

COMMITTEE FUNDING FOR THE 114TH CONGRESS—PART ONE

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS FIRST SESSION

HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, FEBRUARY 4, 2015

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COMMITTEE FUNDING FOR THE 114TH CONGRESS—PART ONE

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2015

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:03 a.m., in room 1310, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Candice S. Miller (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Miller, Harper, Davis, Comstock, Brady, and Vargas.

Staff Present: Sean Moran, Staff Director; John Clocker, Deputy Staff Director; Bob Sensenbrenner, Deputy General Counsel; John L. Dickhaus, Legislative Clerk; Erin Sayago, Communications Director; George Hadijski, Director of Member Services; Max Engling, Professional Staff; Cole Felder, Counsel; Nick Hawatmeh, Counsel; Kyle Anderson, Minority Staff Director; Matt Pinkus, Minority Senior Policy Advisor; Khalil Abboud, Minority Deputy Staff Director/Director of Legislative Operations; Mike Harrison, Minority Chief Counsel; and Eddie Flaherty, Minority Chief Clerk.

The CHAIRMAN. I now call to order the Committee on House Administration for today's hearing on committee funding for the 114th Congress. The hearing record will remain open for 5 legislative days so that Members may submit any materials that they wish to be included.

A quorum is present, so we may proceed.

We are now about 1 month into the 114th Congress. We have organized. We have elected a Speaker. We have heard the State of the Union address from the President. The committees have organized and adopted rules for this Congress, and we have begun the important work of passing legislation that we believe will benefit the American people.

Today the Committee on House Administration takes up our first official business after organizing and adopting our rules, which is to hear from the chairman and ranking member of each House committee to help us in approving a budget resolution to set funding levels for each committee under consideration by the full House. The passage of this resolution is vital so that each committee knows the resources that they have available to support their important oversight and legislative responsibilities.

We all understand the great challenges our Committees face in conducting effective and needed oversight of the entire executive branch of government and finding workable legislative solutions to all of the challenging issues facing our Nation.

We also understand that we have gone through tough budgetary times, and this Committee has led by example by putting forward budget figures over the last 4 fiscal years that actually reduced spending by committees and Member offices to levels below what was spent in 2007. The Committee on House Administration and the entire House of Representatives has led, but we also need to find the appropriate balance that doesn't force budgets so low that needed oversight suffers or the legislative priorities of the people cannot be accomplished.

Over the years we have worked hard to find that balance and we intend to do so again this year. Our Committee can also help by finding solutions that deliver savings in other areas of the legislative branch budget through bringing efficiencies and enterprise-wide solutions to save money. Such savings then allow us to reprioritize spending so that we can do the important work carrying out the wishes of the American people.

This year, in another attempt to streamline operations for these hearings, we dramatically lowered the information requested from committees in the past, which allows us to get right to the crux of the matter, save staff time, and allow the members of our Committee to focus on the most pertinent facts to help us come to a conclusion. I certainly want to thank the members of our staff and the staff members of each of the committees, both Republican and Democrat, that worked together in a very cooperative manner to put all of this information in a usable format so that we can move this process forward.

Most importantly, I want to thank each and every committee chairman and ranking member who are going to be coming before our Committee this week and next week to share with us their vision for their important work in the 114th Congress and the resources they believe they will need to achieve that vision.

Our Committee is no different than all of the others, and we have to make our plans and prioritize our spending and streamline the way that we do business and do everything we can to achieve our goals. This year we are looking to build on the success we had in the previous Congress by improving outreach and assistance to Member offices so that they can better achieve their important mission of serving their constituents. I believe there was no better example of this effort than the New Members orientation that we concluded in November, which I believe has helped to get our newest colleagues, both Republicans and Democrats, off to a running start.

We will continue to work to expand training, educational opportunities for Members and staff that will help them to improve their ability to do their jobs on behalf of their constituents and to better communicate with their constituents as well. While this work is very important for our Committee, it is only part of our work. We will also continue our oversight of all operations of the House, the Smithsonian Institute, the Library of Congress, federal elections, along with our other legislative responsibilities; and we will accomplish it all within the confines of a very tight budget.

We certainly want to thank the members of our Committee for their time, attention, consideration, and participation throughout

this process of setting budgets for our committees. It is so wonderful to have a great Committee, as we do here.

I now want to recognize my partner in the efforts that we undertake on this Committee, my friend, and the ranking member of the Committee, Mr. Brady from Pennsylvania.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

This is probably one of the more difficult tasks that we have to undertake every 2 years. While I do enjoy the opportunity to see our esteemed colleagues, this is one of the few instances in which the committee is unable to meet the needs of everyone. I have had a chance to review the funding submissions from the committees that will come before us today and next Wednesday. They are all extremely thoughtful and based in the desire to conduct strong, responsible oversight. Many of them are hoping to add more staff expertise to help with that process. The unfortunate reality is that there is not enough money and not enough resources to fulfill everyone's request.

Even more unfortunate is the fact that quite often our staffs, those individuals who make it possible for us to do what we do, will suffer as a result, the fact that really bothers me, but unfortunately is the world that we live in.

With that said, I look forward to hearing from our chairs and our ranking members, specifically in the ways in which they have made to do with resources they have and the manner in which they divide resources. Over both Democrat and Republican majorities, this committee has been a strong advocate for the two-thirds, one-third principle in which the minority maintains control of one-third of the committee staff and resources. I would very much like to hear how that is working.

With that, Madam Chair, I thank you, and I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman very much.

The Committee now welcomes Chairman Nunes from the Committee on Intel. We are hoping that his ranking member, Mr. Schiff, will be able to be here momentarily as well. In the interest of time we are going to continue to proceed. So I would ask the official reporter to please enter a page break with the hearing record to begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence is charged with the oversight of the United States Intelligence Community, which includes the intelligence and intelligence-related activities of 17 elements of the U.S. Government and the military intelligence program.

Chairman Nunes, the floor is yours, sir.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. DEVIN NUNES, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Mr. NUNES. Thank you, Chairman Miller. It is great to be in your Committee. Ranking Member Brady and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify about the Intelligence Committee's budget request for the 114th Congress.

The Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence is charged with overseeing 17 entities that comprise the Intelligence Community for our Federal Government. Along with the Senate Intelligence Committee, it is the primary access point between the classified

world of intelligence, Congress, and the American people. Our mission is twofold: to conduct diligent oversight while also providing the resources necessary to those operating at the tip of the spear.

This responsibility grows with each passing year. Entering the 114th Congress, the committee has undertaken a significant reorganization designed to meet the increasingly complex challenge of oversight of the Intelligence Community and its activities. Specifically, the committee changed the House rules, increased its membership to 22 members, and has reorganized and expanded its subcommittees from 3 to 4.

These changes will require the committee to expand staffing to properly serve the committee members. Even under the smaller committee structure in the 113th Congress, it operated with one-third fewer staff than what is appropriate for fulfilling the committee's responsibilities. The increased membership and planned increase in staffing will also require an expansion of the committee's travel budget.

Furthermore, due to previous budget shortfalls, the committee has delayed upgrading electronic equipment that is quickly approaching obsolescence. The committee anticipates a significant level of replacement during the 114th Congress that will strain the committee's budget. This reflects unique challenges facing the Intelligence Committee since it has to maintain three separate classified and unclassified computer systems and sets of equipment, as well as a separate fleet of communications devices used during international travel. Support for these systems requires expensive contractors with high-level clearances.

Given these facts and the unique nature of our committee's work, we respectfully request a 3.6 percent increase above the authorized level of the 113th Congress, which is still 12 percent below the level authorized in the 112th Congress.

The ranking member is not here yet, but I am sure he will be here any moment, but we do appreciate the time that you have given the Intelligence Committee today, and we welcome any questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Chairman.

[The joint statement of Mr. Nunes and Mr. Schiff follows:]



Statement of Chairman Devin Nunes and Ranking Member Adam Schiff

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

Before the Committee on House Administration

Committee Budget Request for the 114th Congress

February 4, 2015

Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify about the Intelligence Committee's budget request for the 114th Congress.

The Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence is charged with overseeing 17 entities that comprise the intelligence community of our federal government. Along with the Senate Intelligence Committee, it is the primary access point between the classified world of intelligence, Congress, and the American people. Our mission is twofold: to conduct diligent oversight while also providing the resources necessary to those operating at the tip of the spear. This responsibility grows with each passing year.

Entering the 114th Congress, the Committee has undertaken a significant reorganization designed to meet the increasingly complex challenge of oversight of the intelligence community and its activities. Specifically, the Committee, via a change to House Rules, increased its membership to 22 Members and has reorganized and expanded its subcommittees from three to four.

These changes will require the Committee to expand staffing to properly serve the committee members. Even under the smaller committee structure in the 113th Congress, it operated with one-third fewer staff than what is appropriate for fulfilling the committee's responsibilities.

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Given these facts and the unique nature of our Committee's work, we respectfully request a 3.6 percent increase above the authorized level of the 113th Congress – which is still 12 percent below the level authorized in the 112th Congress.

Thank you for allowing the Ranking Member and me to present our request for the 114th Congress. We welcome any questions the Committee may have.

The CHAIRMAN. You were just mentioning some of the upgrades that you are looking to do, the electronic upgrades, and the kinds of clearances that you would have to have for anyone to work on any of your systems, and I think we can all certainly appreciate that. You are also interested in perhaps creating an additional subcommittee as well?

Mr. NUNES. Yes. We went from three subcommittees to four. Under the previous Congresses, last few Congresses, the committee was more structured based on, instead of by agency, and we have moved, we changed that where we have now dropped all these 17 agencies that we cover underneath the four subcommittees.

We think this will do a better job in informing Congress, which really is the only link between the American people and the black ops world, so to speak, that we have to deal with. And we know with all the issues facing Congress, whether it is the NSA issues or the leaks or the terrorism threats that are growing around the globe, it is going to put more strain on the Intelligence Community to actually do their job, which then puts more strain on us to make sure that we are communicating with all the Members of Congress as to what is happening in these agencies.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I am very appreciative of the fact that you really, for the most part are really trying to hold the line here on the resources that you are asking the Committee to authorize. But I think in the world that we live in, even though you didn't ask us for additional resources, if you were able to get some additional resources, do you have some ideas of what you might do with that specifically?

Mr. NUNES. Yes. So even though most folks probably think that the Intelligence Committee has a big budget, as you know from the budgets around here it is really small, especially compared to the size and scope of what our mission set is. When you look at the amount of money that we are asking for it is essentially enough to add a couple staffing folks on our side to cover the new subcommittee, and one on the Democratic side.

And then with the increasing threat matrix that we face with ongoing technology developments, as we look at cyber attacks and cyber threats, and I am not talking about the global picture, I am talking about cyber threats just to our committee and the way that we have to run classified computer systems, which I can't possibly tell you how those work, but I know they are very expensive to maintain.

So that is simply what we are asking for.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman. We now see the ranking member.

Mr. NUNES. They decided to give us more than what we were asking for, so don't screw it up, Adam.

Mr. SCHIFF. I was going to say. In that case, I don't want to talk you out of it.

The CHAIRMAN. We would give you a moment to catch your breath, but we would like to recognize you for an opening statement.

Mr. SCHIFF. Thank you very much. My apologies. I thought we were on for 10:15.

Mr. HARPER. We were.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. SCHIFF. We were. Okay. Wow, you are very prompt.

Well, thank you, Madam Chair. I will just second what our chairman has already said. We have an enormous task on our hands overseeing a behemoth industry, and we don't have the advantage that many other committees do in having outside stakeholders who can weigh in and help us oversee and scrutinize activities of those agencies. So we are heavily dependent on our staff. And as the size of the agencies has grown and with the increase in size in our committee, we could really use the additional resources for staff, as well as for new technology. And I wholeheartedly concur with the chairman's recommendation. And I thank you for your support.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

I would ask our ranking member at this time for questions.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Moving forward, do you foresee any challenges in conducting oversight if the funding levels remain the same or even actually decrease?

Mr. NUNES. Well, I think a decrease would be very difficult to handle at this point. As anything around here, you just have to share the workload. The question is, with the increased scrutiny that the Congress wants on NSA and our Intelligence Community, it is going to be very tough to do it with the current staff that we have, which is why we went through and broke down into actual subcommittees, where now we are going to have a subcommittee that specifically focuses on the NSA, which is a new development. So if we want to do the work that the Members of Congress and the American people expect us to do, we have to properly staff those committees.

Mr. SCHIFF. I would certainly concur with that. One of the challenges we have in oversight of the intelligence agencies is to a significant degree we don't know there is a problem unless they inform us of the problem. The better eyes, the more eyes we have on the oversight responsibility, the more we can determine for our own when there are issues, and when issues are raised within the intelligence agencies we are better able to run them to ground.

So as the chairman said, we will make do with whatever we are given, but I think in light of the very special challenges we have of oversight in the classified realm, we could really use the additional resources.

On the Senate side, just by comparison, they not only have committee staff, but each of the Members have their own staff assigned to them. So they are better resourced to the conduct the oversight responsibilities. So even vis-a-vis our Senate counterparts we are at a bit of a disadvantage. But certainly compared to the size of the agencies we are overseeing, it is a tremendous institutional disadvantage that we are under and these additional resources will help us mitigate that.

Mr. BRADY. Two-thirds, one-third working out?

Mr. NUNES. Well, we are both new, but it didn't seem to be a problem in the past. As you know, this historically has been a very bipartisan committee, where the staff worked closely together. There is not a lot of politics that get involved or partisan politics

that get involved in going back and forth, because everything is done behind closed doors for the most part. We will have maybe quarterly open hearings. But I think it seems to be working out.

Mr. BRADY. When there is a changeover that is always where you see the problem. This is just going into another term with the Republicans in control. When it changes over then it becomes a problem. It becomes a good problem and a bad problem. Certain parties have to hire more people, other parties have to let some people go. But as long as you see the two-thirds works out. But I just wanted to make sure that that is happening.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Brady, I was very excited about the two-thirds, one-third until I found out that the two-thirds actually went to the majority. But nonetheless, as the chairman mentioned, it is a very bipartisan operation. The majority covers the overhead costs. And we are reliant upon the majority as well as minority staff. I think it has been a good working relationship and we fully expect that will continue.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Harper.

Mr. HARPER. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And I can think of no committee that we have that carries a greater personal burden for the chairman and ranking member. So we thank you for the tasks that you have accepted, and it is quite a responsibility that you have. And we want to make sure that you are properly resourced on what you need to do this.

We also balance that with the fact that we know there is not enough money to do everything that needs to be done. If your funding—I know you said a 3.6 percent increase request—if the funding remained level with the 2014 level, how would you manage that without that increase?

Mr. NUNES. Well, look, we can manage it. The way that we structured the subcommittees we are going to have to have people cover multiple subcommittees. So the issue really comes back to, as you all know, it has been highly controversial around here, to say the least, about dealing with our spy agencies, specifically NSA, if you want us to cover NSA properly, which I think the Members and the American people expect us to do, we need to add a couple folks to help us do that, accomplish that goal.

Mr. HARPER. All right. Thank you.

Yes.

Mr. SCHIFF. I would just add that even looked at in the very simplest terms, there are more than a dozen agencies we are overseeing. On the minority side we don't even have the staff capability of having one staff overseeing an entire agency. So it is quite a challenge.

Mr. HARPER. Thank you both.

Yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

It is protocol to recognize Mr. Vargas for questions. Are you ready for a question or would you like to—

Mr. VARGAS. I would appreciate—

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. The Chair recognizes Mr. Davis.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you, Chairman Nunes and Ranking Member Schiff. This is my first House Administration hearing today, and it

is great to see such bipartisanship at that table, especially on a committee that is so important to America's national security. And I just have one question. Are there any special circumstances that you haven't covered that you think may take further consideration by your committee or by us here on House Administration that we can begin to consider?

Mr. NUNES. Well, I would first say, being sworn in as the chairman and ranking member and then less than 24 hours later having an attack in Paris, and now this continued assault with the atrocities that are being committed all across the Middle East and North Africa, we never know where the next problem is going to come from, but we know there are going to be additional problems. It is a difficult time, to say the least, for the Intelligence Community.

I would say specifically where we could run into a problem is with the technology, because it is changing so quickly, and with the cyber threats. We do not want to be in a situation where our committee could be compromised, which is why it is so important that we need to update our computer systems, update our software and servers.

As I was explaining earlier—and, Adam, you may be more of a cyber expert than I am—but we have to have different computer systems based on the classification of the information that we receive down at the committee. And if we don't have those secure, then we can't get the information from the agencies. It is as simple as I can put it. So if something happened there, which is why we are trying to stay ahead of the game and be at the front of the technology, so that we don't end up being compromised.

Mr. DAVIS. With what is happening globally, as we just turn on TV every day, I think the modest request that you have put forth and the vision that you are looking forward to I think is a learning experience for me on this committee. And I appreciate your willingness to look ahead too, Chairman.

Mr. NUNES. Thank you, Mr. Davis.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair recognizes Mrs. Comstock.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Madam Chairman, I have no questions.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair recognizes Mr. Vargas.

Mr. VARGAS. I have no questions.

The CHAIRMAN. We want to thank you both so very much for attending, and as I say, I think we are all certainly aware of what is happening around the world and all of the challenges that your committee is facing with a very limited amount of committee funding. So we appreciate, as I said at the get-go to Chairman Nunes, really trying to hold the line.

On the other hand, I think we will also be looking for understanding that you have to react to these pertinent issues around the globe. I think we will also be trying to digest if there is any way that we could get you perhaps a little additional funds as well. We are going to be looking at all of those kinds of things.

Obviously we have got 2 full days of hearings from all these committee chairs and we have to balance it all out here, but we certainly appreciate your attendance here today, and we will excuse you unless you have any other comments.

Mr. NUNES. Thank you very much for your consideration, Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much.

Mr. RYAN. Morning.

The CHAIRMAN. Good morning, Mr. Chairman. In the interest of time I think we are just going to ask you to go and we will—

Mr. RYAN. We will bring Sandy in when he gets going.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, whenever he comes.

So we again would ask the official reporter to please enter a page break into the hearing record to begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee on Ways and Means is the chief tax-writing committee in the House. Its jurisdiction extends to our tax system, reciprocal trade agreements, Social Security, Medicare, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. At this time we certainly recognize and welcome Chairman Paul Ryan. And as we say, when your Ranking Member Sandy Levin arrives. We are a little bit ahead, so he is not late, we are running 5 minutes ahead.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. PAUL RYAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WISCONSIN

Mr. RYAN. We love that.

Madam Chairman, Ranking Member Brady, members of the committee, I am here today to present our proposed budget for the Ways and Means Committee in the 114th Congress. I will be joined by Ranking Member Congressman Levin.

As you consider our request, there are two things that I ask you to keep in mind: first, our strong record of accomplishment in the last Congress; and second, our ambitious agenda for this committee, for this Congress, and all the bills that we are being asked to bring to the floor.

I think the members and the staff of the Ways and Means Committee are second to none. They do incredible work at an incredible pace and they do it all while running a very tight ship. Our jurisdiction covers more than half of all mandatory spending, all of revenue, the debt limit, and trade, and these are the very issues that Congress will be focusing on this year. So it is crucial we stay on top of our game.

The committee needs to add staff, in tax, health care, and the economics fields, to meet these responsibilities. We can't do the best job if we don't have the resources, that is the simple point of it all.

And if our record shows anything it is that we deliver. Last Congress the full committee held 19 hearings and the 6 subcommittees held 60 hearings. The committee reported 25 bills to the floor. But these numbers don't even begin to capture all the work that we do, since we also work on legislation that doesn't go through the committees. Last Congress, for example, the House passed 66 bills in the committee's jurisdiction.

We also laid the groundwork for major reforms. For example, the committee did the yeoman's work in developing a comprehensive tax reform package. We developed a bipartisan trade bill with the Senate. We devoted considerable time to investigating the abuses by the Internal Revenue Service. These are investigations that are ongoing. And we thoroughly analyzed the emergency unemployment benefits on job creation.

In this Congress we are only going to do more. This committee is going to move out on all fronts by building a healthy economy. We are going to continue our work to make the Tax Code simpler, flatter, and fairer so that more people can invest and create jobs right here in America. We are going to do all we can to make our current trade negotiations a success so American trade and American jobs can take off. We are going to develop solutions to save and strengthen critical programs like Medicare and Social Security. And we are going to continue vigorous oversight of the administration.

As for the minority's budget, we are going to continue our tradition of giving the minority one-third of the committee's budget and staff. The minority gets to spend their money as they see fit with no interference from the majority. That is our practice and we will continue that practice in the 114th Congress.

Let me just say, looking at the year ahead, we have got issues associated with health care, like the Supreme Court. We are writing that legislation. We have got possible negotiations on tax reform. We are writing that. We have got possible negotiations on tax reform that also associate with the Highway Trust Fund. We will be writing that. We have got the doctor fix that is coming up and expiring March 31, with a 21.2 percent cut to physicians, we have to fix that. We are writing that as well.

