



CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE

IN KEEPING WITH ITS STATUTORY MISSION, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) in fiscal 2001 provided Congress with research and information services that were timely, objective, nonpartisan, and confidential at all stages of the legislative process, thereby contributing to an informed national legislature.

At the start of the twenty-first century, CRS continued to prepare for the future by adapting to a changing work force and an information technology environment. The most critical challenge for CRS remains the need to replace staff members who are retiring while providing continuity in its legislative support to Congress. In the process, CRS also must harness the latest developments in technology, especially Web-related applications, to meet the changing information and research needs of Congress. Furthermore, it must enhance its analytical capacity in rapidly unfolding areas of national interest and concern, focusing on terrorism and homeland security, public health, and technology, especially in the areas of law, national security, information policy, and telecommunications. CRS also must continue to improve the security and collaborative capabilities of its computer networks and databases.

LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANCE

To assist Congress as it considered a host of domestic and international issues, CRS provided electronic products; briefings and consultations; and other



The Congressional Research Service assembles Info Packs with printed background materials to help congressional staff respond to requests from constituents.
(Photo by Jerry David)

analytic, reference, and information services. The following examples of CRS legislative assistance during fiscal 2001 highlight the interdisciplinary nature of the support that CRS provides Congress.

Agriculture. Conditions in the farm economy, the prospects of a major rewrite of U.S. farm policy, and potential trade legislation prompted requests in the 107th Congress for specialized seminars and briefings by CRS experts on food and agriculture issues. Responses included a one-day program for House and Senate committee staffs and for member office legislative aides. The program included experts on farm policy from government, industry, and academia. Those experts and CRS analysts conducted a series of specialized briefings or tutorials for House and Senate committees throughout the year, covering commodity programs, rural development, research, food programs, trade, and conservation.

An electronic briefing book afforded Congress ready access to information on all major food and agriculture issues. The electronic briefing book was complemented by reports and issue briefs on specific programs and issues; a CRS glossary of agriculture terms, laws, and programs developed for use on committee and member home pages; and a report identifying agriculture Web sites. CRS specialists regularly advised members and their staffs on legislation and options, as well as provided confidential written analyses on a wide array of food and farm topics, including the constitutionality of dairy compacts; the farm economy situation and outlook; commodity programs and operations; and trade agreements affecting agriculture, plant and animal diseases, biotechnology, and agricultural production and food consumption.

Bankruptcy Reform. Bankruptcy reform legislation entered its fifth year of consideration by Congress during fiscal 2001. After legislation was pocket vetoed in the 106th Congress, both houses introduced and passed similar bills designed both to address a historically high volume of consumer bankruptcy filings and to increase creditor recovery by channeling more debtors into Chapter 13. Both bills were pending as the fiscal year drew to a close. As the House and Senate bills evolved during the legislative process, CRS legislative attorneys prepared in-depth analyses, including an array of general distribution reports, as well as frequent briefings and presentations for members and their staffs. Economic analysts prepared reports that examined historic trends in consumer bankruptcy and explored the macroeconomic aspects of this phenomenon.

Budget Process. Because federal budget issues continued to dominate the legislative agenda for much of 2001, CRS provided support for consideration of the fiscal 2002 congressional budget resolution, revenue reconciliation legislation, and annual appropriations bills. Information specialists produced *The FY 2002 Budget: A Chronology with Internet Access*, allowing quick and timely reference for members and their staffs. Issues included extending budget enforcement and budget process reform proposals. Economic analysts prepared a range of reports and briefings and organized a Public Policy Institute session analyzing the economic assumptions used in forecasting the 2002 budget. Also, CRS contributed analyses of the potential implications of a constitutional amendment to limit tax legislation and of emergency spending authority enacted in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks. In addition, the appropriations and budget section of the CRS Web site continued to generate extensive congressional interest and use.

