

Office of the
Chief Administrative Officer
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-6860

July 24, 2020

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
Chairperson
Committee on House Administration
1309 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rodney Davis
Ranking Member
Committee on House Administration
1216 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairperson Lofgren and Ranking Member Davis,

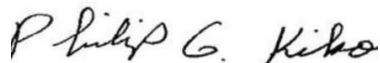
In the summer of 2019, I directed my staff to begin efforts to evaluate the accessibility compliance of House websites and recommend a plan to address areas for improvement and identify the resources and technologies required to be successful in executing this plan. I'm pleased that not only was an achievable corrective and continuous monitoring plan developed, but in performing this accessibility evaluation and plan formulation, CAO has already had success making a few House websites compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA and House.gov has been remediated and a formal Accessibility Statement will be added to the website.

H.Res. 756 - Moving Our Democracy and Congressional Operations Towards Modernization Resolution passed the House on March 10, 2020. I was pleased to see that Section 401, Ensuring Accessibility of House Websites, codifies the importance of accessibility compliance at the House. Section 401 requires:

Not later than 90 days after the date of the adoption of this resolution, the Chief Administrative Officer shall submit a report to the Committee on House Administration detailing a plan to ensure that all House websites and applications are accessible.

I am including with this letter my report for this requirement. At the request of the Committee, I will provide further information on my plan and progress being made for this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Philip G. Kiko
Chief Administrative Officer
U.S. House of Representatives

Web Accessibility Status Update

July 24, 2020

Pursuant to H.Res. 756 - Moving Our Democracy and Congressional Operations Towards Modernization Resolution, Sec. 401. Ensuring Accessibility Of House Websites

Agenda



Where are we?



Current Status



What have we learned?



What have other Federal agencies learned?



Path forward



Timeline review



Next steps

Where are we?

Prioritized and focused on remediations to the Mass Communications Disclosure, CAO, and House.gov web sites.

Identified global issues that affected all platform sites.

Gained insights into our own learning curve.

Site	Total Issues	# Resolved	# Pending	Notes
Mass Communications Disclosure	-	-	-	Complete
CAO web site	53	53	0	Complete
Committee A	30	16	14	*The office moved to a vendor.
* Global Issues	7	7	0	Resolves issues on multiple sites
House.gov	60	60	0	Complete
Committee B	41	0	41	Pending
Committee C	49	0	49	Pending

Current Status

The Web Services team remediated the House.gov website on June 19

This was 26 days before our targeted completion date of mid-July

It was a full-time effort requiring

- Two (2) developers;
- One (1) designer;
- One and half (1 ½) Q&A staff;
- One (1) User Acceptance Tester

Accessibility statement will be updated

- Working with Admin Counsel
- Some aspects are beyond our control

Feedback from User Acceptance Testing

Pre-remediation: There were several issues using JAWS (a computer screen reader program for Microsoft Windows that allows users to read the screen with a text-to-speech output or by a refreshable Braille display); the committee hearing schedules were read out of order; links on the map on the home page would not open; and certain sections of text on accordion style pages were not read properly.

Post remediation: All sections of House.gov are accessible using Voiceover and JAWS screen-readers without issue and the entire site can now be navigated.



Previously communicated items completed were the Franking Commission Kiosk and the CAO website

What have we learned?

Working the issues with the websites to date has helped us understand:

- Remediation
- Work processes
- Accessibility/508 compliance as a Program
- House Statement on Accessibility/508 compliance
- Resolution

What have other Federal agencies learned?

Spoke with subject matter experts to ascertain lessons learned and best practices.

- **National Federation of the Blind**
 - Compliance is the lowest bar; scanning tools are only 30% of the solution;
 - The real test is with users who have impairments;
 - Testing focused on the visually impaired targets all people with impairments – except listening to videos for the deaf.
- **Department of Veteran Affairs**
 - Remediation is the harder, heavier lift;
 - Once you do get there, best to keep continuously monitoring and fixing;
 - Draw a line in the sand for documents – PDFs are the long pole on the tent;
 - * Found it best to have the Developer and Q&A person work together.
- **Department of Education**
 - Have an accessibility statement for the House for what is supported;
 - It has to be a program that is supported for the long term; not a one time remediation effort;
 - Provided a contact at the GSA for a Federal level Accessibility/508 compliance working group.
- **Director, Accessibility Services, U. S. Senate**
 - Approved of the approach House Web Services is initiating.