We have got a number of trade bills that are going to be coming before Congress, the African Growth and Opportunity Initiative, GSP, Miscellaneous Tariffs, Bill customs enforcement, Trade Promotion Authority, TPP and TTIP. Oh, and the Disability Trust Fund goes bankrupt in 2016 and we have to come up with an answer for that as well.

So we have got that in addition to a number of other issues—moving people from welfare to work, streamlining our welfare programs, and many, many others that we intend to get into. Given that we have new scorekeeping rules, we need to have a macroeconomic chief economist to be able to help us through that. We also have to make sure that we are doing a good job in oversight, and we need some people to help us with that as well, in addition to writing multiple health care bills, which are to be prepared this winter and this spring. And so that is why this request is coming.

I would also note that for the past 8 years when I was a ranking member or chairman of the Budget Committee we always turned money back. We always accepted the budget that was given to us and then we turned money back. Under the time I was chairman we turned back \$3 million. So I am not the kind of chairman who always asks for more. In this particular case I think the case is very clear given these responsibilities that are being asked of this committee.

And with that, I would like to yield to our ranking member.

[The statement of Mr. Ryan follows:]

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

**Statement of Chairman Paul Ryan
Committee on Ways and Means
Testimony before the Committee on House Administration
Regarding the Ways and Means Committee Budget for the 114th Congress
Monday, February 2, 2015**

Madam Chairman, Ranking Member Brady, and members of the committee, I'm here today to present our proposed budget for the Ways and Means Committee in the 114th Congress. And I'm joined by our ranking member, Congressman Levin.

Now, as you consider our request, there are two things I ask you to keep in mind: first, our strong record of accomplishment in the last Congress and second, our ambitious agenda for this Congress.

I think the members and staff of the Ways and Means Committee are second to none. They do incredible work—at an incredible pace—and they do it all while running a tight ship. Our jurisdiction covers more than half of mandatory spending, *all of* revenue, the debt limit, and trade. And these are the very issues that Congress will focus on this year. So it's crucial that we stay at the top of our game. The committee needs to add staff—particularly in the tax, health care, and economics fields—to meet its responsibilities. We just can't do the best job if we don't have the resources.

And if our record shows anything, it's that we deliver. Last Congress, the full committee held 19 hearings and its six subcommittees held 60 hearings. The committee reported 25 bills to the floor. But these numbers don't even begin to capture all the work we do, since we also work on legislation that doesn't go through the committee. Last Congress, for instance, the House passed 66 bills in the committee's jurisdiction.

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And this Congress, we're only going to do more. This committee is going to move out on all fronts to build a healthy economy. We're going to continue our work to make the tax code simpler, fairer, and flatter, so more people can invest and create jobs right here in America. We're going to do all we can to make our current trade negotiations a success, so American trade—and American jobs—can take off. We're going to develop solutions to save and strengthen critical programs like Medicare

and Social Security. And we're going to continue vigorous oversight of the administration.

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I want to thank the chairman and members of this committee for giving me this opportunity. I want to thank our ranking member, Mr. Levin. And I look forward to answering your questions. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from the great State of Michigan, Mr. Levin.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. SANDER M. LEVIN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

Mr. LEVIN. Thank you, Chairwoman. Nice to be with you. And I agree entirely about your description of the State of Michigan. And we have worked together on many issues.

I am sorry, actually I was on time, but you started early.

Mr. RYAN. That was noted in the record.

Mr. LEVIN. The chairman and I have discussed several times the agenda, and there will be points when we disagree on how to address the items on the agenda, but there is no disagreement, zero, about the length of the agenda and its importance. Zero disagreement.

I did talk to staff about the history of the appropriations for our work on Ways and Means, and it would be now 20 years ago there was a major cut in the budget of the Ways and Means Committee. And as the work has grown, I think the impact of that cut has magnified. And so, I very much join the chairman, very much join Chairman Ryan in urging that you really give serious consideration to our request.

The work we do is your work, it is your work. Eventually all of us have to vote on the product of Ways and Means, on tax policy, on all of these issues. So I just come here urging that you really try to help us. And the chairman has been very clear, we have discussed this and the staff has, that we will be able to utilize the allocation between the majority and the minority. I just want to assure you that we will do it well, we will do it well. The staff is really a very, very respected staff, majority and minority, very much so. So help us out. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, gentlemen.

We were just sort of looking historically. First of all I would say—and the chairman mentioned this—when you were the chair of the Budget Committee you were very fiscally responsible, and we are very appreciative of that. Even now, even though you are asking for an increase, it is not much.

Mr. RYAN. We can ask for more.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, you laugh, but actually we are looking at that perhaps. I don't want to promise anything here.

Mr. RYAN. We just ask for the amount that we think we can live with.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, and that would be the question that I have, because you are asking for—well, it is 4 percent, but it is \$350,000. You articulated a bit when you mentioned here, I was taking some notes when you were talking, that you need a macroeconomic chief economist.

Mr. RYAN. And international tax. We actually tried to get a detailee from the IRS in the international tax area to save the money, but the IRS rejected that request.

Mr. LEVIN. And we asked for a detail also from Treasury and we got the same answer.

Mr. RYAN. Yeah.

Mr. LEVIN. So it was a very nonpartisan.

Mr. RYAN. That is right.

The CHAIRMAN. They were nondiscriminatory in that way.

Mr. RYAN. So we tried saving the money by doing the detailee route, which I have enjoyed doing over in Budget Committee, which I have found is an effective way of saving money, but that has been denied. And so, if we are going to do business tax reform, the core of that is international. If we are going to come up with an answer for the Highway Trust Fund and repatriation, that is all international.

And from the last Congress we lost the international tax expert. So we need to bring an international tax person in yesterday in order to make this work. In addition, we have new models that—it is not new models, we have models that the Joint Committee on Taxation is going to be using and running. We need to have a macroeconomic modeler in the majority staff to understand how these things works.

Mr. LEVIN. I mean, if you would look, if I might say, Mr. Chairman, at the requests that come from our committee to Joint Tax, I think you would say, wow, thousands, thousands. And this is your work, it is not just ours.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I was just looking at what the historical authorization has been for the Ways and Means. Actually, even with your new request, you are still below—

Mr. RYAN. We know that.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. 2011 and 2012. So I think we should just point that out.

Of course we have got hearings all day today, and then next week we have got all the various committee chairs. So we are just trying to balance it all, and we will once we get all of this information digested and see where we can go with the particular pie of funds here.

You mentioned, I just have one other question here, these additional staffers. First of all, we don't know if we can give you an increase, but if we were to do that and then perhaps looked at even something else, what would you be using that money for? Would it be additional staff as well, or field hearings, or specifically what would you think?

Mr. RYAN. So, first staff, because health care and oversight people. Without getting into the details of the IRS oversight, that is going to take is lot of work this year. There is a lot of new information that is coming to the committee that we have to digest. And we have this authority called 6103, which only the Ways and Means has, which a very important oversight tool, has to be guarded very carefully because personal privacy is involved. We could use some more oversight people.

In addition, health care. We have had to do contingency planning for King v. Burwell, and then we also want to articulate what we think replacement should look like. That takes a lot of work, working with CBO and Joint Tax.

And then on the area of welfare reform. I would like to get out, if possible, if the budget allows, which right now it doesn't, I would like to get out and do field hearings about upward mobility, lifting people out of poverty. I would like to go to Detroit and see what has been done there between the public sector and the private sec-

tor. I have taken three trips myself there, just on my own, to learn about what is going on in Detroit. I would like to do some bipartisan field hearings in the area of poverty and welfare reform. The budget does not give us the ability to do that right now, but it would be something we would like to do if we could.

Mr. LEVIN. If I might add just briefly to what the chairman has said, we haven't had the resources for field hearings.

Mr. RYAN. No.

Mr. LEVIN. And that is unfortunate. So I think most of the added money would be used for staff. The chairman mentioned 6103. There were hundreds of thousands of documents to look at, hundreds of thousands. And we commissioned I think it was five staffers, because you have to commission people under the rules. It was just impossible.

Mr. RYAN. So we have got, without getting into the numbers, we have tens of thousands of documents coming our way in the next number of weeks and we don't have the kind of staff we would like to get through it as quickly as we would like to. Meaning just digesting the information will take a long time, and it is information that only Ways and Means—Government Reform doesn't have the 6103 authority—so only our committee can get through these tens of thousands of documents that we are getting. And if we can have more lawyers, investigators to help us sift through that, then we can process this much faster.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate it.

The Chair recognizes the ranking member, Mr. Brady.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I noticed you asked an increase in communications for \$87.08. I could help you out with that.

Mr. RYAN. Thanks.

Mr. BRADY. And I would like to also ask who talked some sense into you to get rid of that scraggly looking beard you had?

Mr. RYAN. What, you didn't like it? The beard got shaved when the Green Bay Packers lost. All right? It was a Packer thing. You have got to remember, from Philadelphia, I just think 4th and 24.

Mr. LEVIN. The chairman and I discussed at length his beard. But that was off the record.

Mr. RYAN. He didn't like it either.

Mr. LEVIN. No comment.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair recognizes Mr. Harper.

Mr. HARPER. No, I can't follow that.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair recognizes Mr. Vargas.

Mr. VARGAS. Thank you, Madam Chair. I think they make a very compelling argument for the needed funds, and I certainly hope we take a close look at that.

The one question of what is going on in Detroit, I can tell you, they are building good cars now. They are building that new Hellcat, the unfortunate name of course, but they are making very, very good cars now. I am a car nut and so I can tell you they really are leading the world.

But I do think they make a very compelling argument for the needed funds, and I hope we can take a look at that. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I am glad to hear all these good things about Detroit. Detroit is going to be the comeback city of the country.

Mr. RYAN. Oh, I spent two hours with Dan Gilbert a few months ago walking me through their plans downtown. It is just impressive, it is really something.

The CHAIRMAN. Unbelievable what is happening down there.

The Chair recognizes Mr. Davis.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you.

I think the ranking member is just jealous about your beard, Chairman. I am too. I wish I could grow one.

I just wanted to commend you, I am glad you brought it up in your comments, about how under your stewardship the Budget Committee returned, according to my records here, 11.6 percent of your budget back to the taxpayers. And the modest increase that you are asking for with the increased duties that both you and the ranking member look forward to dealing with I think is a reasonable ask. And I would hope that under your stewardship that you would continue what you started on the Budget Committee and move that directly to the Ways and Means, and I look forward to working with you.

Mr. RYAN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair recognizes Ms. Comstock.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Thank you, Madam Chairman. I am glad I don't have to worry about a beard.

I agree with my colleague here on the savings. It looks like from the savings that you turned back you are kind of asking for that back from Budget now to invest here. So that certainly seems reasonable to me.

I was wondering, with the expertise that you are going to have on the health care area in particular, I hear from a lot of people in the medical field that they are concerned now of all the requirements coming in with Obamacare, regardless of what happens with that, combined with all of the requirements that just exist from CMS and everything.

Mr. RYAN. That is right.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Everywhere. Disclosure, my sister handles the medical practice for her husband, and he is a Wharton Business School graduate who cannot figure out how to deal with CMS and cannot find people who will take the jobs to do that.

So I was wondering in terms of the expertise that you are going to have to tackle this, will that be something that they will be able to look at, the ease and the simplicity of our doctors and medical people who are trying to help facilitate this, how they can use it? Because it is a business nightmare, and of course every medical practice is also a small business too.

Mr. RYAN. It is one that is going to get more complicated. We catch it all. So think about what is going on in Medicare, you have lots of provider changes that are being phased in over a number of years. Then you have the Independent Pay Advisory Board doing whatever it is going to do with the kind of authority that they have. We have got the physician cut, but we also have to find a way of paying for it, and that is going to take a lot of effort and work.

And so it is basically like taking a sip from a fire hose. All the rules and regulations that affect all the healthcare providers in America run through this committee, from CMS. And there are so many changes coming that we have to have a good way of processing all of that and having experts on our staff that can take the feedback from the healthcare community and try and make sense out of it, and to try and have at the end of the day what we want to get to is an outcome-based system where we are focusing on good outcomes, not on inputs, not on processes.

And so we have got a long ways to go there, and that is why we would put more resources into the healthcare area.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Well, thank you. And I would encourage that, because that is something that just sounded hugely, hugely difficult. So any way we can make this easier for providers I think would be money very well spent.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I want to thank both gentlemen for appearing today, and appreciate your testimony.

Mr. LEVIN. Thank you.

Mr. RYAN. Thank you. We are going to go mark up seven bills now. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. As I say, we are really going to take a look at all testimony from all the chairmen that we hear from today and next week, and then we are going to see how much money we have and see what we can do.

Mr. RYAN. Great. Thank you very much. I appreciate your indulgence.

The CHAIRMAN. We appreciate the challenges you face. Thank you.

We are actually 15 minutes ahead of schedule. No, we are not. We are right on time for a break, I guess. So we are going to take a break until 11:15, at which time we will hear from Judiciary. With that the Chair would declare a recess.

[Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee will come back to order.

The Committee now welcomes the gentlemen from Judiciary, both Chairman Goodlatte and Ranking Member Conyers, of the Committee on Judiciary.

I would ask the official reporter to please enter a page break in the hearing record to begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The House Judiciary Committee has jurisdiction over protecting our constitutional freedoms and civil liberties, oversight of the U.S. Departments of Justice and Homeland Security, legal, regulatory, innovation, competition, and antitrust laws, terrorism and crime, and immigration reform.

The committee also has jurisdiction over all the proposed amendments to the Constitution. So they are a very active and busy committee. The Committee recognizes both gentlemen for being here.

At this time we would recognize the chairman of Judiciary, Mr. Goodlatte.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. BOB GOODLATTE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF VIRGINIA

Mr. GOODLATTE. Well, thank you, Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Brady, and members of the committee. I appreciate the opportunity to testify on the Judiciary Committee's budget for the first session of the 114th Congress.

In this economy, all Americans are forced to tighten their belts and do more with less. I recognize that. And the Judiciary Committee has done the same.

However, Ranking Member Conyers and I would like to make the case before you today that the Judiciary Committee is deserving of the maximum amount of funds that you can dedicate to it.

Historically and presently, the Judiciary Committee is one of the most active committees in the House. In the 113th Congress, for example, a total of 1,060 legislative measures introduced were referred to our committee. The Judiciary Committee reported 47 bills and resolutions to the House and had jurisdictional involvement in the House passage of 79 bills and resolutions. Finally, a total of 27 bills in which the Judiciary Committee had a jurisdictional interest were signed into law by the President.

Already in the 114th Congress the Judiciary Committee has been hard at work to meet the demands of the heavy workload of the committee, including work on issues of great importance to the entire Congress, such as regulatory reform, combating human trafficking.

One only needs to pick up a newspaper and read the headlines to appreciate how busy the Judiciary Committee has been over the last 2 years and will continue to be this year as we consider such issues as immigration reform and the reform of our surveillance laws, in addition to our normal heavy workload.

We also expect to continue to engage in aggressive oversight this Congress. Among the most important issues the committee continues to consider are ensuring that Federal law enforcement agencies have the necessary tools to prevent terrorist attacks, that the constitutional rights and civil liberties of Americans are protected, that America's borders are secure and our immigration laws are enforced, and that the administration of justice is fair and efficient within both the Justice Department and the Federal law enforcement agencies and within our Federal judiciary.

In addition, the committee plays an important role in strengthening our economy and putting Americans back to work. We ensure robust and fair competition under our antitrust laws, encourage innovation and promote America's global competitiveness through our intellectual property laws, improve our immigration laws to attract the best and brightest from around the world, and bolster the business climate by providing relief from burdensome and excessive regulations. These issues are critical to the safety and economic well-being of millions of Americans.

Because of this, it is vitally important that we retain a highly qualified staff as the cornerstone of the committee's capacity to consider complicated and often controversial legislation and policy issues that fall within its jurisdiction.

To attract and retain quality staff, the committee must be able to offer compensation that is at least somewhat competitive with

the private sector. This is particularly challenging when a disproportionate number of committee staff are attorneys with substantial experience and public policy expertise who could command higher salaries from the private sector.

In addition to the personnel that are necessary to manage the demanding workload of the Judiciary Committee, there are operating funds that will be critical in enabling the committee to properly investigate certain policy issues under its jurisdiction.

For example, I believe that it is an important function of the committee to conduct site visits and field hearings on certain complex issues, such as immigration reform and our ongoing review of copyright laws, where a full evaluation of the issues is not possible without seeing firsthand how the current programs operate and better understand the successes and deficiencies of the current law.

In addition, the committee has requested funds in anticipation of a potential judicial impeachment. We are closely monitoring the recent arrest and ongoing prosecution of Middle District of Alabama Judge Mark Fuller. The Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals has appointed a special committee to investigate the allegations against Judge Fuller, and the special committee will then file a report with the Judicial Council of the circuit.

The Constitution provides the House of Representatives with the sole power of impeachment, which is initiated and overseen by the Judiciary Committee. Due to the potential that a recommendation for impeachment may come to the Judiciary Committee from the Judicial Conference following this investigation, we have requested funds for the purpose of establishing an impeachment task force, hiring counsel, conducting an investigation, and impeachment proceedings.

The funds we requested for this purpose are consistent with the funds that were required to conduct similar judicial impeachment proceedings in the 111th Congress. Should an impeachment be unnecessary, we would return these funds.

While I have and will continue to do what is necessary to ensure that the Judiciary Committee is even more productive while operating with less, I respectfully request that, when allocating funds to committees, you take into account the legislative burden of the Judiciary Committee and the likelihood that it will require more resources when compared with other committees.

And I thank you for your time and consideration and yield back.
[The statement of Mr. Goodlatte follows:]

Statement of Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte
Committee on House Administration
Judiciary Committee Budget for the 114th Congress, First Session
Wednesday, February 4, 2015

Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Brady and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the Judiciary Committee's budget for the First Session of the 114th Congress.

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legislative measures introduced were referred to our Committee. The Judiciary Committee reported 47 bills and resolutions to the House and had jurisdictional involvement in the House passage of 79 bills and resolutions. Finally, a total of 27 bills in which the Judiciary Committee had a jurisdictional interest were signed into law by the President. Already in the 114th Congress, the Judiciary Committee has been hard at work to meet the demands of the heavy workload of the committee, including work on issues of great importance to the entire Congress, such as regulatory reform and combatting human trafficking. One only needs to pick up a newspaper and read the headlines to appreciate how busy the Judiciary Committee has been over the last two years and will continue to be this year as we consider such issues as immigration reform and the reform of our surveillance laws in addition to our

normal heavy workload. We also expect to continue to engage in aggressive oversight this Congress.

Among the important issues the Committee continues to consider are ensuring that federal law enforcement agencies have the necessary tools to prevent terrorist attacks; that the Constitutional rights and civil liberties of Americans are protected; that America's borders are secure and our immigration laws are enforced; and that the administration of justice is fair and efficient within both the Justice Department and federal law enforcement agencies and within our federal judiciary.

In addition, the Committee plays an important role in strengthening our economy and putting Americans back to work. We ensure robust and fair competition under our antitrust laws, encourage innovation and promote America's global competitiveness through our intellectual property laws, improve our immigration laws

to attract the best and brightest from around the world and bolster the business climate by providing relief from burdensome and excessive regulations.

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Because of this, it is vital that we retain a highly qualified staff as the cornerstone of the Committee's capacity to consider complicated and often controversial legislation and policy issues that fall within its jurisdiction.

To attract and retain quality staff, the Committee must be able to offer compensation that is at least somewhat competitive with the private sector.

This is particularly challenging when a disproportionate number of committee staff are attorneys with substantial experience and public policy expertise who could command higher salaries from the private sector.

In addition to the personnel that are necessary to manage the demanding workload of the Judiciary Committee, there are operating funds that will be critical in enabling the Committee to properly investigate certain policy issues under its jurisdiction. For example, I believe that it is an important function of the Committee to conduct site visits and field hearings on certain complex issues, such as immigration reform and our ongoing review of copyright laws, where a full evaluation of the issues is not possible without seeing firsthand how the current programs operate and better understanding the successes and deficiencies of the current law.

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appointed a Special Committee to investigate the allegations against Judge Fuller and the Special Committee will then file a report with the Judicial Council of the Circuit. The Constitution provides the House of Representatives with the sole power of impeachment which is initiated and overseen by the Judiciary Committee. Due to the potential that a recommendation for impeachment may come to the Judiciary Committee from the Judicial Conference following this investigation, we have requested funds for the purpose of establishing an impeachment task force, hiring counsel, conducting an investigation and impeachment proceedings. The funds we've requested for this purpose are consistent with the funds that were required to conduct similar judicial impeachment proceedings in the 111th Congress. Should an impeachment be unnecessary, we would return these funds.

