Towards a More Efficient Legislative Process

Our VISION includes using modern technology and management techniques in Congress to get more done, more quickly, more often.

It is understatement and obvious to say that our government and society have become more sophisticated and more technologically advanced since the nation's founding.

Yet, it seems like government is still acting by rules made when communities trotted off their Representatives for a long, perhaps weeks-long journey to Washington - unable to communicate quickly or effectively until the person came back. If, of course, the constituents knew about the home-coming.

We live in a world now where access is instantaneous (and perhaps there is the risk for too much information invading the Representative's space). Here are some ideas, some from the Information Technology field and others based on basic Common Sense, that fall into our vision for improving operation efficiency and throughput of Congress.

The Amazon "2 Pizza" Rule for Committees and Teams

Amazon, one of the best run and constituent-centric organizations has a rule for teams:

> ***"Don't make it bigger than what 2 large sized pizzas could feed."***

You make your team, your tackle the problem, you solve it, and you move on.

For a lot of committees in Congress, the size is slightly over this limit, but for others, like the House Armed Services Committee (59 members) and Committee on Oversight and Accountability (47 members), one has to ask: Are these really getting anything done?

And the big one - lots of money, here folks - the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has 65 members.

Committee hearings

In Congress, each committee takes testimony - this is what *lawyers* do. In sequence. Verbally. For debate and arguing - even though they already have staked their position. Some of these testimonies are required, but a lot of the questions come off as fluff or showmanship. And seldom does one see a **united front** to actually try and find the best solution to a problem

Wouldn't it be better if true interested parties in an issue could adopt their positions and hash out their divisions with the Representatives or Committees arbitrating? Perhaps have them stand like a Supreme Court case, when committee members sit like judges grilling the various sides at once.

Or - and I recognize this is a big step for lawyers - have brainstorming sessions and white boards for kicking around options — just like we do in industry and software development.

Opposing sides, working together. It's called **<u>TEAMWORK</u>**.

From Software Development: Micro-services and Sprints

Software Development is actually like Legislation in that teams translate specific user requirements into solutions that serve the users' needs.

There are two methodologies not known outside this industry that could be of help: Micro-Services and Sprints

MicroServices

"Micro-Services are typically organized around business capabilities. Each service is often owned by a single, small team. This architecture enables an organization to deliver large, complex applications rapidly, frequently, reliably and sustainably." (https://microservices.io/).

The idea is to have teams fixed and focused on particular areas of policy. And one might think that we have that: In the House we have a committee for say, Agriculture. And the Senate has its corresponding committee. And there is the Executive branch has its Department of Agriculture.

Sprints

Sprints are short periods of time where software teams review required updates or features needed for the next sub-release, and then work like crazy for 2-4 weeks to get them done.

The current process is to have the House and Senate committees work out a solution separately. And then legislation is bound up in each chamber's bill. And then horse-trading is done - potentially weakening good solutions for political considerations. And then the House and Senate argue - ahh, reconcile the bills - and then they get sent to the President.

Putting things together

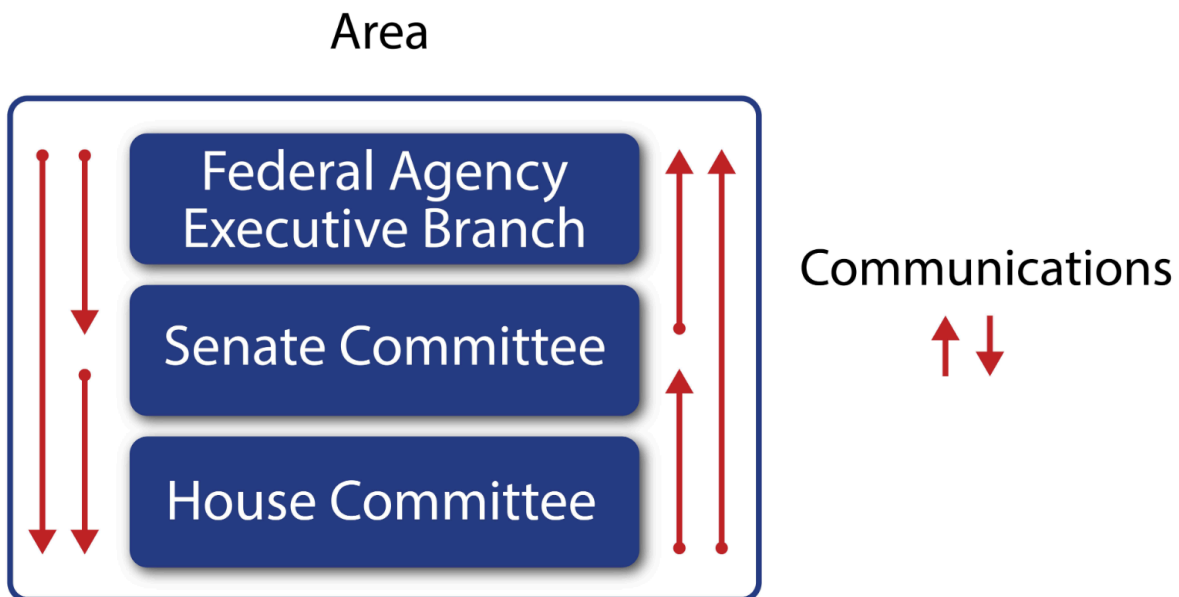Why not make legislation more modular and vertical, kind of like this:

Diagram 3: Integrated operations between Executive, Senate, and House interests.

This way, the interested parties can can work on the solution that has already been reconciled. Sure, each chamber has to vote on it, but the trick is not to water down or alter a solution that has already been agreed on by the principals in the matter.

And yes, take on an iterative pace to continuously review laws and regulations.

Continuous Improvement to have Better Quality, Sprint by Sprint.