Path Forward

WCAG 2.1 Level AA is the end goal

- Most current and complete standard;
- Provides for a more enriched user experience;
- Constituents can use the tools they know;
- Better safeguards the House from issues pertaining to Accessibility/508 compliance.

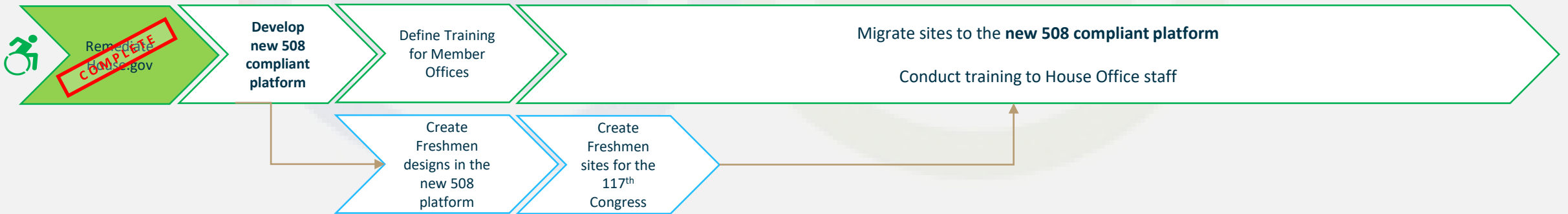
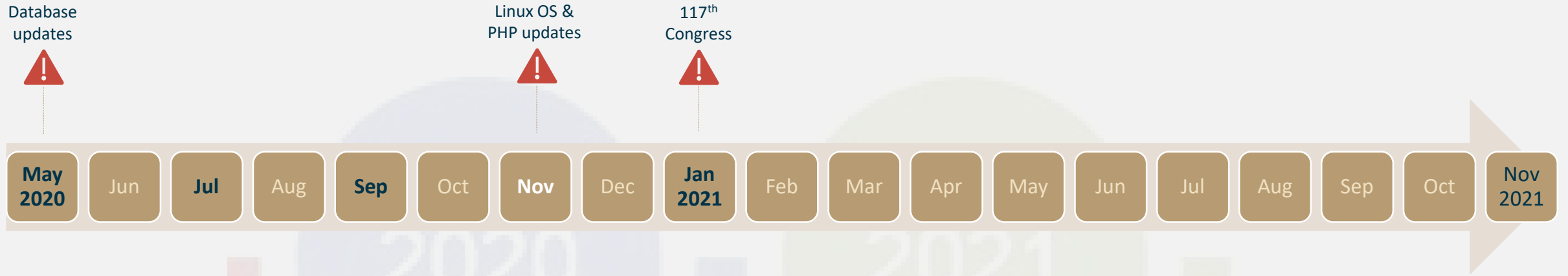
Instills knowledge “in House”

- Remediating the sites to date has allowed the team to fine tune their approach;
- We keep what we build - no concerns regarding vendor lock-in;
- Nuances in site design are being incorporated in the new 508 Platform
 - Better Page Navigation
 - Social media icon functionality
 - Build controls in the Content Management capability requiring necessary fields

Recommendations

- Assess the MCL landscape for continued remediation efforts;
- Apply FY20 funds towards resources to supplement the effort
 - Q&A resource
 - Front-End Developer
 - Accessibility Designer

Timeline and Competing Efforts



* End of support Drupal 7 has been postponed to November 2022

Next steps

Execute the funds provided towards needed resources

Define the Accessibility Statement for the House.gov site

Continue developing the 508 compliant platform

Begin remediation on a set of MCL sites

Conduct training with some offices on managing content for Accessibility/508 compliance