Campaign Finance Reform. Campaign finance reform, especially the issue of whether and how to control soft money, commanded the attention of both the

Senate and the House from the earliest days of the 107th Congress. Although House debate was cut short in July 2001 by defeat of the accompanying rule, the Senate broke a stalemate of many years when it passed the McCain-Feingold bill in April. CRS specialists and legislative attorneys conducted frequent briefings for members and their staffs, prepared a wide range of confidential and general distribution products, and assisted in evaluating draft amendments and alternative proposals. Of particular importance was the *Campaign Finance Reform* electronic briefing book, which provided accurate and timely tracking of proposed Senate floor amendments and changes in the Senate version as it evolved. CRS assisted House Administration Committee staff members in preparing for hearings and the committee's report. They also prepared summaries and comparisons of the Senate-passed bill, the two leading House bills, and current law.

Congressional Oversight. The inauguration of a new president shifted the focus of congressional oversight in fiscal 2001. The Congressional Review Act (CRA), unchanged since 1996, was resurrected to successfully repeal the prior administration's ergonomics rule. It was also used to challenge President Bush's revival of the Mexico City Policy, forcing the president to effectuate the revival directly through executive order, rather than by direction to an agency, which would have been subject to review and veto under the CRA. CRS legal analysts briefed members and their staffs on the procedural and substantive intricacies of this complex legislation. President Bush's imposition of a sixty-day moratorium on "midnight rules" of the previous administration, as well as the subsequent extension of those suspensions, raised serious and complex oversight and administrative law issues, which legislative attorneys addressed through memoranda, personal briefings, and Federal Law Update sessions. CRS attorneys have provided advice regarding the Vacancies Reform Act of 1998, which extends the limitation period for temporary designees to advice and consent positions during a transition period to 300 days. Analysts briefed members and their staffs on new options that are available to the president for making temporary high-level appointments for an extended period that are not subject to Senate scrutiny.

Defense Transformation. Congress continued to grapple with the issue of how to develop a new military force for the future, while simultaneously maintaining effective and ready forces to meet ongoing military challenges in fiscal 2001. Following the end of the Cold War, the U.S. military establishment underwent downsizing and engaged in a variety of efforts to incorporate technology from the emerging high-tech revolution in military affairs. Congress

pressed for a more coordinated effort by mandating important studies, including the Quadrennial Defense Reviews, leading to identifiable defense transformation programs developed in fiscal 2001. CRS defense analysts and specialists supported this process through a series of meetings and seminars with members and their staffs to help identify future threats and potential technical solutions. In particular, a family of reports and issue briefs was prepared to monitor transformation efforts in each of the armed services.

Elections. Circumstances surrounding the 2000 presidential election drew congressional attention to such issues as the reliability of different voting technologies used in the states for the conduct of federal elections, voting problems and irregularities, alleged violation of voter rights, treatment of military and overseas votes, the electoral college, and early media projections of election results. Congress responded with a range of legislation, including proposals to study state procedures in administering federal elections, to establish a stronger federal role in election administration, and to develop constitutional amendments to reform the electoral college. CRS analysts, attorneys, and information specialists collaborated in an integrated response. This response included, during the postelection period, studies and legal analyses of state and federal election practices, as well as of electoral college procedures. Written products included assessments of alternative voting systems and equipment, side-by-side comparisons of reform and study bills, evaluation of proposed electoral college reforms, and analyses of the effects of early network projections and related proposals for a federal election day holiday. In addition, analysts and attorneys conducted briefings for committees, assisted committee staff members in planning hearings, and assisted the staffs of members and committees in developing reform legislation proposals. Analysts from four CRS divisions conducted a Public Policy Institute session examining all aspects of the reform debate for congressional staff, while a Federal Law Update course reviewed the controversial Supreme Court case *Bush v. Gore*.

Elementary and Secondary Education. Debate continued on the federal role in elementary and secondary education. Proposals included those to increase state and local school district authority over the use of federal funds that are linked to student assessments, to school accountability based on annual progress in student outcomes, to teacher quality and quantity, and to improved effectiveness in aid programs for at-risk students. Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) bills passed the House and Senate in May and June 2001, respectively, and were in conference as the fiscal year closed. CRS analysts assisted authorizing and conference committee staff members by assessing

options and analyzing the implications of proposed alternatives. Products included hundreds of computer simulations evaluating alternative funding allocation formulas for more than ten different programs. Using the assembled data, analysts also produced estimates of potential unintended impacts in different versions of the bill, thereby enhancing congressional consideration of new alternatives and options.

