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# Architect of the Capitol Appointment Procedure: Evolution and Recent Changes

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## Architect of the Capitol Appointment Procedure: Evolution and Recent Changes

According to its website, the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) is responsible “for the operations and care of more than 18.4 million square feet of facilities, 570 acres of grounds and thousands of works of art.”

Changes to the Architect’s appointment process have been periodically discussed for many years, and congressional interest increased with the termination of the service of former Architect J. Brett Blanton on February 13, 2023.

The resulting Architect of the Capitol Appointment Act of 2023 was enacted within the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 (H.R. 2670, P.L. 118-31) on December 22, 2023. The act places responsibility for the appointment of the Architect within a congressional commission comprised of 12 Members. Under the new procedure, the appointment is pursuant to a majority vote of the commission, as is reappointment or removal. The act continued the 10-year term for the Architect and amended the existing law related to the appointment and service of the Deputy Architect.

The first appointment under this new process was announced by the congressional commission on May 22, 2024. Thomas Austin assumed the role of Architect on June 24.

Prior to the 2023 change, pursuant to the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 1990, the Architect was appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate. Before the enactment of this law in 1989, the President appointed the Architect for an unlimited term with no formal role for Congress.

The 1989 act first established a 10-year term for the Architect as well as a bicameral, bipartisan congressional commission to recommend candidates to the President. As subsequently amended in 1995, this law provided for a commission consisting of 14 Members of Congress, including the Speaker of the House, the President pro tempore of the Senate, the House and Senate majority and minority leaders, and the chair and ranking minority members of the Committee on House Administration, the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, and the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations. The Architect was eligible to be reappointed.

Alan M. Hantman was the first Architect appointed under the 1989 appointment procedure. He declined to seek reappointment and served from January 30, 1997, to February 4, 2007.

Stephen T. Ayers, who served as Acting Architect of the Capitol following Mr. Hantman’s retirement, was nominated by President Obama on February 24, 2010, for a 10-year term. The nomination was referred to the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration. The committee held a hearing on April 15, 2010, during which the chair and ranking member praised Mr. Ayers for his work as acting Architect and congratulated him on the nomination. Mr. Ayers was confirmed by voice vote in the Senate on May 12, 2010.

Upon Mr. Ayers’s retirement on November 23, 2018, Christine Merdon, the Deputy Architect of the Capitol/Chief Operating Officer, became the Acting Architect of the Capitol. After her resignation in August 2019, Thomas J. Carroll served as Acting Architect of the Capitol.

J. Brett Blanton was nominated to be Architect of the Capitol by President Trump on December 9, 2019. The nomination was referred to the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration. The committee held a hearing on December 12, 2019, and Mr. Blanton was confirmed by voice vote in the Senate on December 19, 2019. On February 13, 2023, Mr. Blanton was informed by the White House that his appointment as Architect was terminated.

Chere Rexroat, the Chief Engineer, was initially named the Acting Architect. She was succeeded in February 2024 by Acting Architect of the Capitol and Chief of Operations Joseph DiPietro.

For additional information and a comparison of appointments in the legislative branch, see CRS Report R42072, *Legislative Branch Agency Appointments: History, Processes, and Recent Actions*, by Ida A. Brudnick.

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The Office of the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) is responsible “for the operations and care of more than 18.4 million square feet of facilities, 570 acres of grounds and thousands of works of art.”<sup>1</sup> This includes the House and Senate office buildings, the Capitol, the Capitol Visitor Center, the Library of Congress buildings, the Supreme Court building, the U.S. Botanic Garden, the Capitol Power Plant, and other facilities. The AOC carries out its bicameral, nonpartisan responsibilities using both its own staff and contracting authority for architectural, engineering, and other professional services.

The appointment of the Architect has been a subject of periodic consideration in Congress for at least 60 years. It is a topic that has received increased attention during periods in which there has been a vacancy in the position and periods of congressional dissatisfaction with either the work of the incumbent or the involvement of the President in what some Members view as an internal legislative branch matter.

This report discusses the history of the selection of the Architect and contains tables on related legislation introduced over the past 60 years.

For additional information and a comparison of appointments in the legislative branch, see CRS Report R42072, *Legislative Branch Agency Appointments: History, Processes, and Recent Actions*, by Ida A. Brudnick.

