

Digital File of the Legislative Proposal: A Case Study on Applying the InterPARES Project Guidelines in the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter presents a case study concerning the digital files of the legislative proposals¹ produced by the Chamber of Deputies (CD), one of the institutions that comprise the Brazilian Parliament. The study was carried out through a technical cooperation agreement between the CD and the Brazilian National Archives, which acted as coordinator of TEAM Brazil in the InterPARES 3 Project. The case study was conducted by researchers from the Archives and Records Management Coordination (COARQ) at the Center for Documentation and Information (CEDI) in the Chamber of Deputies. The case explains the steps involved for the migration of the traditional processing of the legislative proposal to a digital record model. The objective is to implement and validate the digital file of the presented bill as an original record, through the identification of the necessary requirements for guaranteeing its authenticity and for preserving its longevity.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

The Federative Republic of Brazil, formed by the indissoluble union of the states, municipalities, and of the Federal District, is a legal democratic state. The Legislative, Executive and Judicial branches, independent and harmonious among themselves, are the powers of the Union. The Brazilian legislative power is bicameral and is exercised by the National Congress², composed of the Chamber of Deputies (CD) and the Federal Senate (SF). These institutions carry out the following functions: representing the Brazilian people and the federation states, legislating on matters of national interest, and monitoring the acts of the Executive Power, mainly in terms of the application of public resources. The Chamber of Deputies, which began its activities in 1826, is composed of representatives of the people, elected by a proportional system, in each state, territory, and the Federal District. The Federal Senate, in turn, is composed of representatives of the states and the Federal District, elected by a majority vote (Brasil, 2009, p. 30).

In the current Brazilian parliamentary calendar (2011-2014), under the aegis of the 1988 Constitution, the CD has an administrative structure much more complex than that experienced in its first years. It has a framework comprised of 513 deputies, holders of elective office belonging to 22 political parties. The Chamber of Deputies has a permanent staff of civil servants and appointees.

The organizational structure of the institution is broad (Figure 1), as such, the approach of this chapter is limited to those units whose actions have a direct impact on the case study presented. The bodies of the Chamber of Deputies responsible for administering the legislative proposals in digital format are the Chief Legislative Office (SGM) and the Department of Committees (DECOM) while others contribute with their production and processing, offering technical and technological support. These units are identified by dark rectangles in Figure 1.

The Governing Board, or Executive Committee, is the largest body that guides legislative work and administrative services in the Chamber of Deputies. It is composed of Deputies elected by their peers for a period of two years and it is composed of seven titled members: one President, two Vice-Presidents, and four Secretaries, who have four alternates.

Since the Chamber of Deputies was created, the Chief Legislative Office has been part of the administrative structure. The SGM is responsible for advising the Board in all legislative work, as well as the President in the execution of his regulatory and constitutional duties.

The Chief Administrative Office is the body responsible for the planning, coordination, guidance, direction, and control of administrative and support activities for the Chamber in accordance with the Governing Board's deliberations. Included in the Chief Administrative Office structure are the Administrative Division (DI-

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