TTIP as well as on a potential future U.S.-UK free trade agreement, which many Members supported through the introduction of House and Senate resolutions.

***U.S. Alliances and Geopolitical Developments in Asia.***

CRS responded to Members' growing interest in the evolving nature of U.S. alliance relationships in Asia. CRS experts supported Congress as it addressed U.S. economic and security priorities and evaluated the implications of an arbitration case related to the South China Sea dispute between the Philippines and China under the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea. CRS analyzed the northeast Asian governments' response to Russia's so-called "turn to the East" and its implications for U.S. interests, the National League for Democracy's landslide victory in Burma's nationwide parliamentary elections, peace talks between the Burmese government and armed organizations long embroiled in ethnic conflict, and Taiwan's security. Analysts also addressed the Obama Administration's decision to restrict arms sales to Vietnam; developments in Thailand where political and economic instability persist in the wake of two military coups in the past nine years; and the situation in Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation and third largest democracy.

***U.S.-China Relations in a Global Context.*** The United States and the People's Republic of China lead the world in the size of their economies, defense budgets, and greenhouse gas emissions. Many analysts see their cooperation as necessary to address an array of global challenges, yet their differences have increasingly tipped the relationship toward rivalry. Congress relied on CRS expertise as it examined expanding U.S.-China cooperation in addressing global and regional challenges including weak economic growth, climate

change, and nuclear proliferation. CRS supported congressional discussion of friction in the relationship including China's actions in the South China Sea; cyberespionage; the Chinese government's harsh treatment of activists, dissidents, and ethnic minorities; and its resistance to calls for democratic reforms in Hong Kong. CRS experts kept Congress up to date on China's efforts to broaden and deepen its economic and diplomatic engagement in other regions, especially its initiatives to connect economically to Central Asia and South and Southeast Asia.

***U.S. Military Posture.*** As congressional concerns over events in the Levant, Eastern Europe, and East Asia have resulted in greater focus on potential U.S. military responses, CRS provided consultation and analysis on both U.S. strategic choices and military capabilities to implement those choices. CRS analysts gave testimony on acquisition alternatives to allow the Coast Guard and the Navy to build their force structure, and they provided key insights into the Commission on the Future of the U.S. Army, the impact of the Budget Control Act on Air Force aircraft procurement, and the challenges of the U.S. military space program. CRS experts kept Congress informed about nuclear issues, including North Korean nuclear tests, their implications for regional deterrence, and the International Atomic Energy Agency's role in verifying those tests. They analyzed alleged Syrian use of chemical weapons as well as potential North Korean, Iranian, and Syrian cooperation on nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities. CRS also provided consultative support on U.S. options regarding changes in how both partners and adversary nations are conducting warfare in the 21st century, with a focus on building partner capacity, irregular warfare and special operations, and the implications of autonomous weapons systems.

## DOMESTIC SOCIAL POLICY

***The Affordable Care Act.*** Congress continued to oversee the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (P.L. 111-148, as amended) at both the federal and state level and also considered and enacted amendments to the law. CRS assisted lawmakers by providing overviews of the law's provisions; analysis of relevant federal regulations; and guidance pertaining to private insurance, public programs including the Medicaid expansion, and health care delivery issues. Experts provided assistance on implementation of the Act, such as the evolving status of the health insurance exchanges, including trends in health plan participation, premiums, and narrow provider networks; analysis of legislative proposals that would amend, repeal, or defund the Act, including repeal of provisions through the budget reconciliation process; and analysis of topics ranging from the Act's risk mitigation programs to the law's potential impact on competition in the health insurance industry. CRS attorneys responded to numerous legal questions regarding the Act.

***Child Nutrition Programs.*** Congress called on CRS as it sought to reauthorize child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program and certain other institutional food service programs, and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, which were last reauthorized in 2010, with some provisions having expired in 2015. As the House and Senate marked up their FY2016 reauthorization bills, CRS prepared background and analysis, reviewed draft legislation, and assisted in developing and considering amendments. Once markup occurred, CRS helped legislators understand the proposed policy changes, convened seminars, and reported on the potential impact of the 2010 law's expiration, the House and Senate bills, and related Congressional Budget Office cost estimates.

***Child Welfare.*** Child welfare reforms discussed in Congress during the past year and proposed in the Family First Prevention Services Act (H.R. 5456/S. 3065) would restrict federal support for foster children placed in group settings while also authorizing new federal support for services to children and their families to prevent children's entry or reentry into foster care. CRS facilitated congressional understanding of current policy and assisted lawmakers as they developed legislative proposals to address the appropriateness of group care settings and the availability of family settings for foster children.

***Criminal Justice and Sentencing Reform.*** Over the past year, to address the growth in the federal prison population, Congress weighed legislation to lower the number of inmates in federal prisons by allowing reductions in mandatory minimum penalties for some criminal offenses; retroactive application of the provisions of the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-220); giving courts sentencing flexibility in some instances; and facilitating early release of certain prisoners. CRS provided background on the legislation, offered analysis of the potential effects of the proposed reforms, and outlined issues for policymakers to consider as they marked up and debated bills on these issues. CRS attorneys addressed the use of force by law enforcement, the scope of federal gun laws, constitutional jurisprudence regarding the right to keep and bear arms, and the federal government's use of terrorist databases and the No Fly List.

***Federal Pensions for Select Groups.*** Congress considered a number of policy proposals related to civilian federal pensions for specific populations, including federal law enforcement officers and related personnel, military service members, U.S. Postal Service employees, and air traffic controllers at the Federal Aviation Administration. Relevant provisions were included

in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (P.L. 114-113); the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2016 (P.L. 114-92); the FAA Extension, Safety, and Security Act of 2016 (P.L. 114-190); and several bills introduced in the House. CRS analyzed legislative proposals, compared these proposals to current law, conducted in-person consultations, and provided support for congressional hearings.

***The “Gig Economy.”*** Responding to congressional interest in the labor market implications of the “gig economy” (the collection of markets that match providers to consumers on a gig, or job, basis in support of on-demand commerce), CRS analysts and attorneys prepared a report on an issue for which sparse information is available. The report addressed the size and characteristics of the gig workforce, compared its participants with more traditional freelance workers, and identified implications of the gig economy for labor standards and livelihoods more generally. The report also discussed judicial consideration of employment-related claims of gig workers and focused on the classification of gig economy workers (i.e., as independent contractors or employees), which is relevant under federal employment laws and is an issue of interest for Congress. CRS also provided consultations on worker protections for gig workers and the potential for the gig economy to create new work opportunities for economically vulnerable populations.