## 2023 Change to the Appointment Process

The Architect of the Capitol Appointment Act of 2023 was enacted within the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 (H.R. 2670, P.L. 118-31) on December 22, 2023.

The act places responsibility for the appointment of the Architect within a congressional commission comprised of 12 Members.<sup>2</sup> Under the new procedure, the appointment is pursuant to a majority vote of the commission, as is reappointment or removal. The law continued the 10-year term for the Architect. The act also amended the law related to the appointment and service of the Deputy Architect.

Previously, pursuant to a law enacted in 1989, the position of Architect was filled through appointment by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate, following the forwarding of recommendations to the President from a bicameral commission consisting of Members of Congress. Pursuant to the 1989 act, the Architect was appointed for a 10-year term and could be reappointed.

## Congressional Involvement in the Architect Appointment: Discussion Prior to the 1989 Act

Prior to 1989, the Architect was selected by the President for an unlimited term without any formal involvement of Congress. Paul Rundquist, congressional scholar and former specialist at the

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<sup>1</sup> Architect of the Capitol, “About Us,” available at <https://www.aoc.gov/defining-aoc>. The legal responsibilities of the Architect of the Capitol are dispersed through several titles of the *United States Code*. References to AOC duties are included in Title 2 (Congress), Title 5 (Government Organization and Employees), Title 36 (Patriotic Societies and Observances), Title 40 (Public Buildings, Property, and Works), Title 41 (Public Contracts), and Title 42 (Public Health and Welfare).

<sup>2</sup> The commission includes the Speaker of the House, the Senate majority leader, the House and Senate minority leaders, and the chair and ranking minority members of the Committee on House Administration, the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, and the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations.

Congressional Research Service, noted in testimony before the Senate Rules and Administration Committee in 1996 that “the fact that the Architect of the Capitol was a congressional agent nominated by the President without confirmation by the Senate does not seem to have troubled Congress until recent years.”<sup>3</sup>

Bills related to the qualifications and appointment of the Architect were periodically introduced since at least the 1950s; however, little action was taken on these proposals until the 1980s.

**Appendix A** provides information on these bills.

Bills proposing a new appointment process took various approaches. Two changes ultimately enacted in 1989 included requiring the advice and consent of the Senate and establishing a commission to recommend names to the President.

Other bills introduced prior to 1989 proposed making the Architect a congressional appointee. These included proposals to make the Architect subject to a joint appointment by the Speaker and President pro tempore; to alternate appointment between the Speaker and President pro tempore; and to establish a commission of Members to recommend candidates to the Speaker and President pro tempore, with ratification by the chambers.

The introduced bills also varyingly addressed the term of office, eligibility for reappointment, procedure for removal, and procedures following early vacancies.

Whereas some of these bills focused only on the Architect, many of the bills introduced from the early 1970s forward also addressed the appointment of the other presidential appointees in the legislative branch, including the Librarian of Congress, the Comptroller General and the Deputy Comptroller,<sup>4</sup> and the Director of the Government Publishing Office.<sup>5</sup>

## **Former Appointment Process: 1989-2023**

Pursuant to a 1989 act, the Architect was to be “appointed by the President by and with the advice and consent of the Senate for a term of 10 years.”<sup>6</sup> This procedure was established by the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 1990, which also created a congressional commission responsible for recommending at least three individuals to the President for the position of Architect of the Capitol.<sup>7</sup> The commission originally consisted of 10 Members (including the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President pro tempore of the Senate, the majority and minority leaders of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and the chairs and the ranking minority members of the Committee on House Administration of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate).

In considering the FY1990 Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, the Senate Appropriations Committee proposed revising the process by having the President nominate the Architect for a 10-year term, subject to the advice and consent of the Senate. Previously, the position did not require Senate confirmation. In the report accompanying H.R. 3014, the Senate Appropriations Committee stated the following:

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<sup>3</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate Rules and Administration Committee, 104<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., February 29, 1996 (unpublished). Dr. Rundquist gave testimony before the Senate Rules and Administration Committee during a review of the operations of various Senate officers and a study of criteria for the selection of a new AOC.

<sup>4</sup> The Deputy Comptroller General position has been vacant since 1980.