Energy Policy. Electricity shortages in California and rising energy prices elsewhere presented major energy policy issues for Congress in fiscal 2001. CRS analysts conducted numerous staff briefings on the structure of the California energy industry, on factors affecting current supply and demand for oil and gas, and on spiking gasoline prices. Products included an electronic briefing book, *Electric Utility Restructuring*, that outlined current background and analysis on the crisis. Early in 2001, President Bush formed a National Energy Policy Development Group, which issued a range of recommendations in May. By August, the House had passed an omnibus energy bill incorporating some elements of the president's plan. CRS prepared a wide range of analyses to assist Congress in evaluating the administration's program, examining such issues as its potential environmental and economic effects, proposals to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas development, and proposals to provide tax incentives for energy production and conservation.

Immigration. Congressional concern over immigration issues such as increasing border security, extending temporary foreign worker visas, reorganizing the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and legalizing unauthorized aliens broadened and intensified following the terrorist attacks of September 11 to include monitoring foreign nationals and excluding and detaining potential terrorists. CRS analysts provided expert briefings and written products on related legislation introduced in the 107th Congress, including analytical assessments of U.S.-Mexico migration policy options and noncitizen eligibility for, and use of, federal assistance programs.

International Affairs. CRS analysts assisted Congress in its response to a wide range of international issues during fiscal 2001, including the Andean Regional Initiative (ARI), U.S.-China relations, international HIV/AIDS issues, Southeastern Europe, and the Sudan Peace Act.

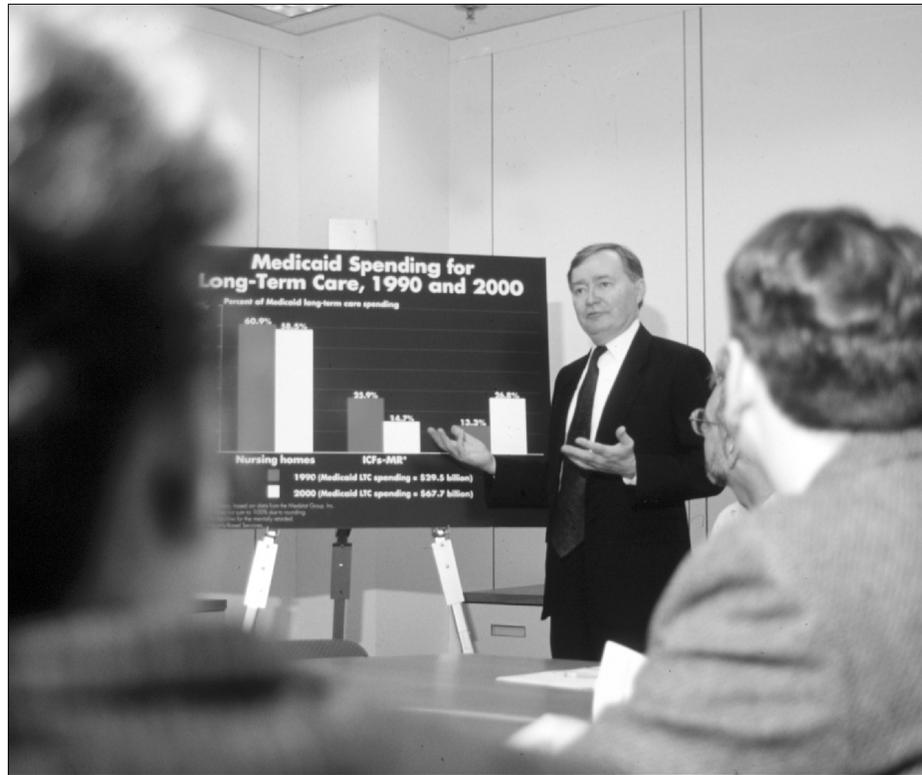
In early 2001, the Bush administration proposed \$882 million in economic and counternarcotics assistance for Colombia and six regional neighbors in the ARI. With final congressional action pending in late fiscal 2001, both chambers acted to cut the president's request and to impose other conditions and reporting requirements. CRS responded to many requests, contributed support to

hearings, and organized two seminars on Colombia in support of congressional action.