***Juvenile Justice.*** State policy is preeminent in juvenile justice; however, the federal government significantly influences state policies through grant funding. Congress last reauthorized the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (P.L. 93-415), the major vehicle for these funds, in 2002. Both the House and Senate worked on legislation that would modify and reauthorize some of the Act’s programs. As Members debated core mandates to attach to grant funding as well as purpose areas of grant programs, CRS provided added value by discussing how these changes may affect states and the youth they aim to serve.

***Mental Health Reform.*** As both chambers considered legislation to reform mental health care in the United States, CRS provided insights into all aspects of mental health care, including Medicaid financing of mental health services, development of the mental health workforce, adoption of health information technology by mental health providers, support for mental health research, and structuring of grants to fund community-based mental health services. CRS summarized, analyzed, and compared different versions of bills as they moved through the legislative process.

***Occupational Safety and Health.*** During FY2016, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) promulgated new standards regulating respirable crystalline silica in the workplace. These new standards were the result of more than 40 years of regulatory activity, but proved controversial in Congress and were the subject of hearings and legislation. CRS experts provided Congress with information on the new standards and their history as well as on possible legislative responses. Analysts summarized the issues surrounding the regulation of respirable crystalline silica in the workplace as well as ongoing legislative and judicial activity. Lawmakers expressed concern over OSHA’s use of a standard interpretation rather than rulemaking to change the types of retail facilities exempt from the process safety management that regulates the use of certain highly hazardous chemicals in the workplace. CRS kept Congress informed on this issue as it evolved, including possible legislative responses and information about ongoing litigation challenging OSHA’s actions.

***Older Americans Act.*** Programs offering nutritional and support services authorized under the Older Americans Act (P.L. 89-73) can assist older Americans to maintain their independence and remain active in their communities. CRS worked closely with Congress to pass the Older Americans Act Reauthorization Act of 2016 (P.L. 114-144). In support of these efforts, CRS experts prepared simulations to model the



distributional effects of proposed changes to several of the original Act's grant allocation formulas. CRS experts also provided technical and analytical support on appropriations and funding issues.

***Opioid Abuse.*** Congress held hearings and considered bills to address the epidemic of heroin and other opioid abuse, culminating in the enactment of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016 (P.L. 114-198). CRS supported every stage of the legislative process, from reviewing draft bills and developing policy options to clarifying differences between the House and Senate bills and supporting work on appropriations for the Act's programs. CRS helped Congress understand how various federal agencies involved in combating the opioid epidemic interact with one another and with states and other entities. CRS also offered expertise in criminal justice and health policy to help Congress approach the opioid epidemic from different perspectives.

***Overtime Pay.*** In 2016 the Department of Labor published a final rule that updates the Fair Labor Standards Act (P.L. 75-718) overtime rule, more than doubling the overtime salary threshold and making many workers newly eligible for overtime pay. CRS explained the overtime pay rule and other provisions of the Act, put the proposed update in the context of previous updates, and clarified who potentially would be affected by the updated rule. Congress called on CRS to evaluate the methodological approach the Department of Labor used to calculate the rate of increase in the overtime salary threshold and to examine the credibility of third-party assessments of the potential effects of the update on wages, jobs, industries, and employer behavior.

***Pharmaceutical Drug Coverage and Spending.***

Congress held multiple hearings during the past year on prescription drug price increases, competition in the pharmaceutical industry, and strategies for controlling escalating prescription drug spending in Medicare, Medicaid, and other federal health care programs. CRS supported congressional investigations in the recent price

increases of certain existing and new medications. CRS analysts reviewed the pharmaceutical distribution system, drug spending in both the private and public sectors, changes in coverage and reimbursement by private and public health care payers, and mechanisms to control spending. Analysts and attorneys offered technical and other assistance for hearings on the state of competition in the pharmacy and pharmacy benefit manager markets and pharmaceutical manufacturer mergers.

***Research and Development of New Medical Treatments.***

CRS continued to support the work of the 114th Congress on medical innovation legislation. The House enacted the 21st Century Cures Act in 2015 (H.R. 6), which included numerous provisions to accelerate the discovery and approval of new pharmaceutical drugs, biological products, and medical devices, primarily through reforms to the National Institutes of Health and the Food and Drug Administration. This year, in response, the Senate worked toward the goal of combining numerous smaller bills into a single package. CRS analysts examined the Senate bills in the context of current federal law, regulatory policy, and agency guidance, and compared them to the House-enacted legislation. Analysts also supported Congress regarding the legal, policy, and budgetary implications of the medical innovation legislation.

***Social Security.*** Individuals entitled to a Social Security retired- or disabled-worker benefit who also receive a pension from work not covered by Social Security are subject to Social Security's Windfall Elimination Provision, where an individual's Social Security benefit is calculated based on an alternative formula, resulting in a lower initial monthly benefit. The Windfall Elimination Provision has been of long-standing interest to Congress, particularly with respect to evaluating the fairness of the reduction based on this formula. In 2016 Congress focused attention on the Equal Treatment of Public Servants Act of 2015 (H.R. 711), which would provide a different formula. CRS provided support for committee markup of the legislation, responded to numerous



requests, and explained this complex feature of the Social Security program and how the proposed legislation would alter current law.

***Technology and Law Enforcement.*** Congress renewed its interest in the opportunities and challenges that evolving technology has presented for U.S. law enforcement, highlighted in part by a recent court battle between the Department of Justice and Apple Inc. regarding access to an iPhone used by a shooter in the San Bernardino, California, terrorist attack. In providing hearing support and legislative analysis, CRS experts presented a holistic view of the “going dark” debate over the degree to which technological change has outpaced law enforcement investigative capabilities, particularly as it has related to encryption on devices such as the iPhone. CRS analysts informed Congress about existing law enforcement tools to conduct investigations and how the changing technology landscape may impact investigators’ work.

***Veterans Benefits.*** Congress continued to look for ways to improve the care and benefits for veterans as well as improve accountability at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). CRS analysts responded to inquiries regarding the recommendations and legislative proposals in several congressionally mandated reports, including assessing the potential impact of reorganizing the Veterans Health Administration. CRS analysts and attorneys offered technical assistance on bills to consolidate the VA’s community care programs and to address veteran pain management needs. CRS addressed legal and policy issues regarding expedited removal and demotion authorities, and due process protection of VA employees. Other assistance included a report on Confederate flag policies in federal cemeteries and responses to constituent requests related to VA service delivery needs in health care, employment, education, housing, and social services.

## GOVERNMENT AND THE ECONOMY

**Appropriations.** CRS continued to maintain an interdivisional team of analysts responsible for producing the annual appropriations reports and for responding to cross-cutting appropriation requests. The team was also responsible for maintaining and updating a popular CRS product, the Appropriations Status Table, to increase its usefulness to congressional clients. Analysts continued to build a database of appropriations legislative actions going back to the mid-1970s. This unique database will provide CRS with the ability to more quickly and more authoritatively respond to congressional needs. CRS also provided a range of different products related to the regular appropriations bills throughout the fiscal year.