While I have and will continue to do what is necessary to ensure that the Judiciary Committee is even more productive while operating with less, I respectfully request that when allocating funds to committees, you take into account the legislative burden of the Judiciary Committee and the likelihood that it will require more resources when compared with other committees.

I thank you for your time and consideration and yield back the balance of my time.

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The CHAIRMAN. I thank the chairman very much.

The Chair now recognizes the ranking member, Mr. Conyers, from the great State of Michigan.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR., A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

Mr. CONYERS. Thank you, Chairwoman Miller, my Michigan colleague, and Ranking Member Brady. It is my pleasure to appear before you today with Chairman Goodlatte to present our 2015 budget request for the House Judiciary Committee.

I join with Chairman Goodlatte in requesting that your committee consider allocating the maximum amount of budget funding possible to the Judiciary Committee for reasons that I will shortly go into.

This request reflects the fact that the Judiciary Committee is responsible for some of the most critical issues facing our Nation. It is among the most active committees in the House.

For example, during the 113th Congress, one in seven of the legislative measures introduced into the House last Congress were referred to our committee. In the 113th Congress, our committee held more than 95 subcommittee and task force hearings, 30 full committee hearings, and 54 full committee markups.

The Judiciary Committee reported 47 bills and resolutions and was involved with the House passage of 79 bills and resolutions. Because of our committee's broad jurisdictional interests, we were involved in about 11 percent of the legislative measures signed into law during the last Congress.

Our committee plays a major role in dealing with diverse legislative and oversight issues that have national significance and affect every American. We consider legislation dealing with terrorism, national security, immigration, criminal law, copyright enforcement, patent rights, antitrust, and most especially constitutional questions, including voting rights and civil liberties.

The committee's responsibilities include oversight of the Department of Justice and the Federal court system as well as the Federal regulatory process. We also examine the constitutional issues presented by the Government's domestic surveillance programs, including the NSA's bulk collection of telephone metadata and the DEA's license plate reader program. Such extensive responsibilities obviously necessitate the committee to expend extensive time and resources and require a well-qualified and experienced staff.

Given the nature of the number and range of nationally important issues within our jurisdiction, it is very likely that the committee workload will probably increase. For example, Chairman Goodlatte has proposed an ambitious hearing and legislative agenda focusing on immigration policy, addressing the problems of overcriminalization and overincarceration, and improving, of course, the trademark, patent and copyright systems. In addition, several of these hearings will require travel, particularly with respect to immigration issues.

As you consider budget allocations for this year, I urge that you and your colleagues prioritize the Judiciary Committee's budget request based on our extensive legislative responsibilities.

I am concerned that not increasing the committee's budget allocation may jeopardize the committee's ability to retain its highly qualified staff who possess the institutional knowledge and expertise critical to the work of the committee.

And so I urge you to maximize to the greatest extent possible the Judiciary Committee's budget allocation. We have submitted a budget request that reflects our shared commitment to retaining and building a highly qualified staff.

And so I appreciate your consideration, your generosity, and your understanding of the responsibilities attendant to this committee's jurisdiction, and I thank you so much.

[The statement of Mr. Conyers follows:]

Statement of The Hon. John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member, Committee on the
Judiciary, for the Hearing on the Committee's 2015 Budget Request before the
Committee on Administration

Wednesday, February 4, 2015, at 11:15 a.m.
1310 Longworth House Office Building

Chairwoman Miller, Ranking Member Brady, and
Members of the Committee, it is my pleasure to
appear before you today with Chairman Goodlatte to
present our 2015 budget request for the House
Judiciary Committee.

I join with my colleague Chairman Goodlatte in
requesting that your Committee consider allocating the
maximum amount of budget funding possible to the
Judiciary Committee.

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The Judiciary Committee reported 47 bills and resolutions, and was involved with the House passage of 79 bills and resolutions.

Because of our Committee's broad jurisdictional interest, we were involved in about 11% of the legislative measures signed into law during the last Congress.

Our Committee plays a major role in dealing with diverse legislative and oversight issues that have nationwide significance and affect every American.

We consider legislation dealing with terrorism and national security, immigration, criminal law, copyright enforcement, patent rights, antitrust, constitutional issues, including voting rights and civil liberties, and many others.

The Committee's responsibilities include oversight of the Justice Department, the federal court system, and the federal regulatory process.

We also examine the constitutional issues presented by the government's domestic surveillance programs, including the NSA's bulk collection of telephone metadata and the DEA's license plate reader program.

Such extensive responsibilities obviously necessitate the Committee to expend extensive time and resources, and require a well-qualified and experienced staff.

Given the nature, number, and range of nationally important issues within our jurisdiction, it is very likely that the Committee workload will only increase.

For example, Chairman Goodlatte has proposed an ambitious hearing and legislative agenda focusing on immigration policy, addressing the problems of over-criminalization and over-incarceration, and improving the patent and copyright system.

In addition, several of these hearings will require travel, particularly with respect to immigration issues.

As you consider budget allocations for this year, I urge you to prioritize the Judiciary Committee's budget request based on our extensive legislative responsibilities.

I am concerned that not increasing the Committee's budget allocation will jeopardize the Committee's ability to retain its highly qualified staff who possess the institutional knowledge and expertise critical to the work of the Committee.

I urge you to maximize to the greatest extent possible the Judiciary Committee's budget allocation.

We have submitted a budget request before you today that reflects our shared commitment to retaining and building a highly qualified staff to support the ambitious and significant work of the Committee.

Members of the Committee, I appreciate your attention to our request, and am ready to respond to any questions you might have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, gentlemen.

Our Committee has got hearings all day today and then next week, of course. We have a limited amount of resources, but we really are trying to look at what each committee has asked of us.

In this case, you have asked for about—a little over 9 percent increase, which most of it, I think, is—as you say, a special circumstance, potentially, with an impeachment proceeding, and that has been historically a—we see a spike in the ask from the committee. Last time it looked like this was 2009 or 2010, I think, when you had a spike for an impeachment.

For my own clarification: So you go outside—you have outside counsel, usually, for that kind of an investigation.

Is there any way that you could do it in-house?

Mr. GOODLATTE. Well, we certainly found from the experience of the last two judicial impeachments, which did occur when Mr. Conyers was chairman of the committee, it is really necessary to get people with the expertise in handling impeachment.

So we actually went back and found people who had experience with this in the past with the various impeachments that have taken place. There are not a lot of them. So that is one thing.

We did—the committee, I believe, did hire some majority and minority additional staff that did work in-house, but we also went outside for at least, I believe, two counsel that were necessary to provide that expertise.

And I just picture the situation that we found ourselves in. This was a case with one of these judges that the Justice Department had refused to prosecute, declined to prosecute, the judge. And so we had to build that case from the ground up.

Now, thankfully, we had the input from the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, which referred the case to the Congress, but we actually had to, you know, not just build off of actual criminal prosecution, but make that case.

Then we had to present that in a week-long trial before the Senate panel that was six Democrats, six Republicans that heard the evidence and then, finally, present the arguments on the floor of the Senate. And we were successful in all four articles of impeachment.

Congressman Adam Schiff, who is no longer with the committee, chaired that task force, and I was the ranking member or vice chair, whatever my title was. And we basically did that work. But we could not have had that success without having the kind of expertise that we called upon to do that.

There is a tremendous amount of work in terms of developing the evidence, traveling in that case to New Orleans to interview a multitude of witnesses, and basically compiling the documentation for the case. Not only does it require additional manpower, but it also requires expertise that is not likely within the expertise of the existing committee staff.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. Very well.

Mr. Conyers, do you have anything to add on that?

Mr. CONYERS. No. Except I just want you to know that, Chairwoman Miller, and my colleague, Mr. Brady, I have always had a good relationship with the Committee on Administration and we

have always made our case in a very straightforward way, as we have done here today.

And we think that the Judiciary Committee has these unique constitutional responsibilities and we think that your committee has always taken these into consideration, and I have no reason to doubt that you will not continue the same evenhanded evaluation and analysis of all of these requests.

I imagine it is a daunting responsibility to hear everybody come before you and make their case, and I am sure there are many good cases, other than our own, to be considered. But I think we can rely on your fairness and thoroughness in listening to our budget request.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you. We certainly are going to do that to the very best of our ability.

The Chair recognizes Mr. Brady if he has any questions.

Mrs. Comstock, any questions?

Mrs. COMSTOCK. No. No questions.

The CHAIRMAN. We want to thank both of you very much, Chairman Goodlatte and Ranking Member Conyers. We appreciate it.

We really will look at this very carefully. As you say, you have got a special, unique circumstance certainly with this possible impeachment.

Quite frankly, all of the cuts that have happened to all of the committees in the last number of years has made it very difficult for you to get your work done, or having field hearings. So we really are going to take a look at all this this year.

Thank you very much.

Mr. CONYERS. Thank you very much.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, gentlemen. We certainly appreciate you coming at a different time than you were originally scheduled for Agriculture, but we actually moved ahead here, if you can believe it, a little bit. We are trying to get all of this—we have all of these committees today and then next week. So we really sincerely appreciate your graciousness of coming today.

This Committee welcomes Chairman Conaway and Ranking Member Peterson of the Committee on Agriculture.

I would ask the reporter to enter a page break into the hearing record to begin a new section for Agriculture.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee on Agriculture has jurisdiction over our agricultural policies generally, agricultural production and marketing, stabilization of prices of agricultural products and commodities, commodity exchanges, crop insurance, soil conservation, and the extension of farm credit and farm security.

Again we welcome you very, very much.

The chair would recognize the chairman, Mr. Conaway of Texas.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS**

Mr. CONAWAY. Well, thanks, Madam Chairman. I appreciate that.

Ranking Member Brady, good to be with you.

And the other distinguished members of the committee and those that aren't distinguished members of the committee, thank you for allowing us to be here this morning. Appreciate that.

It is my first time to do this as chairman of the House Committee on Ag and I am pleased to be doing it along with my ranking member, Collin Peterson, who has been at this for quite some time and brings a great deal of experience. As you might know, he and I both are CPAs. And so we will bring that perspective to the business side of our committee, and we are looking forward to that.

The singular piece of legislation, the farm bill, is behind us for a brief period of time, although we are one day closer today than we were yesterday to needing a new farm bill at some point in time. So work product—the work that the committee would be doing over the next 2 years will be looking at the—overseeing the implementation of the farm bill, USDA's work at making and rolling out these new programs provided in there, and making sure the safety net works on behalf of production agriculture and the conservation titles and those things.

The CFTC, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, is operating in an expired authorization mode. And we intend to bring a bill across the committee and to the floor for reauthorizing the CFTC, which is an important program.

And then the bulk of what we will be doing is a soup-to-nuts robust review of the SNAP program. It spends in excess of \$80 billion a year and hasn't had a great deal of oversight. And we intend to convene the stakeholders to try to ask the questions what is working, what is not working, how can we improve the policies, how can we protect the taxpayers, how can beneficiaries and recipients get the help that they need when they need it and for the appropriate amount of time that they would need it.

We are also working to make sure that a relatively young committee from an experience standpoint, particularly on the Republican side—I think over two-thirds of our team is in their second or first term in Congress. So we have got a great deal of educating to do.

In fact, this morning we just held a briefing with Trade Representative Ambassador Mike Froman to go through the various issues with respect to the trade that will be on the horizon. And that will be a good part of what we have done.

As with every committee, we have brought in some good staff. We have kept some staff that was there. But they are all experienced people, and we expense the appropriate amount of compensation for those folks.

In a way, to try to offset expenses, we have been doing things like migrating our computer system to the House domain. We are going to use the House recording studio for that work instead of our own, removing redundant firewalls, things that are causing—saving significant amounts of money for the taxpayer and allowing us to redeploy those assets in a better way.

So we have also consolidated some portfolios under folks wearing more than one hat in order to make this work. And then we are also looking at ways to reduce printing costs and other things you would expect two CPAs to want their team to be doing.

So our proposal, our request, was flat against the 2015 spending plan. We believe we can live under that and look forward to working with this committee on providing the appropriate amount of work that the—that the Ag Committee needs to do with the resources we have been given.

So, with that, I will turn to the ranking member if he has any comments.

[The statement of Mr. Conaway follows:]

**CHAIRMAN K. MICHAEL CONAWAY
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE**

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
FEBRUARY 4, 2015**

Good afternoon Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Brady and members of the Committee. Thank you for inviting Ranking Member Peterson and me to share the Committee on Agriculture's proposed budget for the next year. As you know, the Committee has a long history of bipartisan cooperation and a history of fiscal responsibility. As a new Chairman for this Committee, I also bring my experience as a CPA, and am committed to continuing this legacy by running an effective and financially responsible Committee.

In the 113th Congress, the Committee, under the direction of Chairman Lucas and Ranking Member Peterson, was successful in passing the 2014 Farm Bill. While this was a great accomplishment, the Committee's work does not stop there. In the 114th Congress, the Committee will have the monumental task of overseeing the implementation of the 2014 Farm Bill, reauthorizing the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) and implementing a robust oversight program, including a complete review of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Further, the Committee has prioritized providing more effective member services to Committee Members and the House as a whole, and working to achieve more effective consensus building among the Committee's constituents.

In taking on this work, the Committee will be taking on new costs. For example, the Committee will be increasing staff levels this Congress over the levels in the previous Congress. The Committee has already prioritized the hiring of designated staffers for oversight, member services and coalitions and more staffers will be added as necessary.

To offset the costs of these new hires and increased Committee activity, the Committee has looked for ways to increase its efficiency and to more effectively use taxpayer dollars. In the 114th Congress, Committee staff began working to reduce any duplication of House-funded technology. These actions include migrating to the House domain, utilizing the House Recording Studio and removing redundant firewalls. Several staff portfolios have been consolidated to make room for new positions and the Committee is also exploring avenues to reduce wasteful printing. This is an on-going initiative and the Committee staff will continue to look for other areas to increase efficiency.

While the Committee does believe that there is a justification for increased funding due to its increased activities in the 114th Congress, the Committee understands that the legislative appropriations were funded at the same level as last year. With this understanding in mind, the Committee has taken steps to increase efficiency and, as a result, is not requesting additional funds, but is requesting level funding, as was provided in 2014.

We certainly have our work cut out for us this Congress. But we are committed to working towards increased efficiency to accomplish our goals. We appreciate your consideration of our budget request. Please let us know if we can provide you any additional information.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.
Mr. Ranking Member, Mr. Peterson.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. COLLIN C. PETERSON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

Mr. PETERSON. I thank the gentleman.

And good morning, Madam Chair, and Ranking Member Brady, and members of the committee.

I am pleased to be here today in support of the Agriculture Committee's budget request, and I am proud of our committee's history on being able to work together and get things done and look forward to continuing that tradition during the 114th Congress.

As Chairman Conaway has already outlined, there is much work for the committee to do in this Congress, just like it is in other Congresses, and it is important that we have the necessary resources to meet our ambitious agenda.

And I believe the record shows that we have been a frugal committee. In the time that I was chairman, Chairman Lucas, now Chairman Conaway, you know, we have operated on a frugal manner. And being CPAs, we expect we will be able to stay within the budget and make things work.

He has stated—the chairman has stated a desire to address duplicative areas within the committee's budget, and I look forward to working with him in this area. And much like his predecessor, Chairman Conaway has been respectful of the rights of the minority, and I appreciate his efforts.

So I thank the committee for the opportunity to testify today. Appreciate your consideration of our budget request and look forward to working with you.

[The statement of Mr. Peterson follows:]

**RANKING MEMBER COLLIN C. PETERSON
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE**

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
FEBRUARY 4, 2015**

Good afternoon Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member Brady and members of the Committee. I am pleased to be here today in support of the Agriculture Committee's budget request. I am very proud of our Committee's history of being able to work together and get things done. I look forward to continuing that tradition during the 114th Congress.

As Chairman Conaway has already outlined, there is much work for the Agriculture Committee this Congress and it is important that we have the necessary resources to meet our ambitious agenda.

I believe the record shows we have been a frugal Committee. The Chairman and I are both CPAs and are both committed to operating within our budget confines. He has stated a desire to address duplicative areas within the Committee's budget and I look forward to working with him in this area. Much like his predecessor, Chairman Conaway has been respectful of the rights of the Minority and I appreciate his efforts.

I thank the Committee for the opportunity to testify today and appreciate your consideration of the Agriculture Committee's budget request.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank both gentlemen very much for their testimony.

Really, I didn't know you were both CPAs previously. So there you go. We appreciate your being—both of you being very fiscally conservative and keeping within the confines of our existing dollars here, although I would say this: first of all, I think it was interesting you were saying you were going to redeploy some of your funds to staff up, in some areas, and, obviously, you need to be doing that.

Our Committee—as I say, talking to all the committee chairs, and we recognize the cuts that have happened in the last couple of cycles here to all of the committees. Now that you have had the Farm Bill through, which was a remarkable piece of legislation. Hats off to everybody that worked on that, certainly.

But if we were actually to give you some additional resources, more than what you have asked for—we are not saying we are going to be able to do that, but we are very cognizant of the cuts that have happened in the last couple of cycles here—I am just wondering specifically, off the top of your head, what you think you might be using that for.

For instance, in our area—I have a heavy ag area, and I think it is the USDA that is out doing all kinds of training, et cetera, about what the new crop insurance program is going to look like for our farmers.

But I am just wondering, if we were to be able to give you some additional resources, would you be looking at additional staff? Would you be thinking about field hearings? What kinds of things might you think about spending something on?

Mr. CONAWAY. Well, I think the broad category for me would be ways how our committee can communicate to taxpayers and constituents, stakeholders, what we are doing, why we are doing it, and why it is important on the various programs that we convene.

There is a growing disconnect in America between—particularly as we urbanize, between production agriculture and the hard work that they do and the food on people's tables and what that costs.

There are an awful lot of folks in the urban areas who think food just shows up at the grocery store by magic and, so, doing a better job of communicating why we have a safety net, why we have a conservation program, not to mention the SNAP program that we are going to be going through there.

So using new tools and new avenues of communicating with the general public and taxpayers in particular would be an area that—should there be additional resources available to us, would be what I would like to try to explore with Collin and how we would do a better job in that regard.

I think we are doing an adequate job now, but the communication schemes available are very dynamic and the Congress is not. So having some additional resources to explore those new dynamic ways of getting at it would be one area that we would take a look at.

And, Collin, if you have any thoughts on that.

Mr. PETERSON. I think I agree with him.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. Very good.

The Chair recognizes the ranking member, Mr. Brady.

Mr. BRADY. Just quickly, Madam Chair. Thank you.
It looks like you guys overloaded supplies and materials last year.

Mr. CONAWAY. No. That reflect—

Mr. BRADY. That—

Mr. CONAWAY. Yeah. That—I'm sorry. Go ahead.

Mr. BRADY. No. No. That is fine.

And you want to add some extra travel in. You would do—what is that for? Field hearings and—

Mr. CONAWAY. Well, we are going to—we are taking the group to Chicago this weekend—or Friday and Saturday to take new Members, again, that haven't been to some of the markets and exchanges. We will also go to a grain silo.

The CFTC, as a part of their Dodd-Frank responsibilities, implemented some 60 rules that came very quickly. This is from an agency that typically did one or two rules a year. They had to do 60 major rule processes—programs within a very limited amount of time.

Many of those have gotten relationships with foreign regulators cross-threaded. And so we are trying to figure out a way to do that. So we may have to travel there to meet with them to make sure that the CFTC rules and the foreign regulator rules begin to mesh better. So there is some travel there.

That also reflects—as I mentioned, we are migrating off into the House domain and doing other things that we have done on a standalone basis. So that is why you see some of the numbers there, particularly on supplies, have mainly dropped. We have obviously pushed that up into salaries in order to compensate our people better for the job that they are doing.

But there will be some additional travel that the committee has not taken in the past related to CFTC as well as—you know, we have got international trade agreements going on. We need to understand the impact that foreign agriculture has on the United States as well as United States agriculture has on foreign agriculture. So there will be some additional travel in that regard.

Mr. BRADY. And the two-thirds/one-third is working—I know we had a—years ago, we had a little bit of an issue here.

But it is working now. Right?

Mr. CONAWAY. I believe so. Collin and I have a—you know, our committee is blessed with a subject matter that is not generally partisan. There are a few things that are. But most of our ruckuses are between square States and non-square States and this particular crop and that particular crop and this industry and that industry.

So we don't argue much about Republicans and Democrats. We argue between cotton and corn and soybeans and milk and specialty crops and all those kind of things. And so that is a little different take. And we are blessed to be able to do that.

I serve on Armed Services and Ag. And on both of those, it is not as partisan as some of the other areas in which we meet in. But, yeah, Collin and I and our teams work well together, and he and I will make sure that continues to happen.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair recognizes Mr. Davis.

