

**Opening Statement – Rules Committee Hearing**  
**Opening Statement**  
**Rules Committee Hearing**  
**April 25, 2012**

- Thank you, Mr. Chairman for calling this hearing.
- I support this legislation and hope we can report it out and bring it to the floor quickly.
- I have previously supported and co-sponsored bills to require electronic filing but I think this bill is better and cleaner than prior versions.
- According to the Federal Election Commission, our current process adds \$430,000 annually to the cost of processing these reports. Requiring electronic filing for Senate candidates will eliminate these costs, saving taxpayer money and improving efficiency.
- Unlike previous versions, the legislation before us will take the Secretary of the Senate out of the process and allow candidates for the Senate to file reports directly with the FEC, just as all other federal candidates do now.
- Our departed colleague, Senator Byrd, always felt very strongly about retaining the Secretary's role in this process. He was a fierce defender of Senate traditions and prerogatives and always wanted primary custody of Senate documents to remain with a Senate officer.
- For this reason, prior bills required electronic filing with the Secretary, rather than with the FEC, which would have required

the Secretary to develop a separate system to accept the filings electronically before transferring them to the FEC.

- This legislation will require direct filing with the FEC and thereby save the money that would have otherwise gone to development of a redundant system.
- I think this is the better approach.
- This committee had hearings on a bill to require electronic filing five years ago. The bill was reported but never enacted due to a dispute over possible amendments.
- While this legislation would fix an obvious problem, I suspect there are other problems in our current system Members might like to address.
- There may even be bi-partisan support for some proposals.
- I hope Members who may wish to address other equally foolish aspects of our campaign laws might be given an opportunity to do so.
- We rarely have legislative vehicles to address these problems and I hope we will not let this opportunity pass us by.
- It would be a shame if five years from now we find ourselves still filing paper reports only because of unwillingness to even allow a vote on other common sense reforms.