**The Budget, Debt, and Deficit.** CRS provided a wide range of analyses related to fiscal policy and the budgetary implications of legislation throughout the year. CRS supported Congress during its budget deliberations for FY2016 and FY2017 to provide discretionary funding for those years. CRS helped Congress address broader budgetary policy issues, such as the appropriate fiscal trajectory of the federal government, changes in the composition and structure of federal outlays and revenues, and trends in recent and projected net interest payments. Concerns about rising debt levels led Congress to enact the Budget Control Act of 2011 (P.L. 112-25), which re-imposed statutory caps on discretionary spending and required an ongoing sequestration of certain mandatory spending programs. CRS helped Congress understand how the Act affects budgetary tradeoffs as well as the effects of subsequent legislative modifications of the Act. CRS monitored trends in federal credit, the collection of fines and fees, and trust fund finances. In late 2015 Congress chose to suspend the federal debt limit until March 2017. CRS experts provided historical context and analysis of federal debt policy and the consequences of allowing the debt limit to constrain Treasury operations. CRS also analyzed how

federal deficits affect economic performance and the implications of current fiscal policies on the long-term sustainability of federal finances.

**Budget Process.** CRS assisted Congress in its examination and use of the process for considering budgetary matters. The most salient of this work involved the impact of budget control mechanisms, such as the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 (P.L. 114-74), on the consideration of budgetary legislation, especially on appropriations bills in the absence of a budget resolution. Analysts assisted with procedures associated with development and consideration of the reconciliation bill enacted by Congress. In collaboration with colleagues across the Service, they provided analysis of appropriations floor amendments and options with regard to continuing resolutions. In the context of a number of the authorization bills that the House and Senate considered, as well as existing authorizations that expired, CRS analysts provided information on the budget process, constraints on new authorization provisions, and implications of the expired provisions. At the request of Members from both chambers, CRS offered seminars and briefings on the budget process and assisted Congress with proposals to change the rules that govern consideration of budgetary legislation.

**Congressional Administration.** CRS analysts, information professionals, and legislative attorneys continued to provide support to Congress on the administration and management of Member offices and other institutions within the legislative branch. Throughout FY2016 CRS research focused on congressional mass communications and mailings; commemorative works in the District of Columbia; technology development in Congress; and staffing issues including congressional tenure and Member and staff pay. Analysts briefed Congress on administrative processes, Members' representational allowance, Senators' official personnel and office

expense account, government information creation and dissemination, and casework. CRS addressed congressional ethics, lobbying issues, congressional advisory commissions, training of congressional staff and interns, ensuring Capitol Hill and district office security, travel policy and costs, legislative branch agency appointments, and congressional nominations to service academies. CRS attorneys examined the activities of federal agencies, including analyzing circumstances in which agencies bypass the notice-and-comment rulemaking requirements and the status of administrative law judges and circumstances when agencies are required to use them for adjudication.

***Constitutional Issues and Separation of Powers.***

CRS responded to congressional interest in the potential use of an Article V convention to propose amendments to the Constitution, including a new report focusing on the most recent developments on this issue. CRS also provided research on various aspects of the Electoral College method of electing the President, such as major policy options available to Congress within the existing Electoral College system, kept Congress informed concerning various contingencies associated with presidential elections, and consulted with Members on the role of Congress in the separation of powers system.

***Emergency Management.*** CRS analysts worked closely with Congress on national preparedness, disaster response and recovery, and mitigation issues throughout the fiscal year. CRS assistance in FY2016 particularly focused on providing support to Members whose districts and states were affected by the Zika virus; the Flint, Michigan, water contamination; Hurricane Matthew; and various wildfire and flooding events. CRS fielded questions related to FEMA disaster declarations, cost-shares, and preliminary damage assessments; public assistance; individual and household assistance; the National Flood Insurance Program; and the impact of the Budget Control Act on the provision of federal funding for disasters.

***Executive Branch Organization.*** CRS provided assistance through in-person briefings, consultations, and written products as Congress developed plans and proposed revisions to executive branch organization, such as reassigning statutory functions, altering agency leadership arrangements, and otherwise rearranging the federal bureaucracy. The efforts included background research and analysis of proposals to abolish agencies and functions and to reduce the size of the federal government. CRS analyzed and commented on alternative approaches to interagency coordination of policymaking and implementation in areas such as national security and homeland security. CRS also provided research assistance on the refinement of proposals to create national commissions and similar study panels for examining a variety of policy issues and developments in the executive branch.

***Federal Grants Management.*** Congress expressed interest in several aspects of grants management, including identifying and preventing waste, fraud, and abuse; resolving unobligated balances in expired grant accounts; pre- and post-award oversight; transparency; and the design and inherent mechanics of specific federal grants. CRS prepared new CRS products on federal grant financial reporting requirements and databases and on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant legislation. CRS analysts produced a new short video describing the federal grants process. They helped develop ideas and conceptualize strategies for improving the performance and oversight of federal grants. These ongoing activities resulted in CRS providing numerous consultations, reviews of draft legislation, and memoranda that were used during hearings and as the basis for developing legislation. CRS also played a significant role in shaping provisions in several introduced bills that were reported out of committee on these issues.

***Federal Pay and Personnel.*** Congress demonstrated broad and sustained interest in issues related to management and administration of the federal workforce. CRS supported lawmakers on the various appointment

authorities, position classification standards, and qualification requirements for selected positions; federal pay schedules; pay adjustment processes; locality pay adjustments over time; freeze on pay rates; critical pay authority; and performance incentives and other types of rewards. CRS analysts covered issues including the workforce characteristics of selected departments and agencies; policies governing furloughs, reductions in force, and other statutory authorities to shape the size and composition of the civilian workforce; hiring flexibilities and removal procedures; the Senior Executive Service; telework; policies and expenditures by executive agencies on conferences; and various approaches for recruiting and retaining an effective information technology and cybersecurity workforce.

***Federal Reserve and Monetary Policy.*** The Federal Reserve gained additional regulatory authority over large financial firms in the Dodd-Frank Act (P.L. 111-203). Many of the Federal Reserve actions, in both monetary policy and financial regulation, have been controversial. CRS supported Congress in its oversight role, as when the chair of the Federal Reserve is required to testify semi-annually, as well as when the House enacted comprehensive Federal Reserve reform legislation. CRS addressed specific hearings and markups and prepared and maintained a portfolio of written products analyzing issues related to monetary policy and the Federal Reserve actions.