Mr. CONAWAY. A member of the committee, by the way.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I can attest to the bipartisanship that the House Ag Committee actually not just talks about, but shows the rest of Congress how to actually work together and get large things done.

Chairman Conaway, I appreciate your leadership. I am not just saying that to get more seniority today. But I also noticed under your leadership the House Ethics Committee returned a portion of their budget. Thank you for your stewardship. And to ask for a level funding I think shows that you really delved into what you foresee in the future could come up.

But one question I had: Do either of you foresee any special circumstances that the committee may run into that we, as a committee, should take into consideration when we determine your funding request?

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Davis, thank you for that. Thank you for the compliment. I appreciate that.

Not right this second. I think every organization should go through a catharsis of having less money to spend. It is healthy. Because if you don't go through that, then over time you build up things that are nice to do and pleasant to do, but not essential to your mission. You take on things that aren't necessarily mission-oriented.

And going through a catharsis of having less money means that you have to examine what you are doing. And we are in that mode. We are coming out of that mode. And I think we are pretty lean and intend to try to stay that way.

You know, the lessons of that catharsis are still fresh on our mind. And so, you know, 10 years from now we may not be in that same position. But right now we think we are working within the—we know we are working within the resources that we have.

And I don't anticipate anything in the near future, certainly this Congress, that would say we would need some sort of an emergency, you know, reallocation of some sort that would—to address that.

But if we did, I would hope that the way we have treated this budget and the way we have done our work would give us some standing that we weren't just crying wolf, that we did have a legitimate issue that was in front of you, and that we have been responsible with the resources that you have given us, and that that would give us some standing to be able to come to you with a straight face and say, "Hey, this is a wreck that we didn't anticipate." But right now I don't know what that might be.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PETERSON. You know, as far as the committee needing money, I am not sure. But, you know, if these prices keep down—you know, we have gone through the best time in agriculture we have ever experienced. You know these prices have come down substantially.

I have been around this a long time. I am expecting that in the next year we are going to be catching a lot of hell on the committee because the farm bill is not good enough and people are in trouble.

Mr. DAVIS. You are not catching it yet?

Mr. PETERSON. Not yet. Not too much, but some. Yeah. I mean, I went to some of these meeting at home on the new farm bill. I am getting a lot of flack because it is too complicated.

You know, farmers don't like the fact that they have to try to figure out which program to be in. And I say, "Well, it is not our fault. We are"—Lucas and I, we only wanted one choice and we wanted planted acres and we lost to the Senate. So I said, "Go talk to the Senate." You know?

But, anyway, it is—farmers—you know farmers. They are going to find some reason to fuss, you know. But I am expecting that, if these prices stay down, there is going to be, you know, concerns raised. But we can deal with it, you know.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you very much.

Mr. PETERSON. And we—you know, they are going to be looking for more money to give to farm programs, not to give to the committee.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you very much, both, for your leadership. And let the record show I actually was in favor of more options. So sorry, Collin.

The CHAIRMAN. The record will reflect that very important caveat.

The Chair recognizes Mrs. Comstock.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Madam Chairwoman, I have no questions.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Well, we certainly thank both of you. We appreciate what you have done here with your budget, and we will take that into consideration.

Like you say, you weren't crying wolf. You really—both of you really looked at this and—of course, the Farm Bill being done, but who knows what is going to happen. We are just trying to balance it all here.

So we appreciate, again, you coming earlier. This helps us with our day-long proceedings.

Mr. CONAWAY. Well, Madam Chair, thank you and the ranking member for your consideration. We appreciate your hard work on parsing out scarce resources. And thank you for the respectful way you have treated Collin and I this morning. We look forward to working with you going forward.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

We are going to go into recess here, subject to the call of the chair, but our plan is to reconvene at 1:30. Thank you.

[Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee will come to order. We are still gathering from votes here, but I think in the interest of time we are—here comes our ranking member—so we are just going to get started here. I know everyone is rushing here today.

So the Committee now welcomes Chairman Price and Ranking Member Van Hollen of the Committee on Budget. I would ask the official reporter to please enter a page break into the hearing record so we have a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee on the Budget has jurisdiction over the Nation's fiscal path. It is the first panel to examine the President's annual budget message. The Budget Committee's chief responsibility is to draft a concurrent resolution that reconciles spending details with the overall comprehensive budget package.

The committee is required to draft a budget resolution, agreed to by April 15 of each year, which establishes total targets in five budget areas: authority, outlays, revenues, surplus or deficit, and public debt. The resolution also sets budget authority and outlay targets for each of the 21 spending categories. Finally, the committee prepares guidelines in the annual budget resolution for cutting programs to meet spending targets. So it is a very active committee.

The Chair now recognizes the chairman of the Budget Committee, Mr. Price.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. TOM PRICE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF GEORGIA

Dr. PRICE. Thank you, Madam Chair and Ranking Member Brady. It is good to be with you. Thank you for the work that you do here on this House Admin Committee. It is extremely important. And I appreciate the opportunity to join Mr. Van Hollen, the ranking member on the Budget Committee, to testify this afternoon concerning the Budget Committee's funding resolution.

For the 113th Congress the Budget Committee continued to spend within the levels approved by this committee. Therefore we are requesting that our annual funding for the 114th Congress remain frozen at the level set in 2014.

The allocation the committee was given in 2014 was slightly more than \$5.1 million, and we are requesting the exact same amount for 2015 and 2016. I intend to continue the Budget Committee's past practice of carefully managing our funding allocations with respect to the committee operations. I am committed to keeping our staffing levels considerably below our current limit of staffing. Our current staff ceiling is 66 positions, and we are well below that level at this point. In addition, we will watch our expenditures closely to ensure that we will use these resources wisely and efficiently.

We have also enjoyed a respectful bipartisan relationship regarding the allocation of resources between the majority and the minority, and I will maintain this tradition. Out of the 2014 spending allocation, the committee was able to provide the minority with one-third of the personnel budget. This personnel funding level ensures that both the majority and the minority have sufficient resources to fulfill the committee's many responsibilities and maintain a highly professional staff.

Nonetheless, personnel costs remain the largest area of spending for our committee, while subscriptions and equipment costs are, respectively, the second and third most expensive items in the committee's budget.

Allow me to note that the House Budget Committee has seen a 19 percent reduction in resources over the last 5 years.

Our request of a frozen funding level is both responsible and disciplined, as well as providing needed flexibility to meet the committee's potential needs for the future. It is also my understanding that the ranking member, Mr. Van Hollen, supports our budget request and our plans for the management of the committee's funds.

And I appreciate the opportunity to be with you, your time, and I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.
[The statement of Mr. Price follows:]

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U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

Washington, DC 20515

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE THOMAS PRICE, M.D.

CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

February 4, 2015

Thank you, Chairman Miller and Congressman Brady, for the opportunity to testify this afternoon concerning the Budget Committee's funding resolution.

The Budget Committee has continued to spend within the levels approved by this committee for the 113th Congress. Therefore, we are requesting that our annual funding for the 114th congress remain frozen at the level set in 2014. The allocation the Committee was given in 2014 was slightly more than \$5.1 million and we are requesting the exact same amount for 2015 and 2016.

I intend to continue the Budget Committee's past practice of carefully managing our funding allocations with respect to the Committee's operation. For example, I am committed to keeping our staffing levels considerably below our current limit --- in fact, the Committee currently has 46 staff members while our staff ceiling is 66 positions. In addition, we will watch our expenditures closely to ensure that we use these resources wisely and efficiently.

We also have enjoyed a respectful bipartisan relationship regarding the allocation of resources between the Majority and Minority, and I will maintain this tradition. Under the 2014 spending allocation, the Committee was able to provide the Minority with one-third of the

personnel budget. This personnel funding level ensures that both the Majority and the Minority have sufficient resources to fulfill the Committee's many responsibilities and maintain a highly professional staff.

Nonetheless, personnel costs remain the largest area of spending for the Committee, while subscriptions and equipment costs are respectfully the second and third most expensive items in the Committee's budget.

I believe our request of a frozen funding level is both responsible and disciplined, as well as providing needed flexibility to meet the Committee's potential needs in the future. Further, it is my understanding Mr. Van Hollen supports our budget request and our plans for the management of the committee's funds.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chairman now recognizes the ranking member, Mr. Van Hollen.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MARYLAND

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Brady, and my hall mate on the seventh floor, Mr. Davis.

I first of all want to congratulate Congressman Price on becoming chairman of the Budget Committee. We have already had two hearings this year on the budget and I am pleased that the committee's continuing in the bipartisan tradition of sharp but civil debates with respect to the budget.

So congratulations again, Tom.

And I join the chairman in requesting the budget level that he presented. We have had a tradition of providing the minority party with one-third of the budget for the purpose of personnel, and the majority essentially takes responsibility for some of the overhead costs with the committee, and we look forward to continuing that tradition. So I am here to support the chairman's request, and I thank the members of the committee.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, gentlemen, very much.

As you both mentioned, I have got my slate here of all of our different committees and what their chairs are asking for. It is good to see that you are looking at a zero increase actually, as you are proposing, for an increase, and I am very appreciative of that. As you mentioned, you had actually a 20 percent cut in the Budget Committee over the last couple of cycles here.

Obviously our Committee is having hearings today and then next week as we are talking to all the various committee chairs and ranking members about what kind of resources they are looking for depending on what is upcoming, et cetera. I don't know that we would be able to, but if we were able to give you actually a bit additional, what kind of things would you use—I mean, if you really had a bit more money, I really don't even know what number we are talking about here—but if there was a little bit of room there, keeping in mind that we have had so many budget cuts, is there something that you would look at specifically? Would it be additional staff or field hearings or anything?

Dr. PRICE. I appreciate the question, Madam Chair. I think that we in the Budget Committee have a number of hearings, and the budget, as everybody knows, we can kill a lot of trees. With some significant technological improvements, I think we could really gain significant efficiency in the printing costs, but it would require tablets and those kind of things for members of the committee and staff. So that is one area where we would look.

In addition to that, we have talked about doing some field hearings. It hasn't been possible at this point, but we have talked about doing some field hearings. I think it is important that the American people know that their Budget Committee is concerned about what they think as well, and doing some field hearings as it relates to how certain States are doing various things as it relates to their budget and how we might be able to cooperate with them to a greater degree.

So I think there are some great opportunities. We understand that times are tight. However, if there are some additional resources then we would put them wisely and responsibly to use.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate what you are saying about tablets. I think sometimes utilizing technology, you spend a dime, save a buck, really. I mean, they are just tools anymore. So it is very important.

Do you have any comment on that.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Well, Madam Chairman, not surprisingly, given the fact that our budget is one-third the size of the majority's budget, we are incredibly squeezed on staff and personnel. Obviously a lot of people left, staff left the committee a number of years ago. We don't expect to be able to replace them all, but we are very squeezed, and have an obligation as the minority to review the budget as closely as the majority. And so we would welcome any additional resources, and that is where we would put them if we could have them.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay, I appreciate that.

Mr. Ranking Member, Mr. Brady. Nothing?

Mr. Davis.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Chairman Price, and my seventh floor buddy, Mr. Van Hollen. I actually got on this committee because they told me that we could kick you off the seventh floor, Chris. And now they are telling me that we can't.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I know you have been trying.

Mr. DAVIS. This seniority thing they tell me about, it doesn't work.

Thank you both. I think it is commendable to ask for level funding at a time of austerity. The only question I have for both of you is, do you see any special circumstances that this committee should consider over the next few weeks about what may lie in front of the committee that you haven't addressed today or that we haven't thought of?

Dr. PRICE. I appreciate that question, Mr. Davis. I think that it is important for folks to understand that our goal is not just to pass a budget through the House in this Congress. We look forward to passing a budget through the House, having the Senate pass a budget, and then to go to conference on that budget. And then we hope we will be able to have reconciliation directives in that budget resolution, which will require greater work on behalf of the Budget Committee later in the year than we have had over the past 4 years.

So we are going to be very, very busy this year, and look forward to some vibrant debates and discussions, but the resources that will be required will be more than they have been the last 4 years.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I have got nothing to add to that.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady, Ms. Comstock.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Since I came in late, I am sorry, I didn't hear the testimony, but since we had heard from Ways and Means earlier today and talked a little bit about dynamic scoring, I was wondering how that was going to impact the budget or how you see that impacting the

budget and your resources to utilize that now and how that might help.

Dr. PRICE. The changes in the rules for the House rules to allow for dynamic scoring at a level of effect on the economy, I don't see that affecting the Budget Committee's budget itself. It will affect how we interpret or the kind of advice that we get from Congressional Budget Office as it relates to certain pieces of legislation. But I don't see the change to dynamic scoring affecting the Budget Committee budget at all.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I would just add, if you want to apply dynamic scoring to the Budget Committee budget—

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Well, to both the gentleman, we appreciate it very, very much, and we appreciate the thought that you and both of your staffs put into sharing with our staff your needs in that. Both your staffs worked very well together to get us the information that we needed here.

Dr. PRICE. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. So we are appreciative of that, and we are going to be listening to everybody here for the next couple of weeks and then we will make some decisions.

Dr. PRICE. Appreciate it. If we can answer any questions, please let us know.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much.

The Committee now welcomes Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member DeFazio of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, of which I am very proud to sit also. I would ask the official reporter to please enter a page break in the hearing record to begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has jurisdiction over all our modes of transportation: aviation, maritime waterborne transportation, highways, bridges, mass transit, and railroads. The committee also has jurisdiction over other aspects of our national infrastructure, such as clean water and wastewater management, transport of resources by pipeline, flood damage reduction, and the management of federally owned real estate and public buildings, and development of economically depressed rural and urban areas, disaster preparedness and response, and hazardous materials transportation as well.

The Committee certainly welcomes you both. We are appreciative of your time. Let me just say at the outset we also are very appreciative of the work that both of your committee staff did on both sides to give us all of the information that we needed to be able to be prepared for this today.

So at this time the chair would recognize Chairman Shuster.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. BILL SHUSTER, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA**

Mr. SHUSTER. Thank you, Chairman Miller, thank you Ranking Member Brady and members of the committee, for the opportunity to discuss Transportation and Infrastructure's fiscal year 2016 budget.

Until Mr. Harper showed, I was going to say I felt like at home here, I have got three members of the T&I Committee, a fellow

Pennsylvanian here, but now the guy from Mississippi. I was going to mention about "My Cousin Vinny." Did that happen in Mississippi?

Mr. HARPER. You know, I hate to say I never saw the movie, but I can tell you that the gentleman that intercepted the pass to win the Super Bowl was from Mississippi.

Mr. SHUSTER. From Mississippi. I didn't bring up "My Cousin Vinny" because Mr. Davis there reminds me of that scene where he brings up his witness and he asks the judge to treat him like a hostile. So I am afraid that Mr. Davis may do that here to me today.

I really appreciate the opportunity. Our committee last year, the Transportation and Infrastructure, had a very productive 113th Congress, promoting the safe and efficient movement of goods and people, commonsense reforms, cutting red tape, fiscal responsibility, increasing transparency, and reducing the regulatory burden. Last Congress our committee logged over 120 meeting days, reported 40 bills, saw nearly 60 bills passed through the House. We were responsible for almost 40 public laws and resolutions.

Some of our bills that became law included the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act, the Howard Coble Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act, a bill to preserve the Highway Trust Fund insolvency, a bill to reduce the regulatory burdens in general aviation and manufacturing, and the Water Resources Reform and Development Act, which is the first water bill in 7 years we were able to pass through the Congress. And there were many, many reforms, and as I mentioned earlier, it was fiscally responsible.

We sent 32 oversight letters to the GAO and Inspector General. Our efforts also save taxpayers dollars. For example, over \$2 billion saved in leased federal office space.

I am proud of the record so far, but we have a more extensive legislative agenda in the 114th Congress, including a long-term surface transportation bill, an FAA reauthorization bill, passenger rail reform, and a reauthorization act. Both FEMA and GSA reform bills are on our sights. Any necessary measure to prevent the EPA and the Corps of Engineers from broadening the scope of the Clean Water Act. A pipeline safety reauthorization bill. And of course we are going to be working on the next WRDA and Coast Guard bills, reauthorizations.

We also need to continue strong oversight of the executive branch during the final 2 years of this administration. Last Congress we were able to periodically get outside the Beltway for field hearings, roundtables, and site visits. This was tremendously valuable to our members, but opportunities were limited by the budget.

In the 114th Congress we want to take Congress to the people more often, engaging with the State and local officials and other stakeholders, private citizens, in their own communities, which provides greater transparency, promotes a better understanding of Congress's work, allows for greater input into the legislative process, and helps our members understand the practical effects of Washington policies out in the real world. And it simply leads to better legislation.

We are committed to ensuring that every tax dollar goes to good use. Ranking Member DeFazio and I have prepared a funding re-

quest that recognizes this era of constrained budgets while allowing the committee to implement its extensive agenda.

Thank you very much, and I am happy to answer any questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

[The statement of Mr. Shuster follows:]

Statement of U.S. Rep. Bill Shuster
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
February 4, 2015
Testimony before the Committee on House Administration
Hearing on "Committee Funding for the 114th Congress"

Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee on House Administration in support of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's budget request for fiscal year 2016.

Our goal is to build upon the successes of what was a productive 113th Congress.

Over the last two years, our committee's efforts focused on instituting common sense reforms of federal programs, cutting red tape, promoting the safe and efficient movement of goods and people, encouraging greater fiscal responsibility, increasing transparency in the federal government, and reducing regulatory burdens.

The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee logged over 120 meeting days, reported over 40 bills, saw nearly 60 bills pass through the House, and was responsible for almost 40 public laws and concurrent resolutions. Among our initiatives that became law were the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act, the Howard Coble Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act, legislation to preserve the solvency of the Highway Trust Fund, a bill to reduce regulatory burdens in general aviation manufacturing, and the Water Resources Reform and Development Act – the first WRDA to become law in 7 years, and the most reform-focused bill of its kind in decades.

Our Members also conducted vigorous oversight of the programs and agencies within our jurisdiction, and worked to ensure those agencies did not exceed their statutory authorities. In addition to official hearings and roundtables, we sent 32 oversight letters to the Government Accountability Office and Inspectors General, and produced two in-depth infrastructure reports by special panels.

Our efforts also saved taxpayer dollars. For example, the Committee cut over \$2 billion dollars in leased federal office space.

I'm proud that we were able to accomplish a number of our top priorities of the last two years.

However, we have a much more extensive legislative agenda in the 114th Congress, including:

- A long-term surface transportation reauthorization that provides certainty for our states and other non-federal partners to undertake large highway, bridge, and transit projects;

reforms programs and streamlines U.S. DOT operations; gets Washington out of the way of innovation; enhances transparency and accountability; and provides greater value for the taxpayer;

- A Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization that lays the groundwork for the future of our aviation system, maintains America's leadership in this vital industry, increases efficiency and reliability of the system, reduces delays for passengers, and speeds up deployment of new technologies;
- A bill to reform U.S. passenger rail transportation, bring greater transparency and accountability to Amtrak's operations, cuts red tape, and help improve some of the Nation's most critical, century-old rail infrastructure;
- Legislation that builds upon emergency management and FEMA reforms we implemented last Congress after Superstorm Sandy;
- A General Services Administration reform bill that continues to save significant taxpayer dollars, reduce waste, and shrink the federal government's footprint;
- Any necessary measure ensuring that the EPA and Corps of Engineers cannot inappropriately broaden the scope of the Clean Water Act and upset the effective, long-standing partnership between the federal government and the states in protecting water quality;
- A measure to reauthorize federal pipeline safety programs;
- The next WRDA and Coast Guard bills.

In addition to our legislative agenda, the Committee will continue to implement its recently approved oversight plan to ensure laws passed in the last Congress, and other previous laws, are being carried out by the federal agencies as Congress intended.

In the last Congress, when the Committee was able to conduct its business outside of the Capital Beltway, through events such as field hearings, roundtables, and site visits to key infrastructure projects and facilities, it proved to be tremendously valuable to our Members and our communities. Unfortunately, our budget limited such opportunities.

In the 114th Congress, we are planning to take Congress to the People more often. Frequently engaging with state and local officials, stakeholders, and constituents in their own communities provides greater transparency, lets them gain a much better understanding of the work we do on their behalf, and allows for a greater exchange of ideas and input into the legislative process. This also allows our Members to more fully understand the practical, and sometimes

unpredictable, effects Washington's policies can have on the real world. And it simply leads to better legislation.

The Committee remains committed to ensuring that every tax dollar goes to good use, both at the agencies we oversee, and within our own offices. Understanding that we are in an era of constrained budgets, Ranking Member DeFazio and I have prepared a Committee funding request that we believe allows us to implement the Committee's extensive agenda, provide greater opportunities to take the Committee's work beyond the Beltway, and maintain an expert staff dedicated to serving Committee Members, the House, and the country.