Sino-American diplomatic relations were contentious throughout much of fiscal 2001. In April 2001, a collision between a Chinese jet fighter and a U.S. military aircraft over the South China Sea engendered a period of tension and stirred the interest of Congress. In addition to organizing numerous briefings of members and their staffs on all aspects of the crisis, CRS defense and foreign affairs analysts authored daily, and often twice-daily, updates for the issue brief *China-U.S. Relations*. Additional support included analyses of the crisis and of pending legislation to prohibit compensation to China as a result of the collision. Also in April, the United States announced plans to sell defensive weapons and services to Taiwan. Defense analysts prepared reports and briefings giving detailed information on the weapons involved, on policy implications of the sales, and on the military balance between China and Taiwan. CRS provided close assistance to members and committees, covering background and policy implications, in consideration of Public Law 107-10, legislation authorizing the president to endorse observer status for Taiwan at the World Health Organization. CRS experts addressed the potential effects of alternative proposals for the pending Tibetan Policy Act of 2001. As the Subcommittee on Trade of the House Committee on Ways and Means prepared for hearings on renewing normal trade relations with China, foreign affairs and trade analysts developed a range of briefings, analyses, and options papers for subcommittee staff.

By the end of 2000, more than 36 million people were living with HIV and AIDS worldwide, and the number of infections was increasing in China, India, the former Soviet Union, and elsewhere. As part of Public Law 107-20, the Supplemental Appropriations Act, Congress approved \$100 million for a new multilateral Global AIDS and Health Fund, with additional contributions included in the House and Senate versions of the foreign operations appropriations bill. CRS information specialists and analysts responded to a high volume of information and background requests by preparing confidential memoranda, conducting briefings for members and their staffs, assisting in developing hearing agendas, and maintaining the regularly updated issue brief *AIDS in Africa*.

Congress dealt with new issues in Southeastern Europe during the fiscal year, particularly the emergence of democracy in Serbia and the danger of a major ethnic conflict within Macedonia. Members also grappled with continuing concerns, including U.S. military deployments to Kosovo and Bosnia and



A CRS staff member briefs congressional and committee members and their staffs on specific policy issues.

(Photo by Jerry David)

aid for regional reconstruction. CRS analysts drafted reports assessing Serbian compliance with congressionally imposed conditions for aid and military burden-sharing with U.S. allies in the region. Briefings and overview materials were also regularly prepared for congressional delegations to the region.

Armed conflict, slavery and other human rights abuses, and famine in Sudan were a source of concern to Congress throughout the year. In June 2001, the House passed the Sudan Peace Act, which condemned human rights violations and created various incentives for a restoration of peace. In July, the Senate passed a similar bill. CRS analysts provided assistance in drafting a number of resolutions and bills, conducted briefings for members and their staffs, prepared a range of reports and confidential memoranda, and accompanied and supported congressional delegations to the region.

Medicare and Prescription Drugs. Rising federal Medicare outlays and the increasing cost to seniors of prescription drugs were major components of the congressional health care agenda. As fiscal 2001 drew to a close, the committees of jurisdiction focused legislative efforts on administrative and regulatory reform. CRS specialists worked with committee staff members to explore innovative reform options, such as prescription drug benefits under Medicare, a

competitively negotiated managed care benefit, and a Medicare regulatory reform bill. Briefings and publications focused on analysis of policy options, including actuarial estimates of associated costs, while CRS staff members appeared as expert witnesses before relevant Senate and House committees. Information research specialists updated Medicare background material and created a new overview package on Medicare coverage of prescription drugs, and a new page providing links to explanations of federal prescription programs and both industry and association positions on prescription drug issues was added to the CRS Web site.

National Missile Defense. The Bush administration's proposals for significantly increased missile defense spending and possible termination of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty generated considerable interest and debate in Congress in fiscal 2001. The House generally supported the president's budget request, whereas the Senate Armed Services Committee sought lower funding and greater restrictions for the program; the terrorist attacks of September 11 spurred both chambers to approve the Bush administration request. CRS analysts crafted an interdivisional response on this issue, integrating earlier works into an updated and comprehensive report. Teams of analysts offered a seminar on missile defense early in the year, prepared numerous briefings with members and their staffs, and responded with written products to a large number of individual inquiries.