***Firearm Regulation.*** CRS provided lawmakers with analysis summarizing congressional action on proposals that were considered in the wake of the December 2015 San Bernardino, California, terrorist attack and the June 2016 Orlando, Florida, nightclub shooting. Some of those proposals addressed gun background checks, terrorist watch lists and mental incompetency. Analysts supported Congress on gun control-related legislative riders to appropriations bills and continued to build the CRS extensive database related to mass shooting incidents and research on gun-related crime and suicides.

***Government Information Policy.*** Congress consulted with CRS on numerous occasions regarding access to and protection of government information. The Service produced and updated a range of reports on government information policy and practices, including reports on legal access to federal records and the collection and retention of presidential records. CRS analysts answered requests seeking data on Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) processing and policies and on the creation and operations of the federal government's more than 1,000 federal advisory committees that provide an opportunity for the public to participate in the policymaking process. CRS responded to requests regarding requirements placed on agencies to ensure the appropriate collection and retention of all records, including those created by electronic means. CRS also provided a series of briefings addressing policy options for the design of transparent advisory committees and assisted with hearings related to proper records collection and the administration of FOIA.

***Government Procurement.*** Congressional interest in government procurement spanned a variety of issues and topics. Small business contracting and programs, domestic preference legislation and statutes (such as the Buy American Act, P.L. 92-428), sourcing policy, project labor agreements, strategic sourcing, and suspension and debarment were among the procurement subjects of interest. Using the federal government's procurement database, CRS employed a multidisciplinary approach, drawing upon policy and legal expertise to analyze draft or existing legislation and to assist with hearings. CRS attorneys addressed legal issues concerning the Supreme Court's hearing of a challenge to the Veterans Administration's implementation of a statute that provides for the VA to "set aside" certain contracts for competition in which only service-disabled or veteran-owned small businesses can compete. CRS provided legal expertise on several executive orders, including one to bar federal contractors from discrimination on the basis of "sexual orientation" or "gender identity."



***Inspectors General.*** Members consulted with CRS on numerous occasions seeking a variety of information related to inspectors general (IG), including the appropriation and staffing levels provided to IG offices, the law enforcement authorities provided to IG investigative employees, and the ability of IGs to access the information they need to perform their oversight duties.

***The Judiciary.*** CRS supported the Senate as it addressed issues related to the selection and confirmation for the current vacancy on the Supreme Court, as well as for vacancies for lower federal court judgeships. A CRS team of analysts and information professionals continued to track judicial nominations using the CRS internal judicial nominations database. The database helps ensure that CRS can quickly respond to congressional inquiries about the status of current and past judicial nominations as well as provide a variety of statistics and accompanying analysis related to the judicial appointment process. CRS also provided analysis of issues related to judicial administration, such as the caseloads of various courts and appropriations levels for the judiciary.

***Legislative Branch Appropriations.*** CRS continued to provide research and information on the annual legislative branch appropriations acts. This work

included analysis of challenges in estimating the cost of individual congressional activities; comparison of legislative branch and total discretionary budget authority; analysis of the timing of the consideration of the appropriations bills; examination of staffing levels and policies; and investigation of subjects related to legislative branch appropriations, including structure, cost of various programs, history, and funding. CRS also consulted with Congress about the relevant components of a continuing resolution.

***Postal Service.*** Congress regularly sought assistance from CRS on a broad range of postal issues. Members traditionally have taken interest in the operations of the U.S. Postal Service, including the number of days of mail delivery, services provided, and facilities. The Postal Service's financial difficulties and concurrent cost-cutting and proposed service reductions have heightened congressional interest in postal policy and the role the U.S. Postal Service might play in the 21st century. CRS provided briefings on postal issues, assisted with hearings support, and addressed disparate postal issues, including post office closures, postal finances, employee pensions and health care, and pending postal reform legislation.

***Security Clearances and Background Investigations.*** Following the data breaches involving background investigation information from databases of the Office of Personnel Management, Congress sought assistance from CRS on a range of issues related to the protection of government information and the impact of the data breaches on federal employees. Congress continued to seek assistance from CRS related to ongoing developments in security clearance procedures and insider threat programs that are being implemented, in part, in response to the unauthorized disclosure of classified information by vetted federal employees and contractors. CRS analysts and legislative attorneys provided assistance through in-person briefings and a variety of written products on security clearances and background investigations.

## RESOURCES, INDUSTRY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

***Agriculture and Free Trade Agreements.*** CRS conducted numerous in-person consultations with Congress to keep Members abreast of the status of the agriculture-related elements of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) free trade agreement and the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP), which together could facilitate sales of U.S. farm products to approximately 1 billion consumers. CRS experts analyzed a range of controversial agricultural issues under negotiation, including sensitive U.S.-EU agricultural trade issues, and responded to specific inquiries. As the Obama Administration pressed forward with its policy of establishing more normal relations with Cuba, Congress expressed greater interest in policies that impede U.S. agricultural exports. CRS responded by examining key issues in farm trade with Cuba.

***Climate Change — Paris Agreement and EPA’s Clean Power Plan.*** CRS supported Congress throughout the year in its efforts to address greenhouse gases linked to climate change, particularly the Obama Administration’s initiatives, including emissions standards for automobiles, greenhouse gas limits on new power plants, and the “Paris Agreement” within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Perhaps the most controversial Obama Administration initiative was EPA’s Clean Power Plan to control carbon dioxide emissions from existing power plants. After the rule was finalized in late 2015, many regulated industries and some states challenged the rule in court. The Supreme Court imposed a stay on the EPA’s regulations while challenges to the rule work through the litigation process. CRS experts assisted Congress on a myriad of questions and concerns regarding technology, economics, law, and policy.

***Droughts and Floods.*** Recurrent drought and periodic flooding challenge water resource managers and affect the management of federal infrastructure and related resources. Drought continued to be an issue for Congress,

particularly in response to conditions in California and the Southwest. Drought forced federal water supply facilities to reduce and in some cases suspend water deliveries to long-term contractors. Some communities’ wells have run dry. Dry conditions have also resulted in extreme wildfires. Throughout FY2016 CRS experts reported on drought conditions and analyzed legislative proposals to address drought, including through informal conference negotiations. CRS also held numerous in-person consultations and workshops on drought response and the effects of altering drought policy. CRS experts assisted Congress with questions related to flood damage reduction projects in response to flooding from rivers and hurricane impacts.

***Electric Utilities.*** In the past year CRS provided Congress with analysis of major issues facing the electric utility sector focusing on implications of environmental regulations (particularly the EPA’s Clean Power Plan and ozone rules), industry infrastructure concerns, fuel prices, reliability, physical security, and cybersecurity. CRS analysts provided support and analysis both in anticipation of congressional needs and in responding to congressional requests. CRS provided ongoing support as hearings were held and legislation marked up on electric industry regulation and security as part of larger energy bills and as stand-alone legislation.