Thank you for providing me an opportunity to present the Committee's budget. I would be happy to answer any questions.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair now recognizes the ranking member, Mr. DeFazio.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. PETER A. DEFAZIO, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OREGON

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you, Madam Chair. I am pleased to be testifying before a fellow member of the committee. It was suggested in the anteroom that if I were succinct we might do better in our request, so I will be very succinct. The chairman has laid out the agenda. It is incredibly ambitious. But these are all things that are essential, and some have to get done and all should get done.

I agree with the chairman in that this committee is best served when it gets out to locales so we can better understand, particularly as relates to the surface bill or some of the other bills before us, the needs more directly and have Americans feel that they have had more of a say in the process. So we have put forward a budget that would allow for what we expect to be a very, very robust travel schedule around the country for listening sessions and/or more formal hearings around the country, and I would hope the committee would look favorably upon us with that.

And I want to say that a lot of people assume because I am from the west coast that I was a Seahawks fan and I wouldn't have been really happy with that interception, but I just want the gentleman to know that his constituent—he is not listening—but anyway his constituent who made the interception was great because I am a Patriots fan. That was a great catch, and he saved their butt.

Anyway, thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, gentlemen.

[The statement of Mr. DeFazio follows:]

**THE HONORABLE PETER A. DEFAZIO
RANKING MEMBER
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
FEBRUARY 4, 2015**

Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Brady, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to join Chairman Shuster in presenting the budget request of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for the 114th Congress.

Although I have served on the Transportation Committee since first being elected to the House 28 years ago, the role of Ranking Member of the T&I Committee is new to me. I am eager to lead my fellow Democratic Members as the Committee embarks on what looks to be a very busy and, I hope, very productive Congress.

Chairman Miller, as you know from your many years of service on the T&I Committee, the Committee has historically stood for true bipartisan cooperation, with both sides realizing the importance of investing in our nation's roads, rail, aviation, waterways and other vital infrastructure. The overwhelming bipartisan support for the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) in the 113th Congress illustrates what we can achieve when we work together. In the 114th Congress, I hope the Committee will build upon that success.

As Chairman Shuster noted, we have a full legislative agenda for the next two years. First and foremost, Congress must enact a long-term surface transportation bill and an FAA reauthorization bill. In addition, the Committee intends to act on Amtrak/passenger rail reauthorization, Coast Guard authorization, legislation to reform FEMA and pipeline safety legislation, not to mention moving forward with another WRDA bill.

For us to do our jobs for the American people, we request that you fund the T&I Committee at an appropriate level. The T&I request of \$8,360,900.00 per year for the 114th Congress represents only a 1.2 percent increase from our 2014 actual funding level. The only budget category that sees any measurable increase is the Committee's travel budget. The increase will allow us to conduct numerous listening sessions, roundtables, field hearings, and site visits outside of Washington DC. Getting the input of many stakeholders from around the country is vital as we tackle the list of multi-year authorization bills previously mentioned.

As in the past, the committee will continue to provide two-thirds of the personnel budget to the Majority, and one-third to the Minority. The non-personnel budget, like the travel budget, will continue to be shared fairly between Majority and Minority.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee on House Administration today. I am happy to answer any questions you might have of us.

The CHAIRMAN. Obviously our Committee has hearings all day today and then next week as well as we look into all the chairmen and ranking members about their respective committees and what they are looking for; and so we have a finite pie of funds to go around. We are appreciative of the fact that actually what you are looking at, what you have asked us for this year is very minimal. Just about a 1 percent increase.

We were also looking at, I asked my staff to look at where you have been historically, and I just thought that was interesting, that your request you are asking for here is almost a million dollars under what it was in 2012, indicative of how the cuts have hit the various committees over the last couple of cycles.

So we are appreciative of the fact that you are almost at level funding. On the other hand, I think in light of the fact that we have had so many significant cuts—and believe me, I don't know that you have any extra money to go around for the committees—but if we were able to squeeze a little bit more than what you are asking for here even, what would you think, as you mentioned about all the various field hearings? I mean, obviously you need to go out and take a look at bridges and roads.

Mr. SHUSTER. Right.

The CHAIRMAN. I mean, if there is a committee that needs to get out and actually look at things it certainly is T&I, I think. But I don't know if you would look at additional staff or field hearings or do you any idea of technology?

Mr. SHUSTER. Sure. You took the words right out of my mouth. Getting out into America and getting out into other places in the world to see what is going on. I think many committees can benefit by that, but our committee benefits significantly, to be able to go to the Port of Los Angeles and Long Beach and see what is happening there, go to Chicago and see the rail tie-up that is in Chicago.

We just went on a trip to Panama to see the canal, to see an unbelievable infrastructure project going on that is going to impact the United States significantly. Getting Members out to see that, number one. And also getting out there to be able to talk to those communities so they can give us firsthand what they believe the positive impact or the negative impact of something we do or don't do.

So that would be the focus of what we did. I don't believe we need to add any staff, but to use those dollars to educate Members and educate the population, the people of America.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. DeFazio.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Well, Madam Chair, there are a large number of new members on your side of the aisle on the committee, and they certainly showed a lot of interest in our first trip to Panama. And I expect that as they want to become more educated members of the T&I committee that there will be a lot of ongoing interest during the year by members. And so it would both allow us to include more members in these trips and also to set up more trips and hearings if we did have some slight increment. As you know, despite the fact that fuel is down 50 percent, the airlines, when we are using commercial, are still doing a fuel surcharge.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, I am well aware of that.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Ranking Member, Mr. Brady.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Madam Chair. It looks like Mr. Shuster, as always, has the committee pretty much wired up, with members here.

But I need to tell Mr. Harper, my cousin, Tom Brady, the MVP of the Super Bowl, did give your guy Mr. Butler the truck, and he gave him the truck with all taxes paid, all insurance paid, and all free of charge.

Mr. HARPER. And a full tank of gas.

Mr. BRADY. Pardon me? And a full tank of gas. So he will be riding around Mississippi in a nice red truck.

No, I have no other questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Harper, no questions?

Mr. Davis.

Mr. DAVIS. I was actually going to not have any questions until the chairman brought up "My Cousin Vinny." So I have a couple of questions for the two yutes that are sitting at the table.

Mr. Chairman, I know that you have mentioned the possibility of field hearings, and I want to get your commitment today that every field hearing will be in the State of Illinois.

Mr. SHUSTER. We can work on that.

Mr. DAVIS. Okay, perfect. That is the only question.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Comstock.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. And all the other ones that you don't have in Illinois, in Virginia.

Mr. SHUSTER. This is kind of Virginia, isn't it?

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Yeah. We are very easy to get to. But, no, thank you, and thank you for your leadership and joining the committee.

Mr. SHUSTER. Thank you.

I have one more request outside the committee's scope of jurisdiction.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes?

Mr. SHUSTER. I will make the same request that I made here 2 years ago. Can we please paint on the walls of the Rayburn Building the streets that are outside, Independence, C Street, because I have been around this place for 40 years and I still get lost in the Rayburn Building because there is no point of reference. And if I could walk out and see Independence, okay, I know which side of the building I am on. So I will plead for you. I might even consider, if you would approve it, I might pay for it myself because it would save me a lot of heartache.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, I always thought it was just the fellows from Pennsylvania that had a hard time in Rayburn, but maybe that is not quite right.

Mr. SHUSTER. Well, that could be true.

And the second request is that, since I have been in Rayburn now for—I was there last year—we have got these massive safes in Rayburn, that we don't use them for anything. So a way for us to make money would be to cut off those massive steel doors and sell them for scrap metal. I am sure Mr. Brady gets a great deal in Philadelphia.

So if you would consider those two requests you would make me very happy.

Mr. BRADY. Are you sure they are empty?

Mr. SHUSTER. Mine aren't empty. I have got some sweatshirts and some gym clothes in there.

Mr. DAVIS. That is where you are supposed to keep your walking-around money, in there.

Mr. SHUSTER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. We are going to close this segment of the hearing, but I thank you, gentlemen, for your insight; and we certainly do take our job seriously and really will be looking at it all. Thanks so much for coming. We appreciate it. Thank you.

Good afternoon. The Committee now welcomes Chairman Chabot and Ranking Member Velázquez of the Committee on Small Business. Again, I would ask the official reporter to please enter a page break into the hearing record, we have a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. Established to protect and assist small businesses, the committee has jurisdiction over matters related to small business financial aid, regulatory flexibility, and paperwork reduction. The committee also has legislative and oversight responsibilities related to the Small Business Administration and its program.

We certainly welcome you both, the chairman and the ranking member; and the Chair now recognizes the chairman of Small Business, Mr. Chabot.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. STEVE CHABOT, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OHIO**

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much, Chairwoman Miller and Ranking Member Brady and members of the committee, for the opportunity to discuss the 2015 budget request of the Committee on Small Business.

I am accompanied by Ranking Member Nydia Velázquez. We have had occasion to work together on this committee in the past. For 2 years I was her ranking member and she was chair of the committee and we had a very good working relationship during those 2 years. And I am sure that we are going to have an excellent working relationship these upcoming 2 years. Our staffs know each other reasonably well and get along as well. So we are looking for good things this term.

In 1941, Congress created the first House Select Committee on Small Business to protect and assist small firms. In 1975, it became a permanent full committee because of the growing importance of small businesses. Today, the majority of America's jobs are created by small businesses across this country and they are essential to economic growth, and the committee's mission to help entrepreneurs is more important than ever.

Although the committee's legislative jurisdiction is somewhat narrow, it includes the Small Business Administration's loans, entrepreneur and economic development programs that our Nation's innovators count on to help them create jobs and grow our committee. In addition, our legislative jurisdiction includes federal contracting programs that help small businesses to compete for business with the Federal Government, expand our industrial base, and save taxpayer dollars.

Conversely, the committee's oversight jurisdiction is vast, encompassing every issue that touches small businesses. Our committee

helps small businesses in every community and congressional district across this country. A commitment to fund this committee is a commitment for us to help small businesses nationwide.

Traditionally, the committee has only full committee staff and no subcommittee staff, so our staff has been rather small in size. For 2014, the committee was authorized \$3,022,614. In 2014, our committee of 24 Members of Congress received the second-lowest authorization of any of the committees.

The Small Business Committee has a proud tradition of accomplishment. In the last Congress the committee held 80 hearings, including 34 full committee hearings and 46 subcommittee hearings and 6 field hearings. We provided aggressive oversight of the administration across 17 agencies.

Legislatively, the committee had great success. The committee reported eight measures, including six that encompassed significant federal contracting reforms. Parts of four of those bills were signed into law as part of the fiscal year 2015 National Defense Authorization Act, the NDAA.

Importantly, House Armed Services Committee Chairman Thornberry has said that he plans to undertake a significant revision in the federal contracting law this year. If our committee is to actively participate in this reform, which it should, it will require additional resources. In the past, these efforts have involved travel and other financial commitments by the committee.

The committee also developed a number of communications tools, legislative and regulatory tracking charts, and other helpful resources for members and small business owners. In addition, the committee has a history of giving its freshmen members a unique chance to participate fully in its leadership hearings and other activities. We intend to build on that success while continuing our committee's record of bipartisan cooperation to enact policies to help our Nation's small businesses.

The committee has traditionally provided one-third of its resources to the minority, over which they have full control. We are grateful to the ranking member for her willingness to work collegially to meet our responsibilities to small businesses.

Today, we are here to discuss the committee's request for 2015, as you know. Our committee has a tradition of excelling on a lean budget. We believe federal spending must be reduced and we have always done more with less. But to carry out our mission, which is to help small businesses, who are after all our Nation's job creators, we have much work to do.

The bulk of our funding is obligated for personnel. Currently, we have 29 staff members, 20 majority and 9 minority, who are running the committee and meeting our legislation and oversight responsibilities. As both policy and administrative staff have been juggling numerous issues and duties, it would be helpful to have several more people.

The committee's computers are outdated and the Web site needs to be redesigned. We have not acted on these items previously so that we did not begin 2015 as overextended.

The modest increase we have requested in our resolution would help to address these needs. Because most of the committee's budget is spent on personnel, we do not have a great deal of nonsalary

spending to reduce. Communications equipment, supplies, and reference materials provide the tools that we use for our legislative and oversight work. Cuts in those areas would also compromise our ability to produce results.

The budget that we have submitted requests a modest 3.5 percent increase. A level-funded budget would not allow us to stay current given our staffing requirements and outdated equipment.

We appreciate the very difficult process that is before the House Administration Committee, and we thank you for the opportunity to discuss our budget. And I would be pleased to answer any questions, I guess, after hearing from the ranking member.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.
[The statement of Mr. Chabot follows:]

**Statement of
The Honorable Steve Chabot
Chairman
Committee on Small Business
Hearing on Committee Funding
Committee on House Administration
Washington, DC
February 4, 2015**

Thank you, Chairwoman Miller, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee, for the opportunity to discuss the 2015 budget request of the Committee on Small Business.

In 1941, Congress created the first House Select Committee on Small Business to protect and assist small firms. In 1975, it became a permanent full committee because of the growing importance of small businesses. Today, the majority of America's jobs are created by small businesses across America. They are essential to economic growth, and the Committee's mission to help entrepreneurs is more important than ever.

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Conversely, the Committee's oversight jurisdiction is vast, encompassing every issue that touches small businesses. Our committee helps small businesses in every community and Congressional district across America. A commitment to fund this committee is a commitment for us to help small businesses.

Traditionally, the Committee has had only full Committee staff, and no subcommittee staff, so our staff has been smaller in size. For 2014, the Committee was authorized \$3,022,614. In 2014, our Committee of 24 Members of Congress received the second lowest authorization of any of the 20 House committees.

The Small Business Committee has a proud tradition of accomplishment. In the last Congress, the Committee held 80 hearings, including 34 full committee hearings, 46 subcommittee hearings and 6 field hearings. We provided aggressive oversight of the Administration across 17 agencies. Legislatively, the Committee had great success. The Committee reported 8 measures, including 6 that encompassed significant federal contracting reforms. Parts of four of those bills were signed into law as part of the Fiscal Year 2015 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

Importantly, House Armed Services Committee Chairman Thornberry has said that he plans to undertake a significant revision in the federal contacting law this year. If our Committee is to actively participate in this reform, which it should, it will require additional resources. In the past, these efforts have involved travel and other financial commitments by the Committee.

The Committee also developed a number of communications tools, legislative and regulatory tracking charts and other helpful resources for Members and small business owners. In addition, the Committee has a history of giving its freshmen Members a unique chance to participate fully in its leadership, hearings and other activities.

We intend to build on this success, while continuing our Committee's record of bipartisan cooperation to enact policies to help our nation's small businesses. The Committee has traditionally provided one third of its resources to the minority, over which they have full control. We are grateful to the Ranking Member for her willingness to work collegially to meet our responsibilities to small businesses.

Today, we are here to discuss the Committee's request for 2015. Our Committee has a tradition of excelling on a lean budget. We believe federal spending must be reduced, and we have always done more with less. But to carry out our mission -- to help small businesses, our nation's job creators and economic growth in every Member's district across the country -- we have more work to do.

The bulk of our funding is obligated for personnel. Currently, we have 29 staff members (20 majority; 9 minority) who are running the Committee and meeting our legislative and oversight responsibilities. As both policy and administrative staff have been juggling numerous issues and duties, it would be helpful to have several more people. The Committee's computers are outdated and the website needs to be redesigned. We have not acted on these items previously so that we did not begin 2015 as overextended. The modest increase we have requested in our resolution would help to address these needs.

Because most of the Committee's budget is spent on personnel, we do not have a great deal of non-salary spending to reduce. Communications, equipment, supplies and reference materials provide the tools that we use for our legislative and oversight work. Cuts in these areas would also compromise our ability to produce results. The budget that we have submitted requests a modest 3.5% increase. A level funded budget would not allow us to stay current, given our staffing requirements and outdated equipment.

We appreciate the very difficult process that is before the House Administration Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to discuss our budget. I would be pleased to answer any questions.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair now recognizes the ranking member, Ms. Velázquez.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Thank you, Chairwoman Miller and Ranking Member Brady and all the members of the committee. I really appreciate the opportunity to discuss the budget submission for the Small Business Committee in the 114th Congress.

As I come before you this afternoon, let me echo what I have said time and again in this forum: Small businesses are the backbone of the American economy. And while the economy continues to recover, our work is still cut out for us.

The Committee on Small Business not only has jurisdiction over the Small Business Administration, but we are often relied upon by our Nation's small businesses to look out for their best interests. From health care to taxes, energy to capital access, contracting to technology, agriculture to trade, these are just a few of the issues that Chairman Chabot and I, along with our members, have to delve into.

I am committed to working with Chairman Chabot on these issues and more. However, the committee needs to be funded at such a level where it allows us do our work with sufficient resources and without having to sacrifice our staff.

Historically, this committee has been underfunded, with the effects of sequestration compounding the situation. Nevertheless, the minority continues to keep operational expenses at a minimum, all the while being understaffed. The slots are there, but the funds simply are not. Our 2014 allocation was spent down to 1 percent. A cut to our funding will be detrimental.

It goes without saying that Chairman Chabot and I, along with our committee members, plan to continue working together in a bipartisan manner to fulfill our jurisdictional responsibility. We know the task at hand that you have in reviewing the numbers, but we ask that you do so with the utmost consideration. The very modest 3.5 percent increase that the chairman is requesting will go a long way in helping the committee upgrade computer equipment, not to mention increase our media presence by redesigning our outdated Web site.

Chairwoman Miller, we are not asking for much. With the importance of technology on a global level, upgrading our IT infrastructure is a necessity.

Thank you. And I appreciate your time and will be happy to answer any questions I may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

[The statement of Ms. Velázquez follows:]

STEVE CHABOT, OHIO
CHAIRMAN

NYDIA M. VELAZQUEZ, NEW YORK
RANKING MEMBER

Congress of the United States
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Small Business
2501 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6515

Statement of Ranking Member Nydia M. Velázquez
Committee on House Administration Full Committee Hearing:
"Committee Funding for the 114th Congress"
February 4, 2015

Thank you, Chairman Miller and Ranking Member Brady. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the budget submission for the Small Business Committee in the 114th Congress.

As I come before you this afternoon, let me echo what I've said time and again in this forum --- small businesses are the backbone of the American economy --- and while that economy continues to recover, our work is still cut out for us.

The Committee on Small Business not only has jurisdiction over the Small Business Administration, but we are often relied upon by our nation's small businesses to look out for their best interest.

From health care to taxes, energy to capital access, contracting to technology, agriculture to trade -- these are just a few of the issues that Chairman Chabot and I, along with our members, have to delve into.

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It goes without saying that Chairman Chabot and I, along with our committee members plan to continue working together in a bipartisan manner to fulfill our jurisdictional responsibilities. We know the task at hand that you have in reviewing the numbers but we ask that you do so with the utmost consideration.

The very modest, 3.5% increase Chairman Chabot is requesting would go a long way in helping the committee upgrade computer equipment, not to mention increase our media presence by re-designing our outdated website. Chairman Miller we are not asking for much, with the importance of technology on a global level, upgrading our IT infrastructure is a necessity.

Thank you Madam Chairman. I appreciate your time and would be happy to answer any questions that you or the committee may have.

The CHAIRMAN. First of all, I do want to say I appreciate the increase in funding that you are seeking here, which is small, and I think particularly in light of the fact that your committee has had certainly its fair share of cuts in the last couple of cycles. I just want you to know that our Committee is well aware of that, very cognizant of that. I also want to just say that both of your committee staff, short as your staff is, on both the R and the D side, were very, very helpful in getting the information from your committee to ours as we contemplate what we are going to be doing here.

I also just wanted to, not so much maybe ask a question, or a statement, or whatever to the chairman, but you mentioned about equipment. I think when you do have such a small staff as you do, equipment can be such a huge force multiplier. So making sure that you have equipment that is up to date, it is really a tool that people do need. So as you mentioned here, that is going to be a part of what you are looking for as you look for the increase. So we appreciate that.

I really don't have any other questions, and I would ask my ranking member if he would like to——

Mr. BRADY. No questions.

The CHAIRMAN. No questions?

Mr. Harper.

Mr. HARPER. No questions.

The CHAIRMAN. No questions?

Mrs. Comstock.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. No questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. Pretty easy. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. That will mean that you all collectively are supporting the 3.5 percent?

The CHAIRMAN. Our Committee is having hearings all day today and a full day next week where we are hearing from every chairman and every ranking member, and we just have a finite pie of funds.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. If I may, Chairwoman?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes?

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Even in cases when natural disaster strikes, small businesses are put in a peril. And our committee and the Small Business Administration through the disaster program provides the loans that are important for those small businesses to be able to get back on track.