Patient Protection. Congress reflected nationwide concern over managed care and other health insurance issues during fiscal 2001. House- and Senate-passed legislation, which awaited conference committee action as the fiscal year ended, offered various approaches designed to improve access to providers, disclosure of health plan information, and procedures for grievance and appeal, as well as to reform health care lawsuit practices for employment-based plans. CRS analysts and attorneys offered a Public Policy Institute session early in the year and a Federal Law Update presentation on associated issues. Numerous briefings of members and their staffs were conducted. Publications included an overview package and products on current federal malpractice and preemption law and comparison of legislative options, as well as analysis of such controversial areas as lawsuit reform and employer liability. Additionally, the Health Policy and Medicine Web site was expanded to include links to a broad range of information sources on managed care.

Presidential Nominations and Appointments. With the change of government in January 2001, Congress was presented with hundreds of nominations for Bush administration appointees requiring Senate approval. CRS information

specialists and analysts assisted members and committees with information from the public record relating to nominees' views and prior careers; analysts also aided committee staffs in developing questions for confirmation hearings and gave numerous briefings on proposed appointments and the appointments process.

Public Lands. Congressional interest in public lands intensified in fiscal 2001 because of proposed regulations issued by the Clinton administration and proposals from the Bush administration concerning use and development of public lands. Specific concerns included national forest management; oil and gas development proposals for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; increased oil and gas exploration in the Great Lakes; water use conflicts in the Klamath River basin; and various issues related to designation of national monuments, endangered species, and grazing rights. CRS specialists and legislative attorneys offered many briefings to members and their staffs and collaborated in preparing and maintaining authoritative analyses in all these areas, including a frequently updated issue brief, *Public Lands (BLM) and National Forests*.

Social Security Reform. Social Security's projected long-range funding problems (according to the latest estimates, payroll taxes will fall below expenditures in 2016, and trust funds will be depleted by 2038) have been of concern to the last three Congresses. To date, relatively less activity has occurred in the 107th Congress, pending the report of a presidential commission on Social Security reform. In anticipation of the commission report, CRS assisted Congress in evaluating different proposals for reform, including individual retirement accounts (IRAs) within the Social Security system, by developing computer models that provide projections of the changes and interactions that particular reforms would have on future benefit levels. Products included a report that analyzed effects on benefits of various reform options as well as one on the economic implications of options. In related issues, legislative attorneys assisted in examining the widespread use of Social Security numbers and also sponsored a Public Policy Institute session examining Social Security privacy issues.

Taxation. Proposals by President Bush stimulated debate over tax policy in fiscal 2001, as Congress moved to refashion and modify the chief executive's plan, which was unveiled early in the 107th Congress. After an active debate, the House and Senate passed compromise legislation, the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001. Major components included a reduction in personal income tax rates, including a retroactive payment to most taxpayers; an increase in the per-child tax credit; reductions for married couples; a phaseout of federal estate and gift taxes; benefits for education; changes

to IRAs and pensions; and a temporary reduction in the alternative minimum tax for individuals. CRS economic analysts prepared written products, including reports, analyses of the macroeconomic impact of various tax cut alternatives, issue briefs, and *Taxation*, a constantly updated electronic briefing book. They conducted numerous briefings and consultations with members and their staffs. Information specialists provided comprehensive data on the public debate over the tax bill and associated issues such as capital gains tax reductions, international tax havens, and the extension of specific corporate income tax incentives. As the fiscal year drew to a close, attention was refocused on proposals for both economic stimulus and relief for people, businesses, and jurisdictions affected by the September 11 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington.