***Energy Infrastructure.*** Energy infrastructure has increased in importance and interest to Congress, primarily in considering the safety, security, and condition of infrastructure, environmental concerns, and future requirements. Energy infrastructure includes natural gas and petroleum pipelines, electric generation and transmission, and storage facilities. CRS supported Congress by placing local issues into a national context; providing insight on evolving incidents, local protests, and litigation; and assessing new technologies designed to alleviate the existing problems with infrastructure. CRS experts collaborated to ensure all views were

analyzed in response to congressional requests, including providing support for House and Senate committees, caucuses, and coalitions.

***Genetically Engineered Food Labeling.*** For some years various consumer groups have sought mandatory labeling of all genetically engineered foods, arguing that U.S. consumers should have an opportunity to see all relevant information on a label in making food choices. The biotechnology industry and many food processors have opposed compulsory labeling, contending that consumers could interpret genetically engineered food labels as warning labels implying that the foods are less safe or less nutritious than conventional foods. Congress ultimately passed legislation in July 2016 that preempts state labeling laws and authorizes mandatory “disclosure” of all genetically engineered foods under U.S. Department of Agriculture administration. Throughout House and Senate committee proceedings over labeling legislation CRS provided analysis and in-person consultation on the potential implications of the various bills for consumers and food manufacturers and offered technical analysis of proposed bill language, while also assisting Members in the development of floor amendments.

***Homeland Security.*** CRS analysts supported a wide range of congressional activities regarding reorganization of the science-related offices within the Department of Homeland Security. CRS support included questions for hearings, lists of potential witnesses, and follow-up consultations. CRS experts also provided objective, timely reviews of executive branch and industry programs and activities in this area.

***Legislation to Reform the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act.*** For the first time since it was enacted in 1976, the Toxic Substances Control Act (P.L. 94-469) was significantly amended when President Obama signed into law the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act (P.L. 114-182). This was the first major environmental law reauthorized by Congress since the Clean Air Act amendments of 1990. Amendments to the Toxic Substances Control Act require a systematic

review of the safety of chemicals currently in commerce, address long-term management and storage of elemental mercury, and provide the federal authority to investigate potential cancer clusters. CRS analysts and attorneys supported Congress throughout the reauthorization process as Members addressed core provisions of the law and developed legislative proposals. The issues debated by Congress, and analyzed by CRS, involved science, chemical testing, law, economics and international trade, regulatory policy, and federalism.

***National Park Service.*** As the National Park Service celebrated its centennial anniversary, the 114th Congress moved on broad legislation to address funding challenges faced by the agency, including a \$12 billion backlog of deferred maintenance. Despite agency efforts to address this maintenance through improved inventory and asset management, the backlog has continued to build during the past decade. CRS provided close support as lawmakers crafted broad legislation that advanced to conference during the year, including provisions to revise existing authorities and establish new authorities for fees, donations, and other funding and management mechanisms to address the agency’s needs.

***Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing.*** The Obama Administration’s development of its five-year offshore oil and gas leasing program for 2017-2022 was also of interest to lawmakers in FY2016. This comprehensive plan set Administration policy for oil and gas leasing in the Gulf of Mexico, Arctic, Atlantic, and Pacific Ocean regions for the next five years. Congress was interested in the Administration’s plans for several lease sales in the Arctic, where opportunities for oil and gas development could expand with the reduction of the amount of ice in the sea during summer. Congress also closely followed the Administration’s decision to remove from the program an earlier-planned lease sale in the Atlantic Ocean, where leasing has not occurred since the 1980s. CRS assisted Congress as it worked on oversight and legislation concerning the five-year program, consulted with Congress on relevant issues, and helped with hearing preparation.



**Patent Policy and Innovation.** In FY2016 congressional interest extended to the protection of new technological innovation and intellectual property rights. CRS policy specialists analyzed patent reform legislation that may potentially change the current patent protection regime. CRS also undertook ongoing research and analysis in the areas of intellectual property and pharmaceuticals as well as exploration of alternative policy approaches and legislative options.

**Provision of Television Content.** The future of television emerged as a major congressional issue in FY2016. The television industry is regulated by a combination of communications and copyright laws, which define the rights and obligations of television stations and networks, cable and satellite program distributors, online video distributors, and the owners of the video content. The financial structure of the television industry is under stress as more viewers watch video programming over the Internet at times of their choosing rather than tuning into a specific station at a specific time. Many of the laws governing the industry predate the wide availability of broadband Internet service and do not reflect current technological realities. These long-simmering issues erupted this year after the Federal Communications Commission proposed regulatory changes to increase competition in the market for set-top cable boxes. CRS analysts and attorneys assisted Members of Congress in understanding the complex issues involved.

**Surface Transportation.** Surface transportation was of concern to Congress during FY2016, as the law authorizing federal highway and public transportation programs was extended into the start of the fiscal year. Federal taxes dedicated to these programs do not generate sufficient revenue to support the current level of spending. CRS provided extensive support on financing issues, automotive safety, and railroad issues.

**Technology Policy and Competitiveness.** The ability of U.S. industry, national laboratories, and other stakeholders to provide innovative science and technology breakthroughs in a global economy



continued to be a focus for Congress. CRS analysts supported efforts in both chambers to reauthorize the Small Business Innovation Research program by providing qualitative and quantitative analysis of federal agencies' set-aside requirements. As Congress examined the role of the federal government in supporting science, engineering, and mathematics education, CRS experts provided research, analysis, consultation, and background testimony.

**U.S. Oil and Gas Exports.** FY2016 marked major milestones in the U.S. oil and natural gas sectors with unrestricted exports of crude oil and exports of natural gas in liquefied form. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016 (P.L. 114-113) lifted a 40-year restriction on crude oil exports. In February 2016 the first natural gas liquefaction facility in the continental United States began operation. Many more facilities are expected to supply international markets over the next few years. On these issues CRS analysts provided testimony, held seminars, produced a variety of written products, and responded with in-person and telephone consultations.

## LAW AND JUSTICE

***Antitrust Law.*** Congressional interest in the state of competition across various industries in the economy increased in the past year. CRS attorneys assisted Congress regarding the potential application of the antitrust laws to developments in the U.S. economy, including describing and analyzing the process and standards by which the Federal Trade Commission and the Department of Justice review proposed transactions between companies. Attorneys also briefed lawmakers on issues such as potential mergers between cable and Internet service providers, the application of the antitrust laws to drug manufacturers, and anticompetitive concerns regarding conditions placed on music streaming companies.

***Civil Rights.*** CRS attorneys addressed a broad range of civil rights issues, including questions about discrimination on the basis of gender identity. They analyzed legal developments in response to state laws and Department of Education guidance on transgender individuals' access to shared facilities and provided legal guidance related to sex discrimination and sexual violence at institutions of higher education. They supported the debate on legislative efforts to strengthen pay discrimination laws and provided legal analysis regarding a Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action.

