



DAVID DREIER, CHAIRMAN • DAVID PRICE, RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER  
[HTTP://HDAC.HOUSE.GOV](http://hdac.house.gov)

The Commission's mission is to strengthen democratic institutions by assisting parliaments in emerging democracies. Central to the Commission's work is the provision of technical expertise enhancing accountability, transparency, legislative independence, and government oversight in foreign parliaments.

The Commission was established by the House (H. Res. 135) to:

- Work with the parliaments of selected countries that have established or are developing democratic parliaments which would benefit from the Commission's assistance;
- Enable Members, officers, and staff of the House of Representatives and Congressional support agencies to provide expert advice to members and staff of the parliaments of such countries, including visits to the House and support agencies to observe their operations first-hand;
- Make recommendations to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) regarding the provision of needed material assistance to such parliaments to improve the efficiency and transparency of their work;

#### Commission Members

Hon. David Dreier of California,  
Hon. Jim Kolbe of Arizona  
Hon. Paul Gillmor of Ohio  
Hon. Mark Kirk of Illinois  
Hon. John Boozman of Arkansas  
Hon. Joe Wilson of South Carolina  
Hon. Tom Cole of Oklahoma  
Hon. Candice Miller of Michigan  
Hon. Jeff Fortenberry of Nebraska

Hon. David Price of North Carolina  
Hon. Silvestre Reyes of Texas  
Hon. Lois Capps of California  
Hon. Rush Holt of New Jersey  
Hon. Adam Schiff of California  
Hon. Artur Davis of Alabama  
Hon. Allyson Schwartz of Pennsylvania

- Enables Members of Congress and congressional staff to directly assist their counterparts in the parliaments of newly democratic countries.
- **Rep. David Dreier** (R-Calif.), Chairman of the Committee on Rules, is the Chairman of the House Democracy Assistance Commission. **Rep. David Price** (D-N.C.) is the ranking Democratic Member. There are 16 Members: 9 Republicans and 7 Democrats.
- Twelve parliaments have been selected for multi-year partnerships. Programs in **Afghanistan, East Timor, Georgia, Indonesia, Kenya, Lebanon and Macedonia** began in 2006. Programs in **Colombia, Haiti, Liberia, Mongolia and Ukraine** will begin in 2007.
- Provides technical assistance to the parliaments of newly democratic countries on a peer-to-peer basis, with Members of Congress working with Members of Parliament and congressional staff working with their parliamentary counterparts.
- Created by the U.S. House of Representatives on March 14, 2005 (H. Res. 135).
- Assistance programs commenced in February 2006 and take place both in the United States and in partner countries. Members of Congress have visited four partner countries in 2006, and MPs and staff from six partner parliaments have visited the United States.
- Complements existing parliamentary development programs, particularly those funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).
- Working through USAID, provides material assistance to partner parliaments to establish and expand libraries, improve information technology, or other purposes. Most notably, the Commission is furnishing and equipping the parliamentary library of East Timor.
- Indirect successor to the Frost-Solomon Task Force, which provided assistance to the parliaments of 10 new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe from 1990-1996.
- More information is available at <http://hdac.house.gov>

#### **Selected areas of technical assistance**

- **Committee operations:** Members and staff of various House committees can advise parliamentary committee chairmen and clerks how to structure staff and activities to ensure effective oversight, such as organizing public hearings and marking up legislation
- **Budgetary issues:** House Members, staff, and Congressional Budget Office experts can help improve capacity of parliaments to scrutinize the government's budget and amend it to reflect the priorities of the parliament.
- **Defense oversight:** Defense is among the most difficult areas for legislatures to exercise effective oversight, as expertise is often lacking. House Members and staff can help their parliamentary counterparts learn how to scrutinize the government's defense plans.

- **Specialized legislation and oversight:** House Members and staff with specific expertise can assist Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff to draft and amend specialized legislation, such as HIV/AIDS programs or a package of laws to counter terrorism, or to oversee key ministries, such as an oil ministry.
- **Legislative procedure:** Members and staff from the House Rules Committee, legislative counsel, House Parliamentarian's office and Congressional Research Service can advise Members of Parliament and staff on bill drafting and parliamentary procedure.
- **Libraries and research services:** Library and research specialists from the Congressional Research Service and Library of Congress can help establish or improve parliamentary libraries or research services.
- **Information services:** Congressional information technology experts can advise parliamentary staff how to use information technology to set up a legislative information service and other systems that disseminate information about parliament's work.
- **Constituent services:** House Members and staff can advise Members of Parliament and their constituency office staff on how to liaise with constituents and handle inquiries, concerns and casework.