Terrorism. Both Congress and the president had identified terrorism as a principal threat to national security and international stability well before the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. After the October 2000 assault on the USS *Cole* in Yemen and the release of the recommendations of four national study commissions, Congress addressed federal antiterrorism policy, organization, and funding and sought to develop reform legislation. CRS supported this effort with a range of products and services, including an electronic briefing book and several reports and issue briefs. CRS specialists testified before the House Government Reform Committee and the House Judiciary Committee on proposals for reforming U.S. antiterrorism efforts. A congressional seminar was organized to compare and analyze commission findings with high-level representatives from each of the study panels. The September 11 terrorist attacks reordered congressional priorities, profoundly affecting many federal programs and policies. To assist Congress, CRS instituted a service-wide, coordinated response that drew upon senior experts in all relevant fields to provide an interdisciplinary perspective. A new, comprehensive, electronic briefing book on terrorism and homeland security was launched soon after the attacks occurred and was frequently updated. Two additional seminars were held on legal and public health issues concerning homeland security, and others were planned. CRS specialists conducted a series of briefings for members and their staffs and prepared a broad range of new reports, including assessments of Federal Emergency Management Agency programs and general information on the federal role in emergency management. Information specialists developed expanded “Chronology,” “Frequently Asked Questions,” “External Links,” “Documents,” “Citizens Help” and “CRS Experts” sections for the revised issue brief.

Trade. Trade policy highlights for fiscal 2001 included a variety of proposals to liberalize international trading arrangements, to revise U.S. export policy, and to reauthorize import preference programs. Specifically these proposals embraced reauthorization and revision of the Export Administration Act, the Export-Import Bank, Andean trade preferences, and the Generalized System of Preferences. In addition, Congress considered proposals to renew the president's "fast-track" authority to negotiate international trade agreements, as well as trade-liberalization agreements concluded by the executive branch and subject to congressional approval. CRS trade analysts developed analyses of various fast-track proposals, including assessments of advantages and disadvantages of each. Other activities included frequent consultations and briefings with members and with the staffs of relevant committees and preparation and maintenance of a full range of related products, which were made available to Congress on the CRS Web site in a comprehensive electronic briefing book, *Trade*.

Welfare. With the expiration of major welfare reform legislation pending in 2002, Congress prepared for reauthorization with oversight hearings and seminars. CRS analysts prepared extensive background materials and analyses, including a comprehensive electronic briefing book, *Welfare Reform*. Additional support included numerous briefings for members and relevant committee staff. Early in 2001, the new administration proposed a key element of its own reform agenda, the "faith-based initiative." CRS specialists and legislative attorneys provided analyses and legislative support while the House debated and ultimately passed a version of this initiative. CRS also supported consideration of legislation reauthorizing several expiring grant programs related to child welfare and child abuse by conducting briefings, providing background materials, and offering staff assistance in preparing committee markups and other relevant documents.

CRS MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES

In fiscal 2001, CRS management initiatives focused on developing a five-year strategic plan; implementing a new, Library-wide merit selection process; increasing the diversity of CRS staff through recruitment and other efforts; implementing congressional outreach programs; making ergonomic upgrades of CRS workstations; and completing the relocation that began in fiscal 2000 as a follow-up to realignment of CRS.

Work continued on a formal five-year strategic plan. Critical activities required by the launch of the plan and subsequent efforts to implement a new hiring system slowed the work. However, CRS identified activities, processes,

and programs that could be adopted and that would address some of the concerns and suggestions offered by staff members and managers during forums used to gather input on the plan. Some elements of the plan will include improvements in internal communications, budget and staffing decisions, training, e-mail communications with congressional clients, and desktop resources.

As part of this planning effort, CRS implemented modifications to the procedures used by the Director's Office to send e-mails to all staff members, began conducting individual meetings with divisions and offices, modified quarterly consultative management forums to encourage staff participation, and began work on a communications survey of all staff members. CRS also routinized its budget and staffing decisions so that they are made on a quarterly basis. As a result, managers have immediate feedback about resources available, which enhances their ability to best allocate those resources. CRS initiated a range of activities to improve the professional development activities available to supervisors and staff members. An Office of Workforce Development Web page, which information staff members and management had requested, was developed during the year. A CRS-wide survey of current training opportunities was conducted. Core curriculum training was developed for new employees that includes external communications, budget and appropriations processes, and written and oral presentations. In addition, CRS worked with the House and Senate to ensure the security of e-mail communications with its clients and considered policies on how to manage e-mail communications to ensure quality, balance, and timeliness of such communications. Finally, as part of a continuing effort to assist analysts in obtaining information and data that they need quickly and efficiently for their work for the Congress, CRS enhanced the type and accessibility of online materials.

