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Committee System: Rules Changes in the House, 105th 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 105th Congress.

Committee Structure

Jurisdiction. H.Res. 5 changed the Budget Committee's jurisdiction from "congressional budget process" to "budget process, generally" and changed the Government Reform and Oversight Committee's jurisdiction from "budget and accounting measures, generally" to "government management and accounting measures, generally."

Name Changes. The resolution changed the name of the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Committee Procedure

Committee Reports. H.Res. 5 authorized committees to (1) file joint investigative or oversight reports with other committees on matters on which they conducted joint studies or investigations, (2) file investigative or oversight reports after the final adjournment of a Congress if they were properly approved by the committee and at least seven calendar days were permitted for filing views, and (3) file final activity reports after an adjournment if at least seven calendar days were permitted for filing views. H.Res. 5 also stipulated that proposed investigative reports will be considered as read if available for at least 24 hours in advance of their consideration.

H.Res. 5 changed the period for filing views on reports from three full days after the day on which the bill or matter is ordered reported to three days counting the day when the matter is ordered reported. The resolution also granted a committee an automatic right to arrange to have an hour after midnight on the third day to file its report if an intention to file views is announced.

H.Res. 5 repealed the requirement that committee reports include an inflationary impact statement. Instead, the report must include a new "constitutional authority statement" that cites the specific powers granted to Congress by the Constitution upon which the proposed measure is based.

Hearings. H.Res. 5 authorized committees to adopt a rule or motion to (1) permit selected majority and minority members, in equal numbers, to take more than five minutes to question witnesses, up to a limit of 30 minutes per side, per witness, and (2) permitted staff to question witnesses if the other side is given equal time and opportunity to do so.

The resolution clarified the procedure for closing a hearing to say that the hearing would not be closed if a majority of those voting, instead of a majority of committee members, determined that the evidence or testimony would not tend to defame, degrade, or incriminate any person.

Witnesses. The resolution required witnesses who appear before a committee in a non-governmental capacity to include with their advance written testimony, to the greatest extent practical, a curriculum vitae and a disclosure by source of the amount of federal grants and contracts received by them and any entity they represent in the current and preceding two fiscal years.

Internet. H.Res. 5 required committees, to the maximum extent feasible, to make all committee publications available in electronic form.

Committee Meetings. H.Res. 5 allowed all committees to meet at any time the House is in session without first obtaining special leave from the full House.

Budget Committee. The resolution conformed the layover requirement for Budget Committee reports on budget resolutions to those for other committee reports.

Ways and Means Committee. The resolution allowed reports by the Ways and Means Committee on major tax legislation to include, for information purposes only, an estimate of the change in revenues resulting from enactment, based on assumptions that estimate the probable dynamic macroeconomic effects of the legislation.

Committee Funding

Reserve Fund. H.Res. 5 allowed committee primary expense resolutions reported by the House Oversight Committee to include a reserve fund for unanticipated expenses, provided that any allocation from such a fund is approved by the House Oversight Committee.

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