

CRS Report for Congress

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Committee System Rules Changes in the House, 107th 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 107th Congress, adopted by the House January 3, 2001. The fact sheet will not be updated unless further rules changes are adopted.

Committee Structure

Organization. The resolution abolishes the Committee on Banking and Financial Services and creates a Committee on Financial Services and changes the name of the Committee on Commerce to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Jurisdiction. Jurisdiction over securities and exchanges, and insurance generally, is transferred from the Committee on Energy and Commerce to the Committee on Financial Services.

The Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence has exclusive oversight responsibility over the sources and methods of the core intelligence agencies.

Size. The Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence is increased from not more than 16 members to not more than 18 members, of which not more than 10 may be from the same party.

Subcommittees. The resolution maintains the current rule regarding the number of subcommittees each committee can create. However, the Committee on Government Reform may create up to eight subcommittees, and the Committee on International Relations and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure may create up to six subcommittees each.

Committee Procedure

Hearings. The procedures for committee hearings are modified to resolve an unintended implication about hearings labeled as something other than investigative; clarify that a copy of the committee rules and hearing procedures should be made available to witnesses “upon request”; and clarify that an assertion that evidence or testimony at a hearing may tend to defame, degrade, or incriminate any person must be made either by a Member of the committee or by a witness at a hearing.

Oversight. Committees are required to include in their oversight plans a review of specific problems with federal rules, regulations, statutes, and court decisions that are ambiguous, arbitrary, or nonsensical, or impose a severe financial burden on individuals.

As mentioned above, the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence gains exclusive oversight responsibility over the sources and methods of the core intelligence agencies.

The Committee on House Administration provides only policy direction to the inspector general, and retains oversight responsibility over the Clerk of the House, Sergeant at Arms, and chief administrative officer.

Quorums. Rules on the majority quorum requirement for ordering a measure reported, the release of executive session materials, the issuance of subpoenas, and determining if evidence or testimony may defame, degrade, or incriminate any person are clarified.

Committee Reports. The requirement that committee reports include a summary of oversight findings and recommendations by the Committee on Government Reform is repealed, and replaced with a new requirement that committee reports include a statement of general performance goals and objectives, including outcome-related goals and objectives, for which the measure authorizes funding.

A committee may file a supplemental report, without additional layover, to correct errors in the depiction of record votes in committee.

Subpoenas. The rule addressing responses to subpoenas is clarified to reflect the current interpretation that the rule also applies to both judicial orders and administrative subpoenas.

Committee Staff

Consultants. An individual employed by the House pursuant to a consultant contract may not lobby the contracting committee or the members or staff of the contracting committee on any matter. The individual may lobby other members or staff of the House on matters outside the jurisdiction of the contracting committee.

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