The beginning of each new Congress provides an opportunity for CRS to help new members of Congress and their staffs improve their understanding of public policy issues and of how to access CRS resources. The U.S. House of Representatives and CRS sponsored "Legislative Issues and Procedures: The CRS Seminar for New Members," on January 5–8, 2001, in Williamsburg, Virginia. The seminar exposed freshman lawmakers to procedural opportunities and constraints in Congress. It also featured detailed policy briefings about the major issues of the day, from prescription drug costs and welfare reform to international trade and the budget surplus. Visits to offices of new members are another way CRS informs members of Congress and their staffs about its services.

CRS also launched a major effort to improve communication with Congress

about CRS products and services. This work was undertaken to ensure that members of Congress and their staffs are aware of the full range of services that are easily and readily available to them. CRS products were revised and redesigned in a consistent and coordinated format that facilitates quick retrieval of information. New analytical products were ready for the start of the 107th Congress and complemented a revised CRS Web site.

CRS has devoted significant attention to building a stronger, more regular recruitment program. It has been working with various groups—public, private, and academic—to build and strengthen networks in the wider public policy community. The Office of Workforce Development has developed a library of new recruitment materials to attract applicants. In addition, in fiscal 2001 CRS continued to pursue opportunities for increasing staff diversity. Specifically, CRS inaugurated two programs to provide paid summer work experiences for qualified minority applicants. The first program was developed in partnership with the Atlanta University Center, a consortium of historically black colleges and universities in the Atlanta area, and was a direct outgrowth of past CRS recruiting efforts. The second program was created in partnership with the Institute for International Public Policy (IIPP). Administered by the United Negro College Fund, the IIPP is a fellowship program designed to identify, recruit, and prepare underrepresented minority undergraduates for careers in international service. CRS also sought during fiscal 2001 to expand its relationships with the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute. Each of these initiatives is part of CRS's ongoing efforts to attract and retain a high-quality work force that mirrors in diversity the Congress it serves and the constituencies the Congress represents.

Eighty-nine CRS workstations were reconfigured in fiscal 2001 as part of the Library of Congress's multiyear plan to upgrade workstations with ergonomically correct furnishings. These workstations are located in the Information Research Division and staff areas of the La Follette Congressional Reading Room. In addition, staff workstations and areas that serve congressional staff in the Production Distribution Center were reconfigured, and ergonomic upgrades were installed. Ergonomic workplace consultations are available to all members of CRS staff. In fiscal 2001, fifty-two CRS staff members received such consultations.

The February 1999 realignment of CRS had consequences beyond changes in organizational structure. Staff members who were reassigned from one division to another had to be relocated physically so that they could work in proximity to their new colleagues. Divisions were consolidated; staff members

within sections were placed together; entrances were redesigned with security and convenience in mind; and copy centers, shared printers, fax machines, and walk-up computers were located strategically. The construction was done in twenty-five phases over a period of a year and a half, so that work for Congress would not be disrupted. During each of the twenty-five phases, affected staff members were temporarily relocated. The final phase, which included the CRS director's office, was completed on December 29, 2000, and some follow-up work was done later in the fiscal year.

TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES

As Congress turns increasingly to online and other Web-based systems, CRS has sought to improve those technological capabilities that are critical to providing Congress with the information it needs. During fiscal 2001, CRS launched a redesigned Web page, worked with the Library to make improvements to its Legislative Information System, upgraded the CRS network through conversion to Ethernet, enhanced the security of its databases and other computer systems, and undertook other technology initiatives that improved its ability to provide Congress with timely, accurate, and nonpartisan information.