We do a lot of workshops in our district. Other Members ask us to help them put together workshops. So it is not only to serve small businesses, but also any Member, Democrat or Republican, that will ask us to put together workshops to provide guidance as to how can they learn the type of capital that is there.

As you know, during the crisis, the economic crisis, small businesses were the most impacted because they were the ones having trouble accessing capital.

The CHAIRMAN. Right.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. The Small Business Committee was at the forefront of that, with the budget, it is the lowest budget of any committee in the Congress.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate that.
Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHABOT. If I could add briefly to that just for a moment. We actually are authorized to have 42 staff slots and we only have 29. That is obviously for funding purposes. You already mentioned the equipment and so you are already certainly aware of that. That is one of the things we would do with additional dollars.

And finally, something I wanted to mention, we have a lot of freshmen on our committee, and one of things we have done over the years is to have field hearings out there to really know what is happening in those districts with small businesses. And a lot of these folks just by coincidence are quite far this year, California, American Samoa, and other places. And so we always reach out and try to do everything we can for our freshmen. And so that would be one of the expenses that we would use any additional dollars for.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. We appreciate both of your attendance, and we certainly will give it every serious consideration. We appreciate your presentations. Thank you.

The Committee now welcomes Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Scott of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Again, I ask the official reporter to please enter a page break into the hearing record, we begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee on Education and the Workforce has jurisdiction over our Nation's schools and workplaces. The committee oversees programs that affect hundreds of millions of Americans, from school teachers, to small business owners, to students and retirees.

We want to welcome Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Scott for being here today. We appreciate you coming. Before I ask you for your testimony, let me just say that we are very appreciative of both of the staffs, of the Republican and Democrat staff members on your committee, for giving our Committee all the information that we needed to be prepared to hear your testimony here today. We appreciate that very much.

At this time, the chairman recognizes Chairman Kline.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. JOHN KLINE, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MINNESOTA**

Mr. KLINE. Thank you, Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Brady, and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear with my colleague Ranking Member Bobby Scott to testify about our committee budget request for the 114th Congress. The Education and the Workforce Committee is once again presenting a responsible budget proposal that will allow to us to fulfill our legislative and oversight responsibilities and continue to serve as good stewards of taxpayer dollars. For 2015 and 2016, we request that our funding levels remain at the current 2014 level.

No one questions the fiscal challenges our country faces, and we recognize we must all do our part. Our prudent use of taxpayer resources these last few years demonstrates our commitment to ensuring each dollar we are allocated is spent efficiently and effectively. However, I urge the committee to consider the very real

challenges confronting our Nation's schools and workplaces. The American people have entrusted us with the responsibility to help address these challenges and to do so will require an appropriate amount of resources.

The Education and the Workforce Committee must advance a number of legislative priorities this Congress, including replacing No Child Left Behind, reauthorizing the Higher Education Act, reforming federal child nutrition programs, strengthening our juvenile justice system, and modernizing the multiemployer pension system.

There are a number of urgent opportunities to improve policies affecting students and working families. However, it is important to note that many of these priorities stem from laws that have or will expire in the very near future. We cannot afford to kick the can down the road any longer.

In addition to our legislative duties, the committee will continue to conduct oversight of the executive branch. We will work to ensure the policies and programs enforced by the Departments of Education, Labor, Agriculture, and Health and Human Services, not to mention the various independent agencies under our jurisdiction, are administered responsibly and in line with congressional intent.

As we consider these legislative and oversight issues, we plan to host field hearings and site visits. Over the years, we have convened field hearings to discuss with employers and workers in Indiana the healthcare challenges they are grappling with, to hear from education leaders in New York and Pennsylvania about the innovative efforts underway to better serve students, and to listen to men and women in Arizona and Nevada describe ways to improve career and technical training.

No matter how well intentioned we might be, it is all too easy to make decisions in the abstract. It is vital to see and hear first-hand about the challenges our schools and workplaces are facing, allowing us to make good decisions grounded in reality.

It is also important that we have sufficient staff with the knowledge and expertise to navigate very complicated policies. In previous years, we have successfully kept our staffing levels lean. As we prepare to move forward with a robust agenda, it is clear we need additional staff to effectively conduct committee business. We are offsetting these necessary expenses with spending cuts and other areas of our budget, allowing us to keep funding needs flat.

We will continue to do what is necessary to operate within our means and conduct the work the American people sent us here to do. We respectfully ask the committee to take these factors into account as you consider our request to keep our budget at its 2014 funding level.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I appreciate your time. I would be happy to answer questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Chairman Kline.

[The statement of Mr. Kline follows:]

**Testimony of Rep. John Kline (R-MN)
Chairman, House Committee on Education and the Workforce
Committee on House Administration Hearing on the “Committee
Budget Request for the 114th Congress”
February 4, 2015**

Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Brady, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear with my colleague Ranking Member Bobby Scott to testify about our committee budget request for the 114th Congress.

The Education and the Workforce Committee is once again presenting a responsible budget proposal that will allow us to fulfill our legislative and oversight responsibilities and continue to serve as good stewards of taxpayer dollars. For 2015 and 2016, we request that our funding levels remain at the current 2014 level.

No one questions the fiscal challenges our country faces, and we recognize we must all do our part. Our prudent use of taxpayer resources

these last few years demonstrates our commitment to ensuring each dollar we are allocated is spent efficiently and effectively.

However, I urge the committee to consider the very real challenges confronting our nation's schools and workplaces. The American people have entrusted us with a responsibility to help address these challenges, and to do so will require an appropriate amount of resources.

The Education and the Workforce Committee must advance a number of legislative priorities this Congress, including replacing *No Child Left Behind*, reauthorizing the *Higher Education Act*, reforming federal child nutrition programs, strengthening our juvenile justice system, and modernizing the multiemployer pension system.

There are a number of urgent opportunities to improve policies affecting students and working families; however, it is important to note that many of these priorities stem from laws that have or will expire in the very near future. We cannot afford to kick the can down the road any

longer.

In addition to our legislative duties, the committee will continue to conduct oversight of the executive branch. We will work to ensure the policies and programs enforced by the Departments of Education, Labor, Agriculture, and Health and Human Services – not to mention the various independent agencies under our jurisdiction – are administered responsibly and in line with congressional intent.

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No matter how well intentioned we might be, it's all too easy to make decisions in the abstract. It is vital to see and hear first-hand about the challenges our schools and workplaces are facing, allowing us to make good decisions grounded in reality.

It is also important that we have sufficient staff with the knowledge and expertise to navigate very complicated policies. In previous years we have successfully kept our staffing levels lean. As we prepare to move forward with a robust agenda, it is clear we need additional staff to effectively conduct committee business.

We are offsetting these necessary expenses with spending cuts in other areas of our budget, allowing us to keep our funding needs flat. Rest assured, we will continue to do what's necessary to operate within our means and conduct the work the American people sent us here to do.

We respectfully ask the committee to take these factors into account as you consider our request to keep our budget at its 2014 funding level. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I appreciate your time and would be happy to answer any questions.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair now recognizes the ranking member, Mr. Scott.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF VIRGINIA

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Brady, and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee with Chairman Kline to discuss the budget of the Committee on Education and the Workforce. I appreciate Chairman Kline's leadership and cooperation on the budget. I also appreciate the chairman's commitment to continuing the committee's custom of allocating one-third of the committee budget to the minority, providing with us with autonomy over the reasonable use of these resources.

I support the chairman's request to maintain funding for the committee at the current 2014 levels. I believe this represents a responsible approach that balances our commitment to the taxpayers with our obligation to do the important work within the committee's jurisdiction.

We take our work very seriously and we are committed to doing our job with a high level of professionalism, and to do that we must be able to attract, train, and retain talented staff who are knowledgeable and capable of delving into the wide array of complex issues facing this committee. To this end, I place a high priority on ensuring that the staff is diverse, highly educated, and credentialed.

Our committee has a robust agenda and broad jurisdiction. We work on issues that have a profound effect on the quality of life for the American people throughout their lives—from child nutrition programs for low-income women and children, to early learning programs, to K–12 and postsecondary education programs. We also have jurisdiction for job training programs for displaced workers and programs and services for older Americans, including retirement security. Our work is critically important, and we are committed to doing everything we can to using research and evidence to generate sound national policy.

This Congress we will have to deal with a number of important reauthorizations, including both the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Higher Education Act. Having both of these authorizations at the same time is a tall order. This is in addition to the work we need to do to provide workers with a safe workplace, fair wages, a voice in the workplace, and a secure retirement.

As Chairman Kline mentioned, we have important work to do in child nutrition programs, juvenile justice programs, as well as our comprehensive oversight responsibilities. We are committed to carrying out this work with the resources provided to us by asking our staff to take on more responsibilities and to be efficient in doing so. I join the chairman in asking the Committee to support our request and to provide the Committee on Education and the Workforce with sufficient funding to do the quality and range of work the American people deserve.

Thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to testify, and I would be happy to answer questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, gentlemen.
[The statement of Mr. Scott follows:]

**Statement of Rep. Robert C. Scott (D-VA)
Ranking Member, House Committee on Education and the Workforce
Committee on House Administration Hearing on the
“Committee Budget Request for the 114th Congress”
February 4, 2015**

Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Brady and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee with Chairman Kline to discuss the budget of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

I appreciate Chairman Kline’s leadership and cooperation on this budget. I also appreciate the Chairman’s commitment to continuing the Committee’s custom of allocating one-third of the

budget to the Minority, and providing us with autonomy over the use of those resources.

I support the Chairman's request to maintain funding at the current 2014 levels. I believe this represents a responsible approach that balances our commitment to the taxpayers and with our obligation to do the important work within our Committee's jurisdiction.

We take our work very seriously and we are committed to doing our job with a high level of professionalism. To do this, we must be able to attract, train, and retain talented staff who are

capable of providing effective assistance on a wide array of issues. We are determined to staff our Committee with highly educated and credentialed individuals who can do the kind of work that the American taxpayers deserve.

Our Committee has a robust agenda and broad jurisdiction. We work on issues that have a profound effect on the quality of life for the American people throughout their lives – from childcare, through their education (kindergarten through post graduate school), through their time in the workforce and into their retirement. Our work is

critically important and we are committed to doing everything we can to make our policies the best that they can be.

This Congress we will have to deal with a number of important reauthorizations, including both the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Higher Education Act. Having both of these reauthorizations at the same time is a tall order.

This is in addition to the work we do to provide workers with safe workplaces, fair wages, a voice in the workplace and a secure retirement. We also

have important work to do on child nutrition programs, juvenile justice programs, as well as our comprehensive oversight responsibilities.

I urge the Committee to support our request and provide the Committee on Education and the Workforce with sufficient funding to do the kind of work the American people deserve.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. First of all, let me just say we are very appreciative of the fact that—I have got my little spreadsheet here on the various requests—that you actually are seeking level funding, particularly in light of the fact that you have had, along with about all the committees, really some significant cuts in the last couple of cycles.

In fact, I just want to put on the record here that you are looking at about \$2 million more actually that you had in 2011 and 2012 than what you are looking for today. So there have been significant cuts. Your staff ceiling is 83 and you are averaging 60. So I don't know what percentage that is, but it is significant.

I did appreciate what you were talking about, Chairman, about the various pieces of legislation that you are going to be undertaking, the No Child Left Behind and the Higher Ed reauthorization, et cetera.

If you had—and I am not sure that we have any additional funds, but once we get all of this information from the various committees we are going to sort of look at our finite pie and see where we are—if we were able to actually give you a bit of an increase, is there anything in particular—I mean, I was just mentioning the low staff—what would be a priority for some additional resources more than what you have asked for? Would it be staff or upgrades the equipment technology or field hearings? What is your thought there?

Mr. KLINE. Thank you, Madam Chair. The first priority would be to make sure we have sufficient staffing. We have already programmed this into the budget request, so we have given you the addition on the majority side of about four staff, and I think the minority side as well. That is sort of the bare minimum. We think that will do it, but if there were more money, then we would staff. We still plan to have some field hearings, I think that is a good way to gather information, but the first priority is staffing.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate that.

Mr. Scott.

Mr. SCOTT. I would agree that we had several vacancies and we have hired very qualified staff. And if we want the best they have to be paid? And the reason there are so many vacancies I think is because you can't get very highly qualified staff with the salary levels that would be necessary if you filled all the vacancies.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate that.

My ranking member. Okay.

Mr. Harper.

Mr. HARPER. No questions.

The CHAIRMAN. No questions?

Mrs. Comstock.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. No questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Nothing? Okay.

Well, we appreciate both of your testimonies. Is there anything else you want us to know about, Anything you didn't cover.

Mr. KLINE. No, thank you, Madam Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. We appreciate it very much. Thanks, and we will get back to you. Thank you.

The Committee now welcomes Chairman Sessions and Ranking Member Slaughter of the Committee on Rules. Again, to the official

reporter, please enter a page break into the hearing record, we have a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee on Rules is amongst the oldest standing committees in the House. The Committee on Rules is charged with presenting to the House the pieces of legislation for its consideration. The committee's priority is to maintain this high standard by establishing the parameters of floor consideration for the pieces of legislation we collectively consider and deliberate upon.

I want to welcome both the chairman and the ranking member, and as I recognize the chairman of the Rules Committee, Mr. Sessions, I just want to tell you, I love Texas, absolutely love Texas. All right? I am all about Texas.

With that, Mr. Chairman.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. PETE SESSIONS, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS**

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Brady and committee, thank you very much. By the way, I am trying to show I am from Texas. There is one thing about it, you never have to ask a person if they are from Texas or not, because they will tell you where they are from. In fact, we are delighted as Texans to be not only in the United States Congress, we treat our Nation as more important than any one given State. But we do happen to believe that all of us together make the United States even stronger, and Texas tries to do its part.

Madam Chairman, Ranking Member Brady, thank you for allowing not only Louise and I to be here today to plead our case, but also to come before you and let you know how much we appreciate and respect the awesome job and responsibility that each of you have. The job which you perform day to day does make a difference. The recommendations that you make, the decisions that you have, have long-term implications on this body.

Mrs. Slaughter was formerly chairman of the Rules Committee. And during her tenure, which I served on the minority, we had an opportunity to work together. We had a chance to work together and see the common problems of the committee the same way. And so you will see our testimony today, while it comes from what I would say Republicans and Democrats, it comes from two people who do understand well and believe that what the Rules Committee does as an institutional representative of the entire body is important, and thus we are here to seek your wisdom on the level of funding that we would have.

I would say to you that we have cut back enormously the services that we provided, any travel that was a part of us doing our job, and perhaps more importantly, we have cut ourself down to a bone now to where if we do have problems, whether it be getting ready for the future or presenting a bill that has to be done for all Members, we could be in trouble.

We are not there today. We have not had our computer break down, we have not had our big copier break down, we have not had these problems. But we are now in the third and fourth year of operating without the ability to make sure that we are prepared well for the future.

What I would like do is to assure this committee that Mrs. Slaughter and myself both have the institution of the Rules Committee at heart. We understand what we are trying to accomplish and why we are doing that. And we believe that we serve this body and the Members well. We believe that we serve the American people well.

But in order to do that, that means that we have got to make sure that the core functions which we are expected to provide are ready and prepared at a moment's notice. It is not unusual, as you know, that we would meet sometime early in the morning or late at night. Our job must be performed for the functions of the floor of the House of Representatives to effectively work well.

I will repeat again, we have been on flat budgets for such a long time, it is time for us to, instead of mending with tape and hard wire, we need to go in and make some changes that would prepare us for the next few years. As always happens, you wear out your equipment, and we are equipment and computer savvy, and so it means that budget cuts over the time have put a damper on us and what we believe is being ready for the future.

The committee has also invested in CORED over the last few decades. We have made ourself TO where we are more in line with GPO, because what we do, many copies have to be printed out that we cannot do in-house and the Clerk's Office. We believe that these have been wise investments.

There is a demand from not only Mrs. Slaughter's caucus, but also the Republican Conference on staying leading edge not just with technology, but the availability that we had to provide Members and the public, which we believe is very important, with the tools so that they can stay up with what we do. Lots of different platforms, lots of different ways, lots of different algorithms that are necessary by today's technology.

And we believe—I believe, and I believe Mrs. Slaughter will amplify—that we have fallen behind a bit in that service component that we have. I don't need to tell you that what we do is time sensitive, must be done correctly and properly. The American people count on it, and the law needs that done.

With that said, I think that what you will hear Mrs. Slaughter and I say is this: that we would ask for your indulgence to provide us more money for capital projects that would allow us to stay prepared for the future and ready. I think we can get by and justify, while we might not have any travel budget, in the long run that hurts our membership. In the short run, we are not prepared if we had a mechanical failure with some of our equipment.

And I want to thank each of you. We will trust your judgment. It is up to you. You have lots of requests from lots of people. You have to make the tough decisions. But we will live by what you offer us and we will do the very best with it.

And with that, I will tell you that we appreciate your time today, and we are always available to your questions. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the chairman.
[The statement of Mr. Sessions follows:]

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CHAIRMAN

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February 3, 2015

**STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN PETE SESSIONS BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
REGARDING THE COMMITTEE ON RULES' 114TH CONGRESS BUDGET
REQUEST**

Thank you Madam Chair, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee on House Administration. I am here today with my Ranking Member, the gentlelady from New York (Mrs. Slaughter) to testify on the Rules Committee's budget request for the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress.

All of us recognize the fiscal challenges that face the Nation. Outside of the Committee on Rules, the House has 20 other committees, all of which work on their individual policy areas and recommend legislation to the House. The Rules Committee stands alone as the committee charged with facilitating the consideration of other committees' work. Without the Rules Committee, it would be virtually impossible for the House to consider anything other than the least controversial bills.

Where other committees have weeks and months to prepare their work product, the Rules Committee's agenda is measured in days, hours, and minutes. Currently we are small, we are flexible, and we deliver on our objectives. We do it with the second-smallest budget of any committee in Congress.

I come before the Committee on House Administration today to tell you first and foremost that regardless of our budget, we will accomplish our mission. We will do it because we have to; this is our responsibility. I also want to emphasize, however, that if we suffer any significant funding cuts and our current funding levels are not maintained, it will have an impact on our work: we will be less flexible, we will be less transparent, and we will be diminished in the ability to meet the needs of the House of Representatives. Additionally, without sufficient funding, costs that could be borne more effectively by the Rules Committee will instead be shifted to the House and other legislative branch agencies at a much higher cost.

I urge the House Administration Committee to consider providing the Rules Committee with sufficient funding to accomplish our mission. I believe that the Rules Committee's track record is one of providing strong value for an extremely modest investment, completing its business in the most cost-effective manner possible.

THE REAL IMPACT OF CUTS TO THE RULES COMMITTEE

Insufficient resources can have very real effects for all committees. For other committees insufficient funding can result in fewer oversight hearings; smaller, less responsive committee staffs; and longer delays in filing reports. Many of those committees can tailor their workload to the available resources. In contrast, the Committee on Rules has no ability to turn down work in response to insufficient resources. When the House is considering legislation, the Rules Committee must be open for business. Preparing legislation for the floor has certain fixed costs; if the Rules Committee does not have the resources to meet the need, those costs don't disappear — they are just shifted to the House. Insufficient funding would mean longer lead times and a greater expense to the House as a whole, when the Rules Committee could produce the same product more quickly and less expensively. As I stated earlier, the Rules Committee will deliver on its responsibilities, but proper funding will give the Committee the financial resources to complete those duties in the most efficient and cost effective manner possible.

The Impact on Automation and Document Production. The Committee has invested heavily in its custom automated workflow system (called CORED) over the last decade, as well as maintained organizational discipline in technology advancement planning and execution. Our budget request includes significant funding for our technology contractors to maintain current in-place systems and while giving us the financial flexibility to make improvements when the needs arise.

In coordination with the Clerk's office and our contractor, we are working to ensure the ability for CORED to produce a valid XML file that can be merged with files provided by the Office of Legislative Counsel to produce a complete report that is ready for GPO to print and the House to post online. In the last Congress we filed 107 committee reports. Achieving "In-Committee production" of these reports would produce significant savings, better work product, fewer errors, as well as produce a standard that other Committees could follow and experience similar benefits.

The Rules Committee often has to produce documents for the House under tight deadlines, sometimes well after business hours. As a result, we are heavy users of our printing and copying equipment, as well as greatly dependent on technology resources that are specific to the Committee. To lessen the possibility of failed technology impacting our mission, we regularly update and replace our computers, copiers, and printers; as well as engage with outside

contractors to ensure that all of our equipment and automated systems are operating at peak efficiency.

Unlike other, larger committees where the effects of a device malfunction or automated system failure are confined to that committee, a breakdown at the Rules Committee is farther reaching. Because our documents need to be filed with the House on the same legislative day that we meet, the House will remain in session waiting on the Rules Committee's work product. If we have an equipment or system failure that delays the filing of our report, the House must remain in session and all of the personnel — including police officers, chamber security personnel, clerks, official reporters, and recording studio personnel — must remain on-duty, earning overtime. Even a short delay can cost the House tens of thousands of dollars in increased operating expenses.

