

Tina Tate

Close Relationship Between the House Radio-TV Gallery and the House Parliamentarians

Insight on the relationship between the House Radio-TV Gallery and the House Parliamentarians, as well as the growing volume of information about the House available to staff and the press.

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The other things that were different in the '70s especially, and even in the '80s, were how much information we got from the leadership. You did not get the same sort of...Right now, you get conference papers that come by e-mail, you get, you know, on the Web sites, you get the schedules, you get all of these talking points, all of these legislative details, you get a breakdown of the bill, you get the amendments that are going to be offered. You get those all delivered to you. And those are the kinds of things we track for reporters, but it goes to the reporters as well. You get inundated with information from all different sources, minority and majority. In the '70s and '80s, you didn't have much other information coming in, so we had a much closer relationship with the Parliamentarian's Office. We spent a good bit of time working with them, and we would always—we were on the floor when there was a question, a parliamentary question. We still have floor access, but we hardly need it now because we would actually have to go down and get copies of amendments that had not been printed until the time they brought them to the floor or check out what was going on with the Parliamentarian or his staff. So we had much more of a direct communication with the Parliamentarian's Office. We were expected to have all of the parliamentary procedures down pat. But if there was any kind of a change, or any kind of a schedule arrangement, or any surprises, we would do much more with them directly than we need to now. Now, you know by the beginning of the day if there's going to be a conflict later on, and it's all much more programmed than it was then. It was much more spontaneous, as were the speeches, much more spontaneous.