***Civil Service Reform.*** Congress called on CRS as it addressed a number of legal issues concerning reform of the civil service, such as the firing of Senior Executive Service employees at the Veterans Administration and placing final decision-making authority in the hands of administrative judges at the Merit Systems Protection Board. Attorneys prepared legal analysis of the circumstances in which agencies can fire employees for suspected criminal conduct and examined reform of whistleblower protections at various federal agencies.

***Congressional Oversight.*** CRS attorneys provided written legal analyses and conducted numerous briefings and presentations to assist Congress in its investigative

and oversight functions. Work included analysis of the legal principles governing the standing of Members of Congress to bring lawsuits to challenge executive branch actions and subpoena noncompliance. They assisted committees in their investigative functions by providing insight into legal questions of authority, jurisdiction, and the ability of Congress to compel testimony and documents from potential witnesses. CRS also assisted with expert testimony on impeachment arising from a congressional investigation into activities of the Internal Revenue Service.

***Election Law.*** Election law was a significant focus for Congress in FY2016. CRS addressed redistricting, voting, and campaign finance and related issues. Attorneys analyzed how the results of a presidential election can be contested, independent bids for president, the constitutionality and legality under the Voting Rights Act (P.L. 89-110) of voter photo identification laws, and pending and decided Supreme Court cases on redistricting.

***Government Ethics.*** CRS legal experts presented two seminars on ethics, one on legal ethics in general and the other on congressional ethics. They continued to provide in-person briefings and report on the statutes and rules that guard against ethical missteps in the areas of campaign financing, lobbying, and conflicts of interest.

***Intellectual Property.*** Congress has a perennial interest in considering whether the copyright and patent laws are furthering or hindering the U.S. innovation economy. CRS addressed copyright licenses and software-enabled electronic devices and recent Supreme Court decisions involving enhanced damages in patent law litigation and administrative patent revocation proceedings. CRS consulted with Congress on music copyright licensing issues and related legislative proposals and assisted lawmakers as they considered patent law issues related to the price of pharmaceutical drugs and patent litigation reform legislation.



**Labor and Employment Law.** CRS attorneys reported on labor and employment law, including the child labor provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (P.L. 75-718); the Department of Labor’s new overtime and fiduciary rules; the treatment of student athletes under the National Labor Relations Act (29 U.S.C. 151-169); *Browning-Ferris Industries of California*, the National Labor Relations Board’s 2015 decision on joint employers; *Gobeille v. Liberty Mutual Insurance Company*, the Supreme Court’s recent decision on preemption; and the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (P.L. 93-406). Attorneys also responded to legal questions involving collective bargaining, employee benefits, and the Fair Labor Standards Act minimum wage and overtime requirements.

**Tax Law.** Because of the 2016 election cycle, Congress was interested in the ability of tax-exempt organizations to engage in campaign activity under the Internal Revenue Code. CRS attorneys assisted Congress as it considered legislation limiting the ability of IRS to take certain actions with respect to Section 501(c)(4) organizations. Attorneys also consulted with and briefed lawmakers on constitutional and other legal issues surrounding state taxation

of Internet sales and related legislative proposals. CRS also supported Congress on controversial legal developments in international taxation, including proposed regulations of IRS addressing related-party debt, the implementation of the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (P.L. 111-147), and transactions known as corporate inversions.

**Trade Law.** Congress turned to CRS legal experts as it conducted oversight of the executive branch’s negotiation of the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) free trade agreement. Lawmakers sought information on how investor-state dispute settlement provisions in the TPP might impact the ability of the federal and state governments to protect public health and the environment. Congress requested a legal analysis of the scope of U.S. obligations under the environment and labor chapters of the TPP. Attorneys outlined domestic content restrictions on government contracting and their interplay with U.S. trade obligations. Following President Obama’s relaxation of some restrictions on trade with Cuba, CRS attorneys and analysts examined the president’s authority to make changes in the Cuba sanctions program and on resolutions of pending trademark disputes.





### III. MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES

**M**anagement developed initiatives in FY2016 to optimize workflow, streamline operations and services, and enhance efficiency. Specifically, these efforts included continuing work on the CRS strategic plan, initiation of a client satisfaction survey, upgrading the congressional request management software, enhancements to CRS.gov and Congress.gov, a pilot to explore greater efficiencies by aligning information professionals with research divisions, a review of CRS policies, two new CRS work products, and planning for the New Member Seminar for the 115th Congress.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

CRS continued its strategic planning initiative by developing an operations plan to complement the CRS strategic plan. The operations plan is a detailed plan for accomplishing the goals and objectives in the strategic plan. It identifies activities and milestones, timeframes, dependencies, and resources. It is used to define, manage, and track work that is aligned with the goals and objectives in the strategic plan. A process was established for reporting on the plan on a quarterly basis and for updating the plan on an annual basis or more frequently if necessary.

As part of the CRS strategic planning initiative, the CRS Director commissioned a 360-degree assessment of the Office of Information Management and Technology. The assessment focused on three key areas: communication, performance, and staffing. The assessment resulted in ten recommendations that were grouped in the areas of organizational change, governance and business practices, and mission information technology (IT) versus commodity IT. Work on implementing the recommendations is ongoing. The CRS Director also launched an assessment of the supporting infrastructure offices in CRS. This assessment is focused on organization functions, structures, processes, and efficiencies.

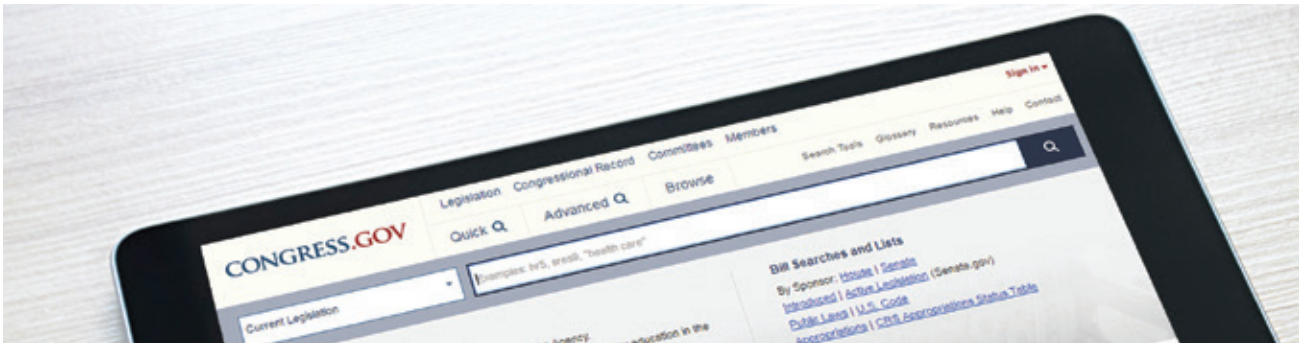
## CONGRESSIONAL CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

At the direction of the House Committee on Appropriations, the Library of Congress commissioned an independent survey (H.R. 114-110) regarding the products and services provided to Congress by the Library, and especially the Congressional Research Service. CRS led this project on behalf of the Library, and ensured that a comprehensive final report was delivered to the committee in conformance with a rigorous time schedule. The project provided a rare opportunity to survey Members and their staff systematically regarding their diverse range of needs essential to fulfilling their legislative and representative responsibilities. The survey yielded responses from more than 1,300 staff and 63 Members.

