

COMMITTEE FUNDING FOR THE 115TH CONGRESS

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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FEBRUARY 15, 2017
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COMMITTEE FUNDING FOR THE 115TH CONGRESS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2017

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

The Committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:46 a.m., in Room 1310, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Gregg Harper [Chairman of the Committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Harper, Davis, Comstock, Smith, Loudermilk, Brady, and Lofgren.

Staff Present: Sean Moran, Staff Director; Kim Betz, Senior Advisor; Bob Sensenbrenner, General Counsel; Max Engling, Franking Director; George Hadijski, Director of Member Services; Erin McCracken, Communications Director; C. Maggie Moore, Legislative Clerk; Dan Jarrell, Staff Assistant; Nick Hawatmeh, Member Services Counsel; Jamie Fleet, Minority Staff Director; Matt Pinkus, Minority Senior Policy Advisor; Khalil Abboud, Minority Chief Counsel; Eddie Flaherty, Minority Chief Clerk; Meredith Connor, Minority Staff Assistant; and Kim Stevens, Minority Financial Director.

The CHAIRMAN. I now call to order the Committee on House Administration for the purpose of today's hearing on Committee Funding for the 115th 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.

It is our Committee's responsibility to hear from each of the standing committees in order to authorize the appropriate amount of funding needed for the respective programs and activities, as well as any of their foreseeable expenditures for this year and next.

Today and tomorrow we will hear from each committee's Chair and Ranking Member on their respective biennial funding requests. I would like to thank each of them for their work and for taking the time to meet and discuss with us their budget priorities.

As in previous Congresses, testimony will be used to draft an overall budget resolution that sets funding levels for each committee. The resolution will ultimately be considered by the full House.

This Committee has worked to find the right balance over the years, and our goal is to do so again for this Congress. And as with each and every other committee that comes before us, the Committee on House Administration is also tasked with planning and

prioritizing our budget resources to effectively and efficiently carry out the House's business and to achieve our strategic goals.

I want to thank Mr. Brady and the staff of this Committee, as well as all of our House committees, both Republican and Democrat, who have worked together in a very timely and cooperative manner to organize the information to be presented to this Committee.

I now want to recognize my friend and colleague, Mr. Brady, from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Brady.

Mr. BRADY. Let me begin by thanking you, Mr. Chairman, for having these hearings and for working with us on our own Committee funding. I was pleased to cosponsor the funding resolution for this Committee. You gave us our full third, and we have worked very well together on our own internal operations. You lead by example, Mr. Chairman, so I appreciate our partnership.

My focus in these hearings will be on making sure that the minority has access to the funds and people to do our job. In some committees that is a traditional one-third, two-thirds split. In other committees a variation of that theme. Protecting minority rights is the most important part of this process for me, and I look forward to hearing from our colleagues over the next 2 days.

Again, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Brady.

Mr. Davis, any opening comments or statements?

Mr. DAVIS. No, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Then we will be in recess for just a moment. We are now waiting on the Ranking Member for the Committee on Natural Resources, so we will begin that just momentarily.

[Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee will come to order. And we are honored to welcome the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Natural Resources. Would the official reporter please enter a page break into the hearing record to begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The House Committee on Natural Resources is tasked with oversight of American energy production, mineral lands and mining, fisheries and wildlife, public lands, oceans, Native Americans, irrigation, and reclamation. So, welcome to Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva.

The Chair recognizes Chairman Bishop for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. ROB BISHOP, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF UTAH**

Mr. BISHOP. I thank you, Committee, for the opportunity of being here to do our budget request for the 115th Congress. First, before I ask for the request, I want to simply review how we used the money that you gave us last year.

During the 114th Congress, we had 138 oversight and legislative hearings, we did 8 field hearings, 14 markups; 118 bills went through the Committee, 73 passed the House, and 28 were signed into law. That, as far as I am concerned, those bills not only were important to our Members, but important to their constituents and I think actually helped the American public go along here, despite some of the obstacles we had in getting them passed.

To continue this work in the next Congress, I am requesting a 2.5 percent budget increase for 2017 and 2018 based on the authorized levels for the 114th Congress. The majority of our budget, as I suppose every committee is, is devoted to personnel, and this request is helping us to retain and attract professional and knowledgeable staff to assist in the areas that are extremely diverse, as you mentioned at the very beginning. And one of the things that surprised me as I took over the Chairmanship is simply how wide our net of our Committee actually goes.

We also are already experiencing some movement of our staff positions within the new administration. I certainly hope the administration doesn't rob from our staff to house and to staff their Agriculture and Interior Committees, but they would be stupid if they didn't. So I need that, we need that flexibility coming in there.

I also want you to realize that more than half of our Committee Members, including the newly elected Members, are from the Western States, which means our travel expenses will always be increased, especially as we decide to try and broaden our interests and have field hearings.

By definition, field hearings bring lawmakers closer to the people and the issues that are being heard. So during the 114th Congress, for example, we had field hearings in New Mexico, Maine, Colorado, Florida, Utah, Nevada, Louisiana, Long Island, New York, and that is just a few of the locations we went to. These hearings are important for transparency, to maximize the public's awareness, and to maximize legislative awareness of the situations that are going on.

So during my first term as Chairman our budget increases reflected funds dedicated primarily to Members and to their staff travel. We think we were economical in the use of our resources to support an increased presence throughout the United States, and we expect to have once again, with our diversity of issues, as well as the geography from where our Members live, have greater expectations than we did in the 114th session.

At the end of the last Congress, the Committee initiated a reorganization of its information technology strategy. This included the hiring of an entirely new IT staff who are focused on modernizing Committee software, House-supported storage options, cloud services, and ensuring the security and accessibility of Committee data. Today's budget request will ensure these issues are appropriately addressed this Congress to maintain and improve operations and equipment necessary to handle the Committee's frequent hearings, publications, and other needs. And I really wish I knew what the hell I said in those last few paragraphs, but we are working on it.

We have had and implemented efficiencies. Our hearings are now almost paperless. If I can get all my Members to file their amendments on time—hint, hint—we will be totally paperless in what we are doing. We have successfully negotiated subscription renewal rates that are lower than offered costs. And we have even moved from bottled water to filtered water in the office, something of which I am not very happy, but we have done that.

So in sum, the Committee has made a concerted effort to use our budget conservatively while maintaining a well-organized operation. We want to maintain that in the future. And I thank you for

your time and look forward to—well, it says I look forward to answering your questions. If you don't have any, I will look forward to it.

[The statement of Mr. Bishop follows:]

Statement of Chairman Rob Bishop
House Committee on Natural Resources
before the Committee on House Administration
Wednesday, February 15, 2017

Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to present the Committee on Natural Resources' budget request for the 115th Congress.

Before I outline our budget request for this Congress, let me first describe some of the important work our Committee accomplished *last* Congress. During the 114th Congress, we held 138 oversight and legislative hearings (including 8 field hearings), 14 markups, and approved 118 bills through the Committee, 73 of which went on to pass the House and 28 that were signed into law. These efforts are not only critically important to Members of our Committee and our individual constituents, but also the entire nation and the American people.

To continue to advance the important work of the Committee this Congress, we are requesting a 2.5% budget increase for 2017 and 2018, based on our authorized levels for the 114th Congress. The majority of our budget is devoted to personnel, and this year's request will help us retain and attract professional and knowledgeable staff to assist in handling the many diverse issue areas within our Committee's broad geographic and subject matter jurisdiction. