

Testimony of Nancy Erickson, Secretary of the Senate
Before the Senate Committee on Rules & Administration
April 25, 2012

Good Morning. I appreciate the invitation to discuss the impact that the implementation of S. 219, the Senate Campaign Disclosure Parity Act, would have on the Office of Public Records, one of twenty-six departments under the Secretary of the Senate.

Current law requires the Secretary of the Senate to receive Senate campaign reports as custodian for the Federal Election Commission (FEC). The Secretary is required to forward Senate campaign reports to the FEC within two working days after receipt.

Since the enactment of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1972 (FECA), the Secretary's Office of Public Records has been the filing location for Senate FECA documents, which have been submitted by Senate candidates in paper form. In response to the Committee's inquiry, I can confirm for you that House candidates file their reports directly with the FEC. From our observations, many Senate campaign filers already use the FEC's electronic system to prepare their reports, only to then print the pages for delivery to the Office of Public Records. In addition to filing with the Office of Public Records, Senate candidates also have the *option* of voluntarily filing electronically with the FEC, which makes those electronic reports available as "Unofficial Senate Electronic Filings." A few filers take this additional step of voluntarily submitting their campaign reports electronically.

My office takes seriously its responsibility to implement Senate policy in an effective and cost-efficient manner. To date, Public Records has developed a processing system that involves accepting and date-stamping reports; copying the date stamp on the report's mailing envelope as requested by the FEC; scanning and indexing those reports; then making them available to the public as soon as possible, usually the following day, through an internal database that can be viewed on public terminals in 232 Hart Senate Office Building. Despite the fact that the statute allows the Office of Public Records two days to transmit reports to the FEC, reports are typically transmitted to the FEC the same day they are received. Our office also stores and archives the reports.

Over the years, the Office of Public Records has streamlined this process, utilizing a high-volume scanner and transmitting reports to the FEC over an Internet connection, instead of relying on a T-1 telecom line, saving our office \$5,000 a year. Despite using the most modern tools available, the processing of paper documents remains labor intensive. As you know, the size of FEC reports varies during election and non-election years:

In 2010, Public Records processed 6,410 total reports consisting of 522,210 pages. One report alone exceeded 9,000 pages.

In 2011, a non-election year, the numbers decreased to 3,486 filings and 223,734 pages.

Since the first of this year, OPR has processed 1,955 reports and 157,032 pages.

S. 219 requires all Senate candidates to file election campaign reports directly with the FEC. I understand that this would have the effect that candidates with more than \$50,000 in contributions or expenditures would be required to file electronically with the FEC. As an officer of the Senate, the Secretary defers policy decisions to the Senate, and my office stands ready to implement this proposed change without delay should the Senate approve the measure.

S. 219-related cost savings for the Office of Public Records would include staff hours of 1.5 Public Records' staffers, who process FEC reports. Such savings in labor hours would be beneficial to our operations, especially since we have been given new implementation responsibility under the STOCK Act, and our budget, like other legislative agencies, has been significantly cut. As you know, the STOCK Act will expand paper financial disclosure filings in the short term to include periodic Transaction Reports, which will initially require scanning and indexing paper reports in a system similar to the current one used for FEC reports.

The Sergeant at Arms, which provides technical support for the Office of Public Record's highly customized FEC and Lobbying Disclosure Act filing systems and databases, must periodically upgrade the FEC processing application for maintenance purposes. The last major upgrade of the system took four months of staff time from SAA technical staff. Elimination of the current FEC processing system and database would result in SAA manpower savings and would allow that organization to redirect resources and manpower to our joint effort to build an electronic financial disclosure filing system.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to share information on the important work of the Office of Public Records. Our office has appreciated the support and guidance of this committee over the years on a variety of issues, and in particular, I want to express my appreciation for your support as we implemented new electronic lobbying filing requirements under the Honest Leadership Open Government Act. We stand ready to implement S. 219 if enacted.

Nancy Erickson

Nancy Erickson was elected Secretary of the Senate when the Senate convened on January 4, 2007. She is the thirty-second person, and the sixth woman, to serve as Secretary of the Senate.

Erickson began her career in Washington, D.C. in 1987 with the General Accounting Office's audit sites at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Following her selection as a Presidential Management Intern (PMI) in 1988, Nancy gained insight into management activities at the Department of Health and Human Service's Health Care Financing Administration, which oversaw Medicare and Medicaid operations. Nancy concluded her rotations in the PMI program as a fellow in the Office of Senator Tom Daschle, where she ultimately accepted a legislative staff position.

A sixteen year veteran of Senator Daschle's staff, Nancy held a variety of positions in the legislative, scheduling, and constituent outreach functions of the office. She was named Deputy Chief of Staff following Senator Daschle's election as Democratic Leader. Most recently, Nancy has served as the Democratic Representative in the Senate Sergeant at Arms (SAA) office, a position appointed by Senator Harry Reid.

Erickson, a native of South Dakota, received bachelor of arts degrees in Government and History from Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, in 1984. She also earned a M.A. in public policy from the American University in Washington, D.C. in 1987.