

CRS Report for Congress

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Committee System Rules Changes in the House, 106th Congress

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Summary

This fact sheet details changes in the committee system contained in H.Res. 5, the rules of the House for the 106th Congress.

Committee Structure

Name Changes. The resolution changes the names of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight to the Committee on Government Reform, the Committee on House Oversight to the Committee on House Administration, and the Committee on National Security to the Committee on Armed Services.

Assignments. The resolution eliminates the requirement that four members of the Standards of Official Conduct Committee rotate off the panel every Congress and changes the service on the committee from two Congresses in any three to three Congresses in any period of five. The prohibition of service on the Budget Committee for more than four Congresses in any six successive Congresses is waived for the 106th Congress.

Subcommittees. The resolution maintains the current rule restriction regarding the limitation of five subcommittees; however, committees that maintain an oversight subcommittee would be restricted to no more than six subcommittees. Further, the Committee on Government Reform, in order to maintain a Census subcommittee, is entitled to have eight subcommittees for the 106th Congress.

Select Committee Continuance. The resolution continues the Select Committee on U.S. National Security and Military/Commercial Concerns with the People's Republic of China until March 31, 1999, to declassify and release its report.

Committee Procedure

Hearings. H.Res. 5 clarifies the rule to permit committees to adopt a rule or motion to extend questioning for selected majority and minority members and to permit questioning of witnesses by staff.

Subpoenas. The resolution clarifies House rules to state the practice that a subpoena may specify the terms of return other than at a meeting or hearing of a committee or subcommittee.

Oversight Plans. The resolution repeals the prohibition against consideration of a committee expense resolution when a committee has not submitted its oversight plan to the Committee on House Administration and the Committee on Government Reform by February 15 of the first session.

Committee Staff

Consultants. H.Res. 5 requires consultants to abide by provisions of the Code of Official Conduct.

Honoraria. The resolution permits certain lower-level House employees to receive honoraria for activities not related to official duties.

Telecommuting. The resolution conforms House rules with other statutory changes that permit telecommuting by federal employees.