Ultimately, insufficient funding of the Rules Committee's staffing and technology needs produces a greater, more expensive overall risk to the House for possible delays in the schedule and the costs associated with those delays.

The Impact on Transparency. Our current award-winning website averages over 80,000 hits per day, with peak days reaching nearly half a million hits. We distribute live hearings online and maintain an online video library of past hearings for the last four years. We maintain a large informational and noticing database and distribution system that provides a high level of transparency and public accountability. Insufficient funding to these areas will compromise maintenance, proper staffing, upkeep, and development of these public resources.

Because the work done by the Rules Committee is different from that of other committees, the standard committee website designed by the CAO's staff does not have the capabilities to deliver the kind of information that the public has come to expect. The Committee was told early in the website's development process that the CAO would be unable to dedicate the staff resources to customize the template. Accordingly, we *must* rely on outside contractors for the development and maintenance of our site.

If the Rules Committee does not receive adequate funding by the House Administration Committee, we will only be able to fund basic maintenance work on the website and other technology-based transparency initiatives. Without continued funding we will be unable to advance any changes needed to reduce Committee costs or make other improvements for Members or the public in the interest of transparency, such as paperless hearings.

EFFECT OF BUDGET CUTS ON THE MINORITY

During the 112th Congress the Rules Committee gave the Minority full control over its one-third of the budget. This arrangement has worked well over the course of the 112th and 113th Congresses, and it is a tradition that I intend to continue.

The effects of any cut on the Minority, however, will be immediate and substantial. The Majority's budget and staff is small; the Minority's is smaller. Any cut could mean that they would be forced to choose between layoffs, furloughs, and purchasing office supplies for basic office functionality. The Minority's small size also leads them to contract out for IT assistance; they have no dedicated IT personnel. Any substantial funding cut could prohibit them from continuing to contract for technical support and maintenance services, leaving them vulnerable to failures while the Committee is operating.

Every majority needs a fully functioning minority; it's essential for our democracy. A cut of this magnitude would do a disservice to the minority members of the Committee, and the House as a whole.

THE DECISION BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

While the Committee on Rules is a standing committee, its function is different than any other. Without the Committee on Rules operating at peak efficiency, the entire House of Representatives institution suffers.

I am asking you today to consider continuing to fund the Rules Committee at 2014 authorized levels for the 114th Congress. We have the second smallest budget of any committee. While an increase in the funding of the Rules Committee would have little effect on the House Committees overall financial picture, even a "modest" decrease in funding would have disproportionately large implications. Our Committee's responsibility is the timely delivery of business to the floor, maintaining the Speaker's commitment to transparency in the legislative process, and the fair and efficient handling of Member requests. With this in mind, I ask for no increase in funding; the Rules Committee believes that with current spending levels we can execute our organizational goals while maintaining the flexibility to arise to challenges.

Over the last 10 years, my predecessors made investments in the Committee to ensure that it can deliver on our mission. We strive for better governance with a Committee and House that delivers better work product faster and cheaper.

Madam Chair, I appreciate the willingness of the Committee to listen our concerns, and I stand ready to work with you to ensure that the Rules Committee can continue to deliver on our mission.

I stand ready to answer any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. I would like to now recognize the ranking member, Ms. Slaughter.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Thank you, Chairwoman Miller, and Ranking Member Brady, Mr. Harper, and Mrs. Comstock. I am pleased to join Chairman Sessions in presenting the Committee on Rules budget request for the 114th Congress.

I would like to begin by saying that, though our committee is often a place of heated debate on policy and politics, in the end, our work impacts the body as a whole. We are not bound by political portfolio, but by service to the institution.

Though our function has evolved since 1789, when we were first funded as a select committee and later as a standing committee, the committee continues to serve as a pillar of support for the House.

Informed by our understanding of the committee's unique role in the House, we have a long tradition of performing the administrative functions of our committee in a fair and equitable manner. This principle covers the division of everything from equipment and office supplies, the allocation of space and personnel.

I am grateful that Chairman Sessions has chosen to continue this tradition of administrative equity while he is the majority and especially that he plans to continue the policy of dedicating one-third of the committee's overall budget to the minority.

I support Chairman Sessions' request to the House Administration Committee and join him in this request to continue funding the Committee on Rules budget at current levels. I believe any cut in funding would certainly impact us fairly severely. Given that our work supports the entire House, it is essential that this committee, both majority and minority alike, are able to operate robustly.

As Chairman Sessions said, we have got some equipment that is lagging behind. We were able, in the minority, to upgrade a little bit at the end of the year because two of our senior Members had gone and gave us a little bit extra money. But we do have equipment that is in dire need of being upgraded.

And I also want to take this moment to express our appreciation to the extraordinary staffs of our committees on both sides. Nobody works harder than the staffs of the Rules Committee, and their hard work and cooperation is central to our success. They operate, as we do, under the assumption of midnight meetings, morning hearings, and everything in between.

I am proud to present this budget with Chairman Sessions, and I always want—so I thank you, Chairwoman Miller, Member Brady, and all the committee members for your time and attention today. And we are happy to answer any questions that you may have.

[The statement of Ms. Slaughter follows:]

PETE SESSIONS, TEXAS
CHAIRMAN

VIRGINIA FOXX, NORTH CAROLINA
TOM COLE, OKLAHOMA
ROB WOODALL, GEORGIA
MICHAEL C. BURGESS, TEXAS
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ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

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RANKING MEMBER

JAMES P. ANGOVERNI, MASSACHUSETTS
ALCEE L. HASTINGS, FLORIDA
JARED POLIS, COLORADO

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February 3, 2015

**HON. LOUISE SLAUGHTER
RANKING MEMBER
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RULES**

**STATEMENT BEFORE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
February 4, 2015
RE: COMMITTEE FUNDING**

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

Thank you, Chairwoman Miller and Ranking Member Brady. I am pleased to join Chairman Sessions in presenting the Committee on Rules' budget request for the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress.

I would like to begin by saying that, though our committee is often a place of heated debate on policy and politics, in the end, our work impacts this body as a whole. We are not bound by policy portfolio, but by service to this institution.

Though our function has evolved since 1789 when it was founded, the Committee continues to serve as a pillar of support for the House.

Informed by our understanding of the committee's unique role in the House, we have a long tradition of performing the administrative functions of our committee in a fair and equitable manner. This principle covers the division of everything from equipment and office supplies to the allocation of space and personnel. I am grateful that Chairman Sessions has chosen to continue this tradition of administrative equity while he is in the majority, and especially that he plans to continue the policy of dedicating one third of the committee's overall budget to the minority.

I support Chairman Sessions' request to the House Administration Committee, and I join him in this request to continue funding the Committee on Rules' budget at current levels. I believe that any cut in funding would risk the efficient operation and administration of our

Committee. Given that our work supports the entire House, it is essential that this committee, majority and minority alike, operate robustly.

I also want to take this moment to express our appreciation to the extraordinary staff of our committee on both sides. Their hard work and cooperation is central to our success. They operate under the assumption of midnight meetings, morning hearings, and everything in between.

I am proud to present this budget with Chairman Sessions. I also want to thank you Chairwoman Miller, Ranking Member Brady, and all the committee members, for your time and attention today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have about our budget request.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate you both being here and your testimony as well. Let me just say that we are very appreciative of the fact that you really—I am looking at my spreadsheet here—really looking for level funding, at level funding in your request.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. A little extra wouldn't hurt, though, would it?

Mr. SESSIONS. In fact—

Ms. SLAUGHTER. We could take it.

Mr. SESSIONS [continuing]. I don't really want to get too much into this—but we are squeezed—

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Yes.

Mr. SESSIONS [continuing]. And perhaps down two members right now.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, this is what I was going to say.

Mr. SESSIONS. So we are trying to find—

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. I am appreciative of the fact that—

Mr. SESSIONS [continuing]. A way, Chairman, to get the money we actually really need by going bare bones.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. And I am very appreciative of that.

On the other hand, I think we are all well aware of what a critical component you are to all of us being able to do our work. In fact, I was trying to remember—and I am sorry I can't remember the incident.

But there was some time—of course, we are always saying, "When is Rules meeting? When are they going to have everything ready?" And somebody said, well, there was some kind of equipment pattern that you had.

Mr. SESSIONS. Right.

The CHAIRMAN. I am sorry I can't remember the details now.

And everybody went, "What?"

So what you are saying, obviously, is very real when you have had some of these significant cuts in the budget, as all the committees really have over the last couple of cycles.

So I guess—and you probably have answered that, but if we were able to squeeze a bit more than what you have even asked for here—and I can't promise that—we are—

Mr. SESSIONS. Yes, ma'am.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. Taking all this testimony today and next week from all the committee chairmen and everyone is making their best case here. Of course, we have a finite pie of dollars to be authorized out.

At any rate, would it be equipment upgrades that you would really—

Mr. SESSIONS. Yes, ma'am.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. Be looking for first and foremost more than staff, even?

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Yes.

Mr. SESSIONS. Yes, ma'am.

I will tell you that we have previously had some travel budget that was important for people to go and see real live things. We have now changed that process, as you know, when I became chairman and I moved us from what might be a committee that was exclusive to where we now have Members who also serve on their own committees.

I found that necessary, because of the budgetary constraints I was under, to get people to where they could go travel with another committee and go see real live functions that, in fact, they represent in the Rules Committee and on the floor.

So I have tried to—if I were trying to make an argument to this committee, to say I have tried to do the things that I can do up to and including not filling my quota of the number of Members that I have.

But I am there and I need the money to make sure—because if we all of a sudden broke one night and our big machine went down—and it is old—I would have to come before the conference and before—and Mrs. Slaughter would gladly do it with me—but we would have to go and explain, “I’m sorry. This is where we are.”

And so we are asking for that opportunity, and that is what we would spend the money for.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Slaughter, do you have any—

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I agree completely.

We do believe the functioning of the House—the fact that we could bring it to a stop on the floor because the Rules Committee is not able to get its work done—its paperwork done is something that is really kind of frightening. It never happened. We don’t want that to happen. But we really, I think, could certainly use the extra money—

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate—

Ms. SLAUGHTER [continuing]. If possible.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate that.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Brady.

Mr. BRADY. I don’t believe so. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Harper.

Mrs. Comstock.

Okay. Well, we appreciate your time and attendance here today. And we are taking this very seriously. And, as I say, we are—we are all very aware of what the Rules Committee does and needs to do. So we appreciate your—

Mr. SESSIONS. Yes, ma’am.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. Testimony and we will be thinking all of that through. Thanks so much.

Mr. SESSIONS. Thank you, Chairwoman.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate it.

The Committee now welcomes Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Johnson on the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

Again, I ask the official reporter to enter a page break as we begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee on Science, Space, and Technology has jurisdiction over all energy research and development, all federally owned and operated nonmilitary energy laboratories, astronomical research and development, civil aviation research and development, environmental research and development, and the commercial application of energy technology, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the National Aeronautics and Space

Administration, and the National Science Foundation, as well as the National Weather Service. So they have a full plate.

We welcome the chairman and the ranking member.

I will just mention, as I did to the chairman that was just here, we are all about Texas. All right? Let me just put that on the record.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Fair enough.

The CHAIRMAN. I recognize Chairman Smith.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. LAMAR SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS**

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Thank you, Madam Chair and Ranking Member Brady. We appreciate the opportunity to be able to testify about the Science, Space, and Technology Committee's budget.

And in the last Congress, we made every effort to use our authorized funding efficiently and effectively. Only .3 percent of our funding in the last Congress went unspent. We have done more with less, streamlined our administrative processes and procedures, and reduced the number of staff. The committee held 99 hearings and approved 20 bills that subsequently passed on the House floor. Eighteen of these 20 bills were bipartisan and six became law.

The committee plans to be even more active in this Congress to conduct oversight of the administration and to continue to promote legislation that advances America's interest in science, space, and technology.

A number that may make our budget request look small is \$40 billion. That is the amount of Federal Government agency budgets that the committee will reconsider, reprioritize, and reauthorize in the next 2 years.

The Science Committee's jurisdiction has expanded over the past 57 years to become very broad and diverse. As the chairman of your committee just mentioned, the committee has jurisdiction over programs at the following Federal agencies: NASA, the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Standards, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, Homeland Security, the Science and Technology Directorate, the U.S. Fire Administration, and the United States Geological Survey, among others.

To perform effective and efficient oversight and develop legislative policy, we must ensure that staffs on both sides of the aisle are equipped with the technical expertise necessary to handle this diverse jurisdiction.

The committee is now one of the few committees with signature subpoena power and deposition authority. These tools will enhance our investigative capabilities and help us better guard against waste, fraud and abuse, and mismanagement within the Federal agencies themselves.

Our increase in oversight capabilities consequently leads to an increase in the amount of resources necessary to carry out this important work. The committee has already added experienced oversight counsel and other senior staff to assist with this effort.

The Science Committee ensures that taxpayers and the American people receive a strong return on their investment. Our request before you for \$5.3 million will allow the committee to increase productivity, raise American standard of living, and create more jobs.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify today and look forward to your questions after the ranking member completes her opening statement as well.

[The statement of Mr. Smith of Texas follows:]



Chairman Lamar Smith's Science Committee Funding Hearing Testimony before the House Administration Committee

February 4, 2015

Madam Chair, Ranking Member Brady and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee's budget for the 114th Congress.

All Americans know how to tighten their belts and do more with less. This is something that the Science Committee has done for many years.

In the last Congress we made very efficient use of our authorized funding levels. Only 0.3% of our funding for the last Congress went unspent once all obligations for 2014 are satisfied.

We have done more with less, streamlined our administrative processes and procedures, and reduced the number of staff.

The Committee held 99 hearings and approved 20 bills that subsequently passed on the House floor. Eighteen of these were bipartisan. Six became law.

The Committee plans to be even more active in this Congress to conduct oversight of the Administration and to continue to promote legislation that advances America's interests in science, space, and technology.

A number that may make our budget request look small is \$40 billion. That is the amount of federal government agency budgets that the Committee will reconsider, reprioritize and reauthorize in the next two years.

The purpose of the Science Committee is to encourage the research and development that leads to new innovations and job creation. So the work of the Science Committee focuses on America's future.

The Science Committee's jurisdiction has expanded over the past 57 years to become very broad and diverse.

The Committee has jurisdiction over programs at the following federal agencies: NASA, the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Federal Aviation Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, the Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate, the U.S. Fire Administration, the United States Geological Survey, among others.

To perform effective and efficient oversight and develop legislative policy, we must ensure that staffs on both sides of the aisle are equipped with the technical expertise necessary to handle this diverse jurisdiction.

The Committee is now one of the few committees with signature subpoena power and deposition authority. These tools will enhance our investigative capabilities and help us better guard against waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement within the federal agencies.

Our increase in oversight capabilities consequently leads to an increase in the amount of resources necessary to carry out this important work. The Committee has already added experienced oversight counsel and other senior staff to assist with this effort.

The Science Committee ensures that taxpayers and the American people receive a strong return on their investment. Our request before you for \$5.3 million will allow the Committee to increase productivity, raise Americans' standard of living, and create more jobs.

Thank you for your time and I welcome any questions you may have.

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The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
The Chair now recognizes the ranking member, another gentlelady from the great State of Texas, Ms. Johnson.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS**

Ms. JOHNSON. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman and Ranking Member Brady and members of the committee.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak about the committee's funding for the 114th Congress. Chairman Smith is already presenting an overview of the committee's finances. So I will make my remarks as brief as possible on the minority budget.

I would like to note that the funding level in the second session of the 113th Congress provided some much needed stability to our budget after the committee absorbed disproportionate cuts relative to other committees to start the 113th Congress.

The 26.2 percent reduction in our budget from 2010 to 2013 forced us to defer filling staff slots as well as cutting salaries of those who had already been with us. We also had to significantly limit committee oversight travel by Members and staff.

Thankfully, in the 113th, we were able to hire valuable new staff members and complete several important oversight trips. Members or staff visited NASA, NASA Science Foundation, Department of Energy facilities and advanced manufacturing facilities.

In the 114th Congress, the committee will need to development and advance legislation to reauthorize many of the agencies under the committee's jurisdiction, including NASA, NSF, NIST, FAA's R&D programs, and the Department of Energy programs, among others.

It is also anticipated that there will be a range of significant oversight initiatives undertaken by the committee in the 114th Congress, including some that will result in the need to develop additional legislation.

I place a high priority on making sure that minority Members and staff will be appropriately informed and engaged in the legislative and oversight activities of the committee. We made full use of our payroll and travel funds to carry out our responsibilities in the 113th Congress, and there will be no reduction in the need for at least the level of resources provided in the 113th Congress.

Indeed, despite the slight budget increase, due to the resource constraints based in the 113th Congress, we still have unfilled staffing slots, and that staffing shortfall affects our ability to carry out our legislative and oversight activities. It also affects our ability to compete with the private sector for skilled professional staff.

In addition, though Members and staff were able to do some oversight visits, the constrained travel budget still limits the ability of travel of Members and staff to undertake the oversight visits to the government research facilities, laboratories, et cetera, under the jurisdiction of the committee that should be done to be perfectly prepared to do the work. This especially impacts our new Members who have not been to many of the places which we have committee jurisdiction. And this is a particular concern, given the number of new minority Members joining the committee in the 114th Congress.

As a result, any cuts to the overall committee budget in the 114th Congress would likely force staffing reductions and further reductions in needed oversight travel, both of which would have a serious negative impact on minority Members' ability to carry out their legislative and oversight responsibilities.

Thank you.

[The statement of Ms. Johnson follows:]

**Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology**

*Testimony before the Committee on House
Administration*

February 4, 2015

Good morning, Chairwoman Miller, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee. I want to thank you for this opportunity to speak today about our Committee funding for the 114th Congress. Chairman Smith has already presented an overview of the Committee's finances, so I will make brief remarks on the Minority budget.

I would like to note that the funding level in the second session of the 113th Congress provided

some much needed stability to our budget after the Committee absorbed a disproportionate cut relative to other Committees to start the 113th Congress. That 26.2% reduction in our budget from 2010 to 2013 forced us to defer filling staff slots as well as to cut the salaries of most of the staff who were retained from previous Congresses. We also had to significantly limit Committee oversight travel by Members and staff. Thankfully, in the 113th, we were able to hire valuable new staff Members and complete several important oversight trips. Members or staff visited NASA, NSF, and DOE facilities and advanced manufacturing facilities.

In the 114th Congress, the Committee will need to develop and advance legislation to reauthorize many of the agencies under the Committee's jurisdiction, including NASA, NSF, NIST, FAA's R&D programs, and Department of Energy programs, among others. It is also anticipated that there will be a range of significant oversight initiatives undertaken by the Committee in the 114th Congress, including some that will result in the need to develop additional legislation.

I place a high priority on making sure that Minority Members and staff will be appropriately informed and engaged in the legislative and oversight activities of the Committee.

We made full use of our payroll and travel funds to carry out our responsibilities in the 113th Congress, and there will be no reduction in the need for at least the level of resources provided in the 113th Congress. Indeed, despite the slight budget increase, due to the resource constraints faced in the 113th Congress, we still have unfilled staffing slots, and that staffing shortfall affects our ability to carry out our legislative and oversight activities. It also affects our ability to compete with the private sector for skilled professional staff. In addition, though Members and staff were able to do some oversight visits, the constrained travel budget still limits the ability of Members and staff to undertake

the oversight visits to government research facilities, laboratories, etc. under the jurisdiction of the Committee that should be done. This especially impacts our new Members, who have not been to many of the places over which the Committee has jurisdiction. That is a particular concern, given the number of new Minority Members joining the Committee in the 114th Congress.

As a result, any cuts to the overall Committee budget in the 114th Congress would likely force staffing reductions and further reductions in needed oversight travel, both of which would have a serious negative impact on Minority Members' ability to carry out their legislative and oversight responsibilities.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Thank you very much, both of you. We are appreciative of your time and your attention and being here.

Let me also say that we had excellent cooperation from your staff, both the minority and majority staff, on your committee to give our Committee staff all the information that we needed so we could be prepared for this today.

Just looking at my spreadsheet here of all the various committees and what they are asking for, you are essentially—I mean, almost at level funding is what you are asking for here, a very small increase, 1 percent—a little over 1 percent. So we are very appreciative of that.

Obviously, your committee—or all the committees, really, in varying degrees have had significant cutbacks in the last several Congresses in the last several cycles, and we are very aware of that. I think it has handicapped your ability to do oversight, et cetera, and, as you say, some of the field hearings and so on and so forth, staff cuts, et cetera.