<sup>5</sup> This position was previously known as the Public Printer when the agency was known as the Government Printing Office (changes to both names were made pursuant to P.L. 113-235, div. H, December 16, 2014, 128 Stat. 2537, 2538).

<sup>6</sup> 2 U.S.C. §1801(a)(1).

<sup>7</sup> P.L. 101-163, November 21, 1989, 103 Stat. 1068, 2 U.S.C. §1801.

These changes will conform the process of the appointment of the Architect more closely to the appointment procedure followed for other officers of similar stature. The Committee believes this will accord proper recognition to the importance of the functions of this office and help to promote greater accountability in their performance.<sup>8</sup>

During the brief Senate debate on the provision, Senator Harry Reid, then-chairman of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee, declared that the committee's amendment "better reflects the institutional status of the Architect as an officer of the legislative branch and should make the lines of accountability in the performance of his duties much less ambiguous."<sup>9</sup> Senator Don Nickles, then-ranking member of the subcommittee, noted the fixed term of the Architect would be similar to that of the Comptroller General, who is appointed for a single 15-year term.<sup>10</sup> The legislative history does not appear to indicate why the shorter term was chosen for the Architect.

In conference, House and Senate negotiators agreed to a compromise that reflected the absence in the Senate proposal of any formal role for the House in the selection of a future Architect. The compromise expanded the Senate's language by providing for a bicameral congressional advisory commission. The conference report does not provide additional information on this decision or any other options considered.<sup>11</sup> The compromise was accepted in both houses without debate and the measure was signed into law on November 21, 1989.<sup>12</sup>

The commission was expanded in 1995 to include the chairs and ranking minority members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees.<sup>13</sup>

The commission process established in 1989 followed a similar process used for filling vacancies in the position of Comptroller General, who leads the Government Accountability Office (GAO).<sup>14</sup> The commission procedure for GAO, which also calls for a recommendation to the President of at least three individuals, was established in 1980.

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<sup>8</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Appropriations, *Legislative Branch Appropriations, 1990*, report to accompany H.R. 3014, 101<sup>st</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., S.Rept. 101-106 (Washington: GPO, 1989), pp. 37-38.

<sup>9</sup> Sen. Harry Reid, "Legislative Branch Appropriations, 1990," remarks in the Senate, *Congressional Record*, vol. 135, September 6, 1989, p. 19591.

<sup>10</sup> Sen. Don Nickles, "Legislative Branch Appropriations, 1990," remarks in the Senate, *Congressional Record*, vol. 135, September 6, 1989, p. 19593.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Congress, *Making Appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 1990, and for other purposes*, report to accompany H.R. 3014, H.Rept. 101-254 (Washington: GPO, 1989), p. 19.

<sup>12</sup> "Conference Report on H.R. 3014, Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 1990," Vote in the House, *Congressional Record*, vol. 135, September 28, 1989, pp. 22270-22271; "Legislative Branch Appropriations, 1990 – Conference Report," Vote in the Senate, *Congressional Record*, vol. 135, November 9, 1989, p. 28052; and P.L. 101-163, 103 Stat. 1068, 2 U.S.C. §1801.

<sup>13</sup> P.L. 104-19, July 27, 1995, 109 Stat. 220. The official record provides little additional information on the changes considered in 1995. Additional membership on the commission was first agreed to in the conference report on H.R. 1158, the Second Supplemental Appropriations and Rescissions Act, 1995, which was vetoed by President Clinton on June 7, 1995. The joint explanatory statement accompanying the conference committee report did not indicate why the provision was added. Subsequently in the same Congress, the provision was included in the original version of H.R. 1944, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Additional Disaster Assistance, for Anti-terrorism Initiatives, for Assistance in the Recovery from the Tragedy that Occurred at Oklahoma City, and Rescissions Act, 1995, which was introduced on June 28. It passed the House the next day following the adoption of one amendment agreed to by voice vote and passed the Senate without amendment on July 21. It became P.L. 104-19 on July 27, 1995.

<sup>14</sup> 31 U.S.C. §703.