The results showed a strong appreciation and need for the dedicated services CRS provides to Congress. Congressional staff rated CRS very highly on its core values, including confidentiality, nonpartisanship, and objectivity. Respondents expressed a strong need for a broad range of analytical products and services from CRS. Reflecting the recurrent, trusted working relationships between congressional staff and CRS analysts, respondents rated consultative services such as direct telephone and email responses from CRS analysts, in-person briefings, and personalized memoranda very high for their effectiveness. The survey also yielded important insights about new products and services that would be of value to Congress. The report serves as an important resource to inform decisions about optimizing the delivery of services to an evolving Congress during a time of constrained resources.

## CONGRESS.GOV ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As part of the Library's multi-departmental team, CRS contributed to continuing development and daily operations of the next-generation legislative information system platform and services, Congress.gov. Through a multi-year Library-wide strategy, Congress.gov will replace two legacy legislative information systems (LIS and THOMAS) with a single, modern system. CRS provided data analysis, subject matter expertise, consultation, system testing, user testing, coordination of data partner relationships, and support for congressional users and data partners. The Service also continues to support the use of the Congress-only LIS until equivalent capability is fully developed for the new



Congress.gov. Accomplishments in FY2016 included the deployment of LIS-like quick searches for each of the Congress.gov collections, the initial implementation of an LIS-like advanced search, as well as other functionality and data that enabled the retirement of the THOMAS web interface.

## MERCURY UPGRADE

CRS successfully deployed new customer relationship management (CRM) software in FY2016 to store, manage, and analyze requests from congressional clients. The system is known as “Mercury.” The upgrade was undertaken to enhance security and to enable more timely upgrades. While the new system reflects current business processes, the upgrade was complex and required documentation and retraining staff on a new user interface. This upgrade, and the completion of an archiving feature for the repository of congressional requests, enhanced information security and was responsive to a key priority and concern of congressional oversight committees and leadership offices.

## POLICY REVIEW

The review and dissemination of CRS policies and guidelines by the Policy Working Group continued in FY2016. Policies and guidelines were drafted, revised, and amended to help ensure that employees are informed about the rules that govern CRS products and services for Congress as well as ethics and professional responsibilities and to decrease the risk that CRS core values will be eroded. The working group is headed by the Counselor to the Director and includes first-line supervisors from all CRS research divisions and infrastructure offices.

## *THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION*

*The Constitution of the United States of America: Analysis and Interpretation* (popularly known as the Constitution Annotated or CONAN), is an official Senate document that is statutorily required and contains legal analysis and interpretation conducted by CRS attorneys of the Constitution based primarily on Supreme Court case law. CONAN serves Members of Congress and their staff, as well as the general public, including practicing attorneys and others interested in learning about the Supreme Court and the nation’s founding document. CONAN addresses the meaning of each constitutional provision and can be especially useful when researching the constitutional implications of specific issues or topics. Following CONAN’s 100th anniversary celebration on September 23, 2014, CRS completed a comprehensive independent review of the content, organization, methodology, and presentation of the published versions of this legal reference document.



The fiscal year's efforts provided a strong foundation not only for the multi-year effort ahead to revise all of the existing CONAN content (more than 2,500 pages), but also for the initiation of the technology work required for the design, development, and future implementation of a new CONAN website in collaboration with the Library.

## CRS WEBSITE IMPROVEMENTS

CRS redesigned parts of CRS.gov, the CRS website for Congress, into a series of new pages intended to make CRS products easier for congressional staff to discover and use. The new Issue Area Pages more closely mirror the issue portfolios found in congressional offices, rather than adhering to CRS's internal categorization. They are also designed to actively promote the full range of CRS products and services for Congress. The implementation of the new pages represents a milestone in CRS website enhancement following the implementation of the initial CRS enterprise taxonomy.

## INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS (IP) PILOT

In March 2016, CRS began piloting a strategy to explore whether greater efficiency and coordination could be achieved in providing information research and services to Congress. As part of the pilot, research librarians in the Knowledge Services Group (KSG) moved directly into two research divisions to better align with the work of analysts and meet the divisions' research priorities and requirements. Other information professionals were assigned to work in KSG's Reference and Information Services Section to focus on information, collections, and knowledge management, and enable more efficient access to critical information. The results of the pilot will be assessed in FY2017.

## INFOGRAPHICS

A new infographic product became available for the first time on the CRS website in FY2016. Infographics are intended to present complex information without the need for an accompanying written product. These standalone infographics are distinguishable from the tables, graphs, and other image-based content commonly embedded in CRS written products and supplement those products' text-based analyses. The use of infographics to convey information and analysis has been recognized as a desirable way to communicate complex information. Topics of infographics include "U.S. Military Casualty Statistics," "Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) and U.S. Trade Agreements," "Executive Agreements," and "Economic Effects of the FY2014 Shutdown."





## INTERACTIVE MAPS

Geospatial analysis and mapping products illustrate complex public policy data, which can lead to improved understanding of multidimensional public policy issues. During the past fiscal year, CRS completed 173 GIS-related requests on issues of interest to Congress, such as Zika occurrences worldwide, oil and gas pipelines in the United States and worldwide, migration of unaccompanied minors from Central America to the United States, and state minimum wages. CRS actively engaged in defining requirements and in testing the Library of Congress Geospatial Hosting Environment (GHE). The GHE’s Staff GIS Portal was used to develop interactive maps and test review procedures to ensure they meet CRS standards for objectivity and authoritativeness.

## TECHNOLOGY ENHANCEMENTS

During the annual power shutdown of the Madison building, CRS successfully conducted a close down and restart, or “fail over,” for all CRS applications to the Alternate Computing Facility and maintained full operational capability for CRS users. This is the first time the fail over has occurred of all Tier I systems with full capability during a power shutdown. The successful fail over is the culmination of several years of architectural and engineering enhancements to the CRS Common Operating Environment from a single-site environment to a high-availability multisite implementation.