So looking at what you have actually requested—and, believe me, I am not sure that we could do this—but if there is any additional resource, we might even be able to resource you up a bit, what kind of thing would you put as a priority? Would it be additional staff or equipment upgrades—

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Yeah.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. Field hearings?

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Chair, you have mentioned a couple of those. And let me thank you for acknowledging the cuts that we sustained in the past. In fact, from 2010 to 2013, we were cut more than any other committee, 26 percent. So it would be wonderful to recoup some of that and to use it in very productive ways.

You mentioned field hearings. We would be able to conduct more of those. I don't know that we had any in the last Congress, and clearly those are needed. We would also increase staff to be able to accomplish our oversight responsibilities in a more effective manner.

Quite frankly, we were busy in the last Congress. And, as you know, we have been trying to revitalize the committee for the last couple of years, and I think we succeeded in doing that. We had the 99 hearings in the last Congress. We took 20 bills to the House floor. Eighteen were bipartisan.

We hope to build on that success of the last Congress. We will probably have even more hearings in the coming Congress. And, again, it is all in an effort to respond to the American people and make sure their Government is effective and efficient and held accountable. So we will do all that.

In addition to the oversight hearings, we will probably—we have oversight hearings. We have additional staff. We have additional field hearings as well. And all that will be part of the mix. And, believe me, that will quickly justify the 1 percent or more that you might consider giving us, and we appreciate that very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Johnson, do you have any—

Ms. JOHNSON. I think what we would do is fill some of the slots that we have not been able to fill. And we had to cut a few salaries. We might consider giving a few raises.

We deal with very competitive staff. Most of them have to have advanced degrees, mostly doctorate and law degrees. And we didn't do any real oversight, and I think that is very important, especially for this committee.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ranking member, Mr. Brady.

Mr. BRADY. Nothing.

The CHAIRMAN. Nothing.

Ms. Comstock, any questions?

No. All right.

Well, we certainly thank you both again for your attendance here today. And we are going to take this very seriously, what you have talked about. And once we get all the information and look at what we have here and digest it a bit, we will get back to you. Thank you so much.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Thank you.

Ms. JOHNSON. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Chair, I want to say that Congresswoman Comstock is a member of the Science Committee, so I think you will have at least some support from that direction as well.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, she is going to be a very forceful advocate, I know, for the Science Committee.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

The Committee now welcomes Chairman Miller and Ranking Member Brown of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Again, I would ask the official reporter to please enter a page break into the hearing record to begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee on Veterans' Affairs recommends legislation expanding, curtailing, or fine-tuning existing laws relating to veterans' benefits. The committee also has the oversight responsibility of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the committee is the voice of Congress for veterans in dealing with the VA.

We certainly welcome both the chairman, Chairman Miller, and Ranking Member Brown to appear before our Committee today.

Before I recognize you, let me just mention that we had excellent cooperation from both the Republican and the Democratic staff on your committee in giving our Committee all the information that we now have in front of us about what you requested. So we are very appreciative of that.

With that, the Chair would recognize Chairman Miller.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. JEFF MILLER, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA**

Mr. MILLER. Thank you very much, Chairman Miller, and Ranking Member Brady. It is good to be before you again to discuss the budget for the Veterans' Affairs Committee for the 114th Congress.

Ranking Member Corrine Brown joins me here today. We have submitted our funding request forms for 2015 per your committee's guidance.

I will begin by recounting what was an extraordinarily productive year for the committee from both an oversight and a legislative standpoint. I am really proud of the work that we were able to do with a leaner budget. But as I am going to detail for you in a mo-

ment, one of the biggest lessons learned is that constant and aggressive oversight is essential if we are going to help fix the problems that plague the VA.

As you know, the committee has oversight over the entire Department of Veterans Affairs as well as over various other programs serving veterans of the Departments of Labor and Defense, over Arlington National Cemetery, and others. The Department of Veterans Affairs is the second largest agency in the Federal Government, employing almost 340,000 people, with a budget of roughly \$160 billion.

Now, last year, notwithstanding a leaner committee budget, we were able to uncover and bring to light in the public what probably was the biggest scandal in VA history, namely, that veterans across the healthcare system in VA were waiting months for their care, even though official wait time data suggested that they were not.

And after the committee exposed the wait time manipulation scandal at Phoenix, we embarked on a series of hearings, many lasting well past midnight, to get at the root cause of the scandal. We heard from whistleblowers whose warnings were ignored, IG and GAO witnesses who told us the problems were longstanding and systemic, and private-sector experts who suggested a path forward toward reform.

The culmination of the committee's work was enactment of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014. This landmark legislation allocated \$10 billion for a first-of-its-kind program that would allow veterans waiting for care at VA to obtain it in their communities. It allocated 5 billion for internal VA hiring and infrastructure needs. And it put in place a new streamlined process available to the VA secretary to make it easier to hold senior executives accountable. Needless to say, oversight of the elements of that law alone are going to keep us very busy in the 114th Congress.

Now, I think the key lesson that we learned last year is that the committee must take a trust-but-verify approach with the information the VA presents to us. We discovered a serious disconnect between what was being told to us in Washington, D.C., by VA leadership and what was actually happening in the field.

To ensure that we have sufficient ability to get real-world pictures on not just wait times at hospitals and clinics, but, also, VA's disability claims processing efforts where hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of annual procurement contracts exist, near-billion-dollar construction projects, and a myriad of other issues, we need the staff expertise and a travel budget oriented towards meeting these vast needs.

On the majority staff, we currently have four investigators. My hope is to double our investigative capacity by hiring a medical investigator, an acquisition procurement specialist, a cybersecurity specialist, and an investigator who specializes in forensic analysis. These individuals would primarily be responsible for on-site visits around the country, digging deep into facility operations to ensure that the story being told by VA leadership in Washington is exactly what is happening in the field.

Accordingly, we are going to request a \$600,000 increase to our personnel budget and a \$70,000 increase to the committee's travel budget. Relative to the size of the primary agency that the committee oversees, I hope we can all agree that this is a modest investment to make.

Now, the travel budget line in our request will enable us to move completely away from relying on VA resources to support our oversight. And I have testified in the past to this committee that reliance on VA for travel puts the Department on advanced notice each time the committee engages in an oversight visit.

And turning to equipment, last year we obligated end-of-year available funds to meet significant, but scheduled, upgrades necessary to replace outdated servers, computers, and a poorly functioning copier. Thus, we are not requesting any increase for the committee's equipment needs.

It is a small committee charged with an awesome responsibility, oversight of those who care and provide services for our Nations' warriors and their families. In doing so, we have exercised extreme fiscal responsibility.

And, with that, I would like to ask that my entire written statement be entered into the record.

[The statement of Mr. Miller follows:]

**Honorable Jeff Miller
Chairman
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
House Administration Funding Hearing
1310 Longworth House Office Building
February 4, 2015
Topic: COMMITTEE BUDGET FOR 2015
*Up to 5 Mins.***

THANK YOU CHAIRMAN MILLER AND RANKING MEMBER BRADY FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAR BEFORE YOUR COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS THE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS BUDGET FOR THE 114TH CONGRESS.

RANKING MEMBER CORRINE BROWN JOINS ME HERE TODAY.

WE HAVE SUBMITTED OUR FUNDING REQUEST FORMS FOR 2015 PER YOUR COMMITTEE'S GUIDANCE.

I WILL BEGIN BY RECOUNTING WHAT WAS AN EXTRAORDINARILY PRODUCTIVE YEAR FOR THE COMMITTEE FROM BOTH AN OVERSIGHT AND LEGISLATIVE STANDPOINT. I'M REALLY PROUD OF THE WORK WE WERE ABLE TO DO WITH A LEANER BUDGET. BUT, AS I WILL DETAIL IN A MOMENT, ONE OF THE BIG LESSONS LEARNED IS THAT CONSTANT AND AGGRESSIVE OVERSIGHT IS ESSENTIAL IF THE PROBLEMS THAT PLAGUE THE VA ARE EVER TO BE FIXED.

AS YOU KNOW, THE COMMITTEE HAS OVERSIGHT OVER THE ENTIRE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, AS WELL AS OVER VARIOUS PROGRAMS SERVING VETERANS AT THE DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR AND DEFENSE, OVER ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, AND OTHER MATTERS.

THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IS THE SECOND LARGEST FEDERAL AGENCY, EMPLOYING ALMOST THREE HUNDRED AND FORTY THOUSAND PEOPLE WITH A BUDGET OF ROUGHLY ONE HUNDRED SIXTY BILLION DOLLARS.

LAST YEAR, NOTWITHSTANDING A LEANER COMMITTEE BUDGET, WE WERE ABLE TO UNCOVER AND BRING TO PUBLIC LIGHT WHAT MAY BE THE LARGEST SCANDAL IN VA HISTORY. NAMELY, VETERANS ACROSS THE VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM WERE WAITING MONTHS FOR THEIR CARE EVEN THOUGH OFFICIAL WAIT TIME DATA SUGGESTED THEY WERE NOT.

AFTER THE COMMITTEE EXPOSED THE WAIT TIME MANIULATION SCANDAL AT THE PHOENIX VA MEDICAL CENTER, WE EMBARKED ON A SERIES OF HEARINGS –MANY LASTING PAST MIDNIGHT – TO GET AT THE ROOT CAUSES OF THE SCANDAL. WE HEARD FROM WHISTLEBLOWERS WHOSE WARNINGS WERE IGNORED; IG AND GAO WITNESSES WHO TOLD US THE PROBLEMS WERE LONG-STANDING AND SYSTEMIC; AND PRIVATE SECTOR EXPERTS WHO SUGGESTED A PATH FORWARD TOWARD REFORM.

THE CULMINATION OF THE COMMITTEE’S WORK WAS ENACTMENT OF THE VETERANS’ ACCESS, CHOICE, AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2014. THIS LANDMARK LEGISLATION ALLOCATED \$10 BILLION FOR A FIRST-OF-ITS KIND PROGRAM ALLOWING VETERANS WAITING FOR CARE AT VA TO OBTAIN IT IN THE COMMUNITY.

IT ALLOCATED \$5 BILLION FOR INTERNAL VA HIRING AND INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS.

AND IT PUT IN PLACE A NEW STREAMLINED PROCESS AVAILABLE TO THE VA SECRETARY MAKING IT EASIER TO HOLD SENIOR EXECUTIVES ACCOUNTABLE.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, OVERSIGHT OF THE ELEMENTS OF THAT LAW ALONE WILL KEEP US VERY BUSY THIS CONGRESS.

I THINK THE KEY LESSON THAT WE LEARNED LAST YEAR IS THAT THE COMMITTEE MUST TAKE A "TRUST BUT VERIFY" APPROACH WITH THE INFORMATION PRESENTED TO US BY VA.

WE DISCOVERED A SERIOUS DISCONNECT BETWEEN WHAT WAS BEING TOLD TO US IN WASHINGTON D.C. BY VA LEADERSHIP AND WHAT WAS ACTUALLY HAPPENING IN THE FIELD.

TO ENSURE THAT WE HAVE SUFFICIENT ABILITY TO GET THE REAL-WORLD PICTURE ON NOT JUST WAIT TIMES AT HOSPITALS AND CLINCS, BUT ALSO VA'S DISABILITY CLAIMS PROCESSING EFFORTS; HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS WORTH OF ANNUAL PROCUREMENT CONTRACTS; NEAR-BILLION DOLLAR CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS; AND MYRIAD OTHER ISSUES, WE NEED STAFF EXPERTISE AND A TRAVEL BUDGET ORIENTED TOWARDS MEETING THESE VAST NEEDS.

ON THE MAJORITY STAFF WE CURRENTLY HAVE FOUR INVESTIGATORS. MY HOPE IS TO DOUBLE OUR INVESTIGATIVE CAPACITY BY HIRING A MEDICAL INVESTIGATOR, AN ACQUISITION/PROCUREMENT SPECIALIST, A CYBER-

SECURITY SPECIALIST, AND AN INVESTIGATOR WHO SPECIALIZES IN FORENSIC ANALYSIS.

THESE INDIVIDUALS WOULD PRIMARILY BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SITE VISITS AROUND THE COUNTRY, DIGGING DEEP INTO FACILITY OPERATIONS TO ENSURE THAT THE STORY BEING TOLD BY VA LEADERSHIP IN WASHINGTON IS WHAT IS BEING EXECUTED IN THE FIELD.

ACCORDINGLY, WE ARE REQUESTING A \$600,000 INCREASE IN THE COMMITTEE'S PERSONNEL BUDGET AND A \$70,000 INCREASE IN THE COMMITTEE'S TRAVEL BUDGET. RELATIVE TO THE SIZE OF THE PRIMARY AGENCY THE COMMITTEE OVERSEES, I HOPE WE CAN ALL AGREE THIS IS A MODEST INVESTMENT TO MAKE.

A TRAVEL BUDGET IN LINE WITH OUR REQUEST WILL ENABLE US TO MOVE COMPLETELY AWAY FROM RELYING ON VA'S RESOURCES TO SUPPORT OUR OVERSIGHT.

I'VE TESTIFIED TO THIS IN THE PAST, BUT RELIANCE ON VA FOR TRAVEL PUTS THE DEPARTMENT ON ADVANCE NOTICE EACH TIME THE COMMITTEE ENGAGES IN AN OVERSIGHT VISIT.

TURNING TO EQUIPMENT, LAST YEAR WE OBLIGATED END-OF-YEAR AVAILABLE FUNDS TO MEET SIGNIFICANT BUT SCHEDULED UPGRADES NECESSARY TO REPLACE OUTDATED SERVERS, COMPUTERS, AND A POORLY FUNCTIONING COPIER. THUS, WE ARE NOT REQUESTING ANY INCREASE FOR THE COMMITTEE'S EQUIPMENT NEEDS.

**THIS IS A SMALL COMMITTEE CHARGED WITH AWESOME RESPONSIBILITY:
OVERSIGHT OF THOSE WHO CARE AND PROVIDE SERVICES FOR OUR
NATION'S WARRIORS AND THEIR FAMILIES.
IN DOING SO, WE HAVE EXERCISED EXTREME FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY.**

**WE ACCOMPLISHED A GREAT DEAL FOR OUR VETERANS WITH ONE OF THE
SMALLEST COMMITTEE BUDGETS IN THE ENTIRE CONGRESS.**

**MADAME CHAIRMAN, YOU HAVE MY ASSURANCE THAT WE WILL CONTINUE
TO ACCOUNT FOR, AND STRETCH, EVERY DOLLAR AFFORDED US AS WE OUT-
STRIDE THE EXPECTATIONS PLACED UPON US.**

**BUT MY HUMBLE REQUEST OF YOU, THE RANKING MEMBER, AND THE
MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE, IS THAT WE BUILD ON THE OVERSIGHT
SUCCESS OF THE VETERANS' COMMITTEE LAST CONGRESS WITH THESE
SMALL, BUT IMPORTANT, ADDITIONS TO OUR BUDGET THAT I HAVE
OUTLINED.**

**THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAR BEFORE YOU TODAY. I
KNOW MS. BROWN WILL HAVE MORE TO SAY ON THE WORK WE'VE DONE
TOGETHER AND WHAT WE PLAN TO ACCOMPLISH THIS CONGRESS.**

I WOULD BE GLAD TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, we appreciate your testimony. The Chair now recognizes the ranking member, Ms. Brown.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. CORRINE BROWN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Ms. BROWN. Thank you very much. And I am excited about being the ranking member, first of all. And I have been on the committee the entire time I have been in Congress, ever since '92.

Now, I know that you see that the two Members on this committee are from Florida, but there are 435 Members that have veterans in their area. And it is our job and our responsibility to make sure that they are getting the service that they deserve.

Now, we know that the veterans love the VA. We have got to make sure that the VA loves the veterans back. And that is why it is important that we get the increases. And I support Mr. Miller 100 percent.

You know, we have taken cuts in the committee. And even with this request, we will not be where we was 2 or 3 years ago. So I am asking for supporting.

I want to associate myself with the gentleman from Florida in the entirety. And I want to make sure that we can address those needs. Yes. We need oversight, but we have got to make sure that the veterans are getting the service that they deserve.

So, with that, I will yield back my time. And I want to turn my entire statement in to the record. And we are available for any questions that you might have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Without objection, your full testimony will be entered into the record.

[The statement of Ms. Brown follows:]

**STATEMENT OF CORRINE BROWN
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BEFORE THE HOUSE ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**

February 4, 2015

Thank you Chairman Miller and Ranking Member Brady for the opportunity to appear before you today to speak in support of the proposed budget for the Committee on Veterans' Affairs for the 114th Congress. I am pleased to join with Chairman Jeff Miller to support the proposed budget. As a committee we have done a lot more with a lot less, but I do not see how we can do much more without more resources.

During this Congress the Veterans' Affairs Committee will be expected to continue our active oversight over the Department of Veterans Affairs,

as well as continue our national commitments to our veterans. The Veterans' Affairs Committee will be working to ensure that the bill we enacted last Congress to address the delays veterans were seeing in getting health care does indeed provide greater access in a timely fashion. We know that veterans love the VA system, and we will have a lot of work ahead of us to make sure that the system loves them back. This will require the Committee to keep a close eye on VA oversight of the health care system and how we move forward to make sure that veterans get the care they need. This will also require the Committee to keep our ears open to hear about the experiences of our veterans.

Veterans' Affairs will also have our hands full working with veterans and the VA in how best to

address issues today and in the future, including an ever-increasing focus on the needs of our women veterans and our returning service members. There are problems at the VA, just like there are problems everywhere. I want the Veterans' Affairs Committee to be actively engaged in fixing problems and supporting the VA in its efforts to reform and reorganize. I know Chairman Miller joins me in this. I want the Veterans' Affairs Committee to be working for veterans, and I know you will all join me in supporting this.

I don't have to remind you that the Veterans' Affairs Committee has seen its budget cut. Even with the increase we are asking for the Committee's budget will be lower than it was just a few Congresses ago. Our work is increasing, and we desperately need to

ensure that the Committee has the expertise, the staff, and the resources to assist us in meeting the many challenges before us.

We cannot fail our veterans in the work ahead. They were there when we needed them, and we must be there when they need us. I know this Committee must make some tough decisions, but I believe, along with Chairman Miller, that our proposed budget is a realistic picture of the resources we will need to meet all the challenges we will face.

Thank you for providing us the opportunity to speak today; and I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. I guess I would just say I am looking at your budget request that you have here and you have articulated extremely well exactly what you would be looking for with the money that you are asking for: four new investigators. I was trying to take some notes while you were talking there as well.

Let me just say, on behalf of the country, I thank you very much to your committee for what you did uncover last year for all of our veterans with the limited amount of resources that the committee had.

So I appreciate the request that you have made. You know, our Committee is taking testimony all day today and next week as well, and we obviously have a finite amount of resources that we can authorize here for the various committees.

But we are very appreciative of the service that you have had with your committee so far. I think we are all well aware of the necessity for you to have some additional investigators, resources. I am not quite sure exactly what dollar amount that may be.

I don't really have any questions other than just the comment that we take it very seriously, the work that your committee has been doing.

I would ask if my ranking member has any questions.

Mr. BRADY. Yes. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Real quickly. I know we have got to vote.

I just want to thank the chairman and the ranking lady because they kept me well abreast on the City of Philadelphia. We had some major problems. And I appreciate that. And you did a great job there. The morale has really increased a whole lot more immensely.

And whatever you need to keep our veterans because they are—they should be the most dear to all our hearts because of what they do, the job that they do. And we are here. We get sniffed by dogs and everybody that comes to see us has got to get scrutinized. And they are out there in harm's way. When they come back home, we have got to let them know that we care for them.

So I appreciate the job that you both do. And I promise I will do whatever I can to make sure you get what you need to continue the job that you do. Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mrs. Comstock.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I just wanted to reiterate my colleague's comments and thank you for the important work you do. I think there is nothing that we don't hear more about than from our veterans and making sure these services work well. So I thank you for the important work you are doing. And so I will join in that support.

Mr. MILLER. Thank you.

Ms. BROWN. I just want to add that the veterans, once they get into the system, they have indicated they like the VA system. But the key is we have got to make sure that they get in in a very timely fashion and they get the services that they deserve. So the Army motto is "One team, one fight," and we are all in this together.

The CHAIRMAN. You know, it is really true, and I appreciate that as we conclude here. It has often been said that a society can be

measured in large part on how they treat their veterans, and I think that is an absolute true statement.

So, again, we appreciate your attendance here today.

Is there anything we didn't ask you that you want to leave us with here? Anything else?

Mr. MILLER. No. We will be happy to provide your staff with any other information necessary.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Thank you very, very much. We appreciate both of you coming.

I now recess the hearing. The Committee will reconvene. Subject to the call of the Chair, we will reconvene at 11:00 a.m. next Wednesday. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 3:22 p.m., the committee recessed, to reconvene at 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, February 11, 2015.]