## Appointments Considered Pursuant to the 1989 Law

### Filling the First Vacancy After the 1989 Act: 1995-1997

Following the decision of George White, who served as Architect from January 27, 1971, until November 21, 1995, not to seek reappointment under the new process, Alan Hantman was nominated under the new procedure to a 10-year term by President Clinton on January 6, 1997.<sup>15</sup> Following a hearing on January 28, 1997, the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration favorably reported his nomination. Mr. Hantman was confirmed by the Senate by voice vote on January 30, 1997.<sup>16</sup> Declining to seek reappointment, Mr. Hantman retired on February 4, 2007,<sup>17</sup> and Stephen T. Ayers, then-Deputy Architect, began service as the Acting Architect of the Capitol.<sup>18</sup>

### Filling the Second Vacancy: 2007-2010

Mr. Ayers was confirmed and appointed as Architect three years later, in 2010. Between the announcement that Mr. Hantman would retire and the nomination and confirmation of Mr. Ayers, few congressional announcements were made regarding the status of the Architect vacancy and the submission of the recommendations to the President.

During a hearing on the FY2008 appropriations request on April 24, 2007, before the House Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee, Acting Architect Stephen Ayers responded to a question about the status from ranking member Representative Zach Wamp:

I did speak to the [Senate] Rules Committee about the selection process.... They have told me that their executive recruiter is currently interviewing potential candidates, and I surmise that they would give them that list of potential candidates in a month or two. So that is about the extent of my knowledge of that.<sup>19</sup>

Although the list of names was reportedly transmitted to President George W. Bush in summer 2007, the identity of the candidates was not publicly released by the commission.<sup>20</sup>

In its activities report on the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress (2007-2008), the Committee on House Administration summarized congressional actions and indicated concern about the current process:

Although the commission forwarded three candidates [to the President], complex circumstances prevented final selection and confirmation of the Architect. The Committee

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<sup>15</sup> The 1989 act required Mr. White to be reappointed under the new procedure no later than the sixth anniversary of the enactment of the law if he chose to remain in office. (P.L. 101-163, §319(b), November 21, 1989, 103 Stat. 1068.)

<sup>16</sup> “Executive Calendar,” remarks in the Senate, *Congressional Record*, vol. 143, January 30, 1997, pp. 1304-1307, 1312. From the retirement of Mr. White until the confirmation of Mr. Hantman, William L. Ensign served as Acting Architect of the Capitol.

<sup>17</sup> Obtained from “Alan M. Hantman, FAIA,” U.S. Architect of the Capitol, <https://www.aoc.gov/about-us/history/architects-of-the-capitol/alan-m-hantman-faia>.

<sup>18</sup> According to the biography provided by the AOC, Mr. Ayers “joined the Architect of the Capitol as an Assistant Superintendent for the Senate Office Buildings. He served in several capacities over the next decade, including Deputy Superintendent for the Senate Office Buildings, Superintendent of the Library Buildings and Grounds, Acting Deputy Architect/Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Architect/Chief Operating Officer” (“Stephen T. Ayers, FAIA, LEED AP,” U.S. Architect of the Capitol, <https://www.aoc.gov/about-us/history/architects-of-the-capitol/stephen-t-ayers-faia-leed-ap>). Pursuant to 2 U.S.C. §1804, the Deputy Architect “shall act as Architect of the Capitol during the absence or disability of that official or whenever there is no Architect.”

<sup>19</sup> U.S. Congress, House Appropriations Committee, *Legislative Branch Appropriations for 2008*, hearings, pt. 3, 110<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., April 24, 2007 (Washington: GPO, 2007), p. 300.

<sup>20</sup> John McArdle, “Finalists for AOC’s Top Job Delivered to President Bush,” *Roll Call*, August 13, 2007.

anticipates completion of the appointment process in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, but in the meantime is reviewing whether the process is simply broken and requires new legislation.<sup>21</sup>

The three-year period following the retirement of the former Architect was also noted in the February 3, 2010, debate in the House on passage of H.R. 2843 (111<sup>th</sup> Congress), the Architect of the Capitol Appointment Act.<sup>22</sup>

On February 24, 2010, President Obama nominated Stephen T. Ayers, who had been serving in an acting capacity during the vacancy, to a 10-year term. The nomination was referred to the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, which held a hearing on April 15, 2010. The Senators in attendance at the hearing praised Mr. Ayers and congratulated him on the nomination. Mr. Ayers was confirmed by voice vote in the Senate on May 12, 2010.<sup>23</sup>

Mr. Ayers announced his intention to retire on November 23, 2018.