CRS also implemented several enhanced capabilities across the organization including enabling CRS users to attach large files or sets of files over the standard 20 MB limit to email messages; upgrading from Exchange 2007 to Exchange 2013, which allows CRS to provide enhanced capabilities and features with future planned updates to office computers; and installation of SMART boards, which enable staff members to collaborate and interact with electronic content.

## NEW MEMBER SEMINAR

CRS planned the New Member Seminar, which was held at the start of the 115th Congress. Hosted in cooperation with the U.S. House of Representatives, the program, “Legislative Issues and Procedures: The CRS Seminar for New Members,” is held in Williamsburg, Virginia. CRS worked with the Committee on House Administration to select topics and speakers most useful to newly elected Members and continued planning and logistical activities to help ensure a successful seminar. Grant funding was secured to cover the cost of the event (see Appendix A).



## SUPPORT FOR CRS STAFF

CRS continued to offer research staff a core writing curriculum twice a year. Experienced CRS colleagues provided staff with guidance, tools, and best practices for writing reports and other CRS products. These sessions offered a practical orientation to CRS writing and engaged participants in thoughtful discussions about creating quality products for Congress. Writing sessions included an overview of CRS products and services, the writing process, and review of editorial policy. Originally conceived as a writing presentations series for new hires, these sessions have become a permanent offering open to all staff.

Research assistants (RAs) have been essential additions to CRS staff for several years. The RA position was designed to assist analysts in responding to congressional requests by producing graphics, tables, and other components of products; collecting, organizing, and analyzing data; and conducting various other research support duties. The first 11 RA hires were brought on board within three research divisions in late FY2014 and early FY2015. These RAs were hired into not to exceed three-year appointments, both to facilitate a regular influx of fresh talent and to provide budgetary flexibility. It was anticipated that some of the research assistants would pursue other opportunities aligned with their career trajectories. By the end of FY2016 seven of the initially hired RAs had left CRS. The four remaining RAs from the initial cohort have been joined by newly recruited colleagues who continue to enhance the capability of CRS to respond with agility to congressional requests.

In FY2016, CRS continued to focus on fortifying the supervisory workforce to meet new and evolving demands, while sustaining quality service in support of the Congress. CRS identified initial leadership training courses to develop critical supervisory competencies: coaching, problem solving, and communication. As a result of two successful years, 70% of first-line managers have completed this training.



# PHOTOGRAPHY

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Jerry Almonte: Pages 1, 3, 5-27, 29, 34

David Rice: Pages iv (Capitol dome interior),  
vi (Capitol with Library of Congress dome shadow)

Carol M. Highsmith: Pages ii (Library's Great Hall),  
4 (Library's Reading Room), 36 (aerial of Capitol Hill)

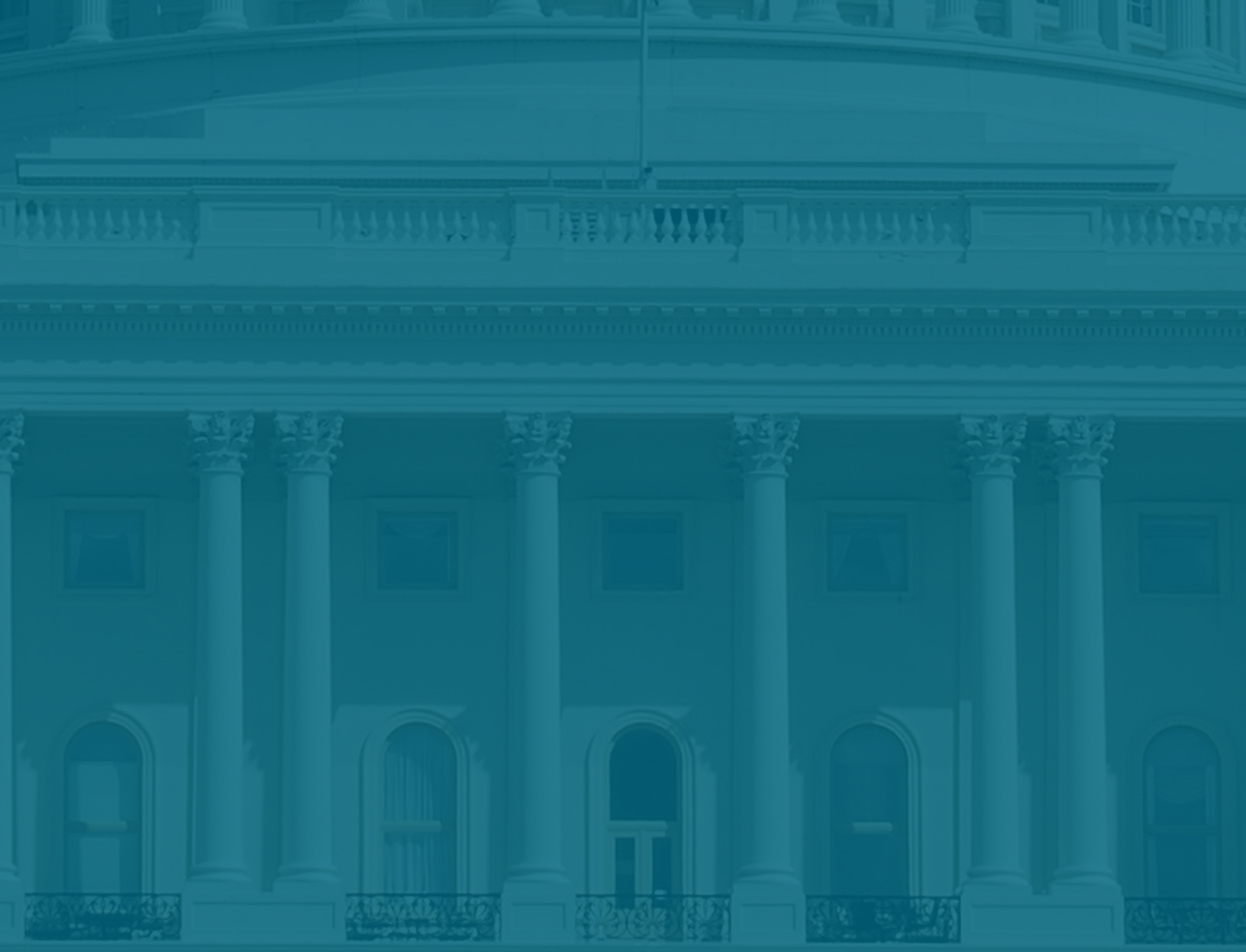
Architect of the Capitol: Inside front cover (Statue of Freedom);  
Pages 28 (Small Senate Rotunda), 35 (Rython and Capitol dome)

Shutterstock: Covers (Capitol facade); inside back cover

Design: K. Bisola Momoh







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