A redesigned CRS Web site was made available to congressional and CRS staff members on January 30, 2001. Implementing work that began in April 2000, CRS staff members streamlined the new CRS Web site design on the basis of client-centered, human factors and ergonomic principles outlined in the CRS Web Site Strategic Plan. A new site address, <<http://www.crs.gov>>, was obtained to enable congressional staff to locate the CRS Web site more easily, and the Web site was redesigned to provide topical access to selected CRS products and services in a more targeted, active, legislation-focused manner than was the case with the former Web site. In addition to the Current Legislative Issues feature discussed shortly, other specific improvements included implementing a single search box on the CRS Web site and introducing a completely new navigational structure. New electronic briefing books posted on the CRS Web site during the year included *Agriculture and the Farm Bill*; *Welfare Reform*; and a redesigned, expanded electronic briefing book on terrorism, which was posted after the September 11 terrorist attacks.

In response to Congress's increasing use of online and Web-based sources, CRS launched the Current Legislative Issues (CLI) system in fiscal 2001 as part of its Web redesign. The CLI system is a new format for accessing CRS products on more than 130 different public policy issues. It is designed to provide

members of Congress and their staffs with Web-based materials that are specifically tailored to the legislative issues facing Congress at any given time. The CLI system is also designed for ease of use; it provides a streamlined presentation of issue-oriented CRS product lists, links to relevant electronic briefing books, facilitation of searches for other CRS products and requests for CRS research assistance, and faster posting of product updates.

The Legislative Information System (LIS) is an online retrieval system that provides Congress with accurate and timely legislative information. During fiscal 2001, use of the LIS increased 15 percent over the previous year. The LIS was redesigned to provide easier access and a format that can be constantly expanded to accommodate the wide range of legislative information that Congress needs. In addition, improvements were made to security and system availability. Safeguards were installed to prevent denial of service attacks and to ensure continuous system availability. CRS is making progress in its efforts to create a backup server at a remote location to be used in the event that the Library of Congress's computer center cannot operate. CRS is also working with staff in the House and Senate to ensure reliable exchange of data and to prepare for implementation of a new data standard known as extensible markup language (XML).

A key feature of CRS's continuing technology initiatives is upgrading the CRS network and other computer systems. Beginning on May 30, 2001, CRS began conversion from a 4 MB Token Ring network to a 100 MB Fast Ethernet. The upgrade was completed in October 2001. It has expanded capabilities for the future that will be critical to CRS's work for Congress. The more robust system will allow for improved protection of CRS's systems against intrusion and compromise; help provide faster, safer, and more automatic backups for applications and data; and make possible more integrated collaborative research and analysis. In addition, CRS converted to Dynamic IP, which manages Internet addresses, to provide faster access to network resources, and CRS centralized and consolidated its servers. CRS also provided staff members with faster, higher-capacity computers and upgraded its security systems. The security upgrade included deployment of the latest virus definitions and an e-mail scanning tool to block suspicious and infected e-mail messages.

Improving computer security is critical to CRS's work for Congress. During fiscal 2001, CRS conducted more than twenty training sessions for staff as part of its computer security program, as required by Library of Congress Regulation (LCR) 1620. Specialized training modules were designed for CRS management and technical support staff. CRS staff members were briefed on the latest

technology behind computer security threats and were instructed on how to follow standardized procedures in the event of computer security incidents. In addition, CRS participated in regular interagency meetings sponsored by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Commerce Critical Infrastructure Coordination Group, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology to review new computer security threats. CRS also briefed staff members of the Senate Armed Services Committee on current information related to spyware and cyber-warfare, including Internet vulnerabilities and hacker methods, in preparation for future hearings about national infrastructure protection. Finally, CRS worked with the Library of Congress Security Committee and participated in regular meetings of the Capitol Information Security Technology Exchange to update plans for a coherent response to computer security threats directed specifically at Capitol Hill computer assets.

CRS uses the Inquiry Status and Information System (ISIS) to manage its workload of congressional requests. ISIS provides immediate access for tracking information on congressional inquiries and provides reliable statistical data for budget, program, and personnel planning. These features allow CRS to keep pace with the changing concerns of Congress. An important enhancement introduced in February 2001 was the secure Web-based system for members and their staffs to submit research requests to CRS electronically, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Congressional staff members played an important role as system testers during the development phase. From February to September 2001, CRS received nearly 8,000 research requests from congressional offices. In addition, major work began on a number of ISIS components that will resolve technical problems, integrate data, improve systems for reporting management data, and improve screen design and functionality.