### **Filling the Third Vacancy After the 1989 Act: 2018-2019**

Following Mr. Ayers's retirement on November 23, 2018, Christine Merdon, the Deputy Architect of the Capitol/Chief Operating Officer, became the Acting Architect of the Capitol. After her resignation in August 2019, Thomas J. Carroll served as Acting Architect of the Capitol.

Reportedly, an executive search firm was hired to lead the search for a new Architect.<sup>24</sup> The identity of potential candidates was not publicly released by the commission.

J. Brett Blanton was nominated to be Architect of the Capitol by President Trump on December 9, 2019.<sup>25</sup> The nomination was referred to the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration. The committee held a hearing on December 12, 2019, and Mr. Blanton was confirmed by voice vote in the Senate on December 19, 2019.

### **Filling the Fourth Vacancy After the 1989 Act and Enactment of New Appointment Procedure: 2023 and 2024**

On February 13, 2023, Mr. Blanton was informed by the White House that his appointment as Architect had been terminated. The termination followed allegations of misconduct addressed during a hearing of the Committee on House Administration on February 9, 2023,<sup>26</sup> and in an inspector general report issued on October 26, 2022.<sup>27</sup> Numerous Members of Congress, including

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<sup>21</sup> U.S. Congress, House Committee on House Administration, *Report on the Activities of the Committee on House Administration During the One Hundred Tenth Congress*, 110<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., H.Rept. 110-924, 2008, p. 18.

<sup>22</sup> *Congressional Record*, February 3, 2010, pp. H480-H482. No further action was taken on H.R. 2843 in the 111<sup>th</sup> Cong.

<sup>23</sup> *Congressional Record*, May 12, 2010, p. S3662.

<sup>24</sup> Katherine Tully-McManus, "Ready to manage a world-famous building and grapple with a billion-dollar backlog? This job's for you," *Roll Call*, January 10, 2019.

<sup>25</sup> See White House, "President Donald J. Trump Announces Intent to Nominate Individuals to Key Administration Posts," press release, December 9, 2019, <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/presidential-actions/president-donald-j-trump-announces-intent-nominate-individuals-key-administration-posts-23/>, and PN1324, 116<sup>th</sup> Cong., December 19, 2019, <https://www.congress.gov/nomination/116th-congress/1324>.

<sup>26</sup> See U.S. Congress, Committee on House Administration, *The Looking Ahead Series: The Architect of the Capitol's Strategic Plan for the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress*, hearings, 118<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., February 9, 2023, <https://cha.house.gov/committee-activity/hearings/looking-ahead-series-architect-capitols-strategic-plan-118th-congress>.

<sup>27</sup> See Architect of the Capitol, Office of Inspector General, *J. Brett Blanton, Architect of the Capitol, Abused His Authority, Misused Government Property and Wasted Taxpayer Money, Among Other Substantiated Violations*, October, 26, 2022, available at <https://www.oversight.gov/report/AOC/J-Brett-Blanton-Architect-Capitol-Abused-His-Authority-Misused-Government-Property-and>.



leadership of the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration and the Committee on House Administration, had called for his resignation.

Although pursuant to 2 U.S.C. §1804, the Deputy Architect of the Capitol was to act as the Architect of the Capitol during a vacancy, at the time of Mr. Blanton's termination as Architect, the deputy position also was vacant.

Chere Rexroat, the Chief Engineer, became the Acting Architect of the Capitol.<sup>28</sup> She was succeeded as Acting Architect in February 2024 by Joseph DiPietro, who is also the Chief of Operations.<sup>29</sup>

As stated above, the Architect of the Capitol Appointment Act of 2023 was enacted within the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 (H.R. 2670, P.L. 118-31) on December 22, 2023, while the Acting Architect continued to lead the agency.

The first appointment under this new process was announced by the congressional commission on May 22, 2024. Thomas Austin assumed the role of Architect on June 24.<sup>30</sup>

## Legislation Introduced Between 1989 and 2023 to Change the Appointment Process

Between the enactment of the 1989 law and the 2023 law, a few bills were introduced to change the process of appointing the Architect.

These proposals aimed to shift the Architect appointment responsibility from the President to specified Members of Congress. As with earlier bills, statements in the *Congressional Record* by bill sponsors cited an interest in using the appointment process to protect the prerogatives of, and ensure accountability to, the legislative branch. Some discussions also addressed the appropriate role of the House of Representatives, which does not play a formal role in the confirmation of presidential nominees.

The only change enacted between 1989 and 2023, as stated above, occurred in 1995, when the commission charged with recommending names to the President expanded to include the chairs and ranking minority members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees.<sup>31</sup>

**Table 1** compares the Members involved in appointment under the 1989 law, bills introduced between the enactment of the two laws, and the 2023 law. These bills are also discussed below.

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<sup>28</sup> See "Chere Rexroat," U.S. Architect of the Capitol, <https://www.aoc.gov/about-us/organizational-structure/office-chief-engineer/CEng>.

<sup>29</sup> See "Joseph DiPietro," U.S. Architect of the Capitol, <https://www.aoc.gov/about-us/organizational-structure/office-chief-operations/ChOps>.

<sup>30</sup> See "Thomas E. Austin," U.S. Architect of the Capitol, <https://www.aoc.gov/about-us/history/architects-of-the-capitol/thomas-e-austin>; Sen. Amy Klobuchar, "Congressional Commission Announces Architect of the Capitol Appointment," press release, May 22, 2024, <https://www.klobuchar.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2024/5/congressional-commission-announces-architect-of-the-capitol-appointment>; "Congressional Recognition of Thomas Austin, Architect of the Capitol," *Congressional Record*, Extensions of Remarks, June 25, 2024, p. E660; and "Architect of the Capitol Appointment," *Congressional Record*, June 18, 2024, p. S4147.

<sup>31</sup> P.L. 104-19, July 27, 1995, 109 Stat. 220.

## **109<sup>th</sup> Congress (2005-2006)**

During the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, one bill (H.R. 4446) was introduced to establish a uniform appointment process and 10-year term of service for the Architect, the Comptroller General, and the Librarian of Congress. This proposal provided for joint appointment by four Members, including the Speaker, the majority leader of the Senate, and the minority leaders of the House of Representatives and Senate. No further action was taken.

## **110<sup>th</sup> Congress (2007-2008)**

A bill (H.R. 6656), which would provide for a 12-member congressional appointing panel, was introduced in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress and referred to two committees, although no further action was taken.

## **111<sup>th</sup> Congress (2009-2010)**

In the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, two measures (H.R. 2185 and H.R. 2843) were introduced to remove the President from the Architect appointment process and shift it to the congressional leaders and chairs and ranking members of specific congressional committees. Under both measures, the Architect would still be appointed for a 10-year term.

Under H.R. 2185, which was introduced on April 30, 2009, and referred to the Committee on House Administration and Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, the Architect would be appointed by a 12-member congressional appointing panel. No further action was taken during the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Under H.R. 2843, as reported, the Architect would be appointed jointly by the same 14-member panel that currently is responsible for recommending candidates to the President. This bill was reported by the Committee on House Administration (H.Rept. 111-372), and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure was discharged from further consideration of the bill. The House agreed to the bill, as amended to include 18 rather than 14 Members of Congress (see **Table 1**), by voice vote. It was received in the Senate and referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration, and no further action was taken during the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress.

## **118<sup>th</sup> Congress (2022-2023)**

During the vacancy caused by the termination of Mr. Blanton’s appointment, identical legislative provisions to alter the appointment process were included in an introduced House bill, as well as in Senate floor amendments—the latter of which resulted in enactment of the provision.

H.R. 3196, the Architect of the Capitol Appointment Act of 2023, was introduced on May 10, 2023. It was referred to the Committee on House Administration, which held a markup and ordered the bill reported on September 28, 2023.

Additionally, S.Amdt. 220 to S. 2226, a Senate floor amendment to the Senate FY2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), filed by Senator Klobuchar (for herself and Senator Fischer) on July 12, 2023, included the Architect appointment provision as proposed in H.R. 3196, though the amendment was not offered to the bill.

The Architect appointment provision was included, however, in S.Amdt. 935, a full-text substitute “managers’ package” offered by Senator Schumer on behalf of Senator Reed, which incorporated the text of 51 different filed amendments to the bill. Senate passage of S. 2226, as amended, on July 27, 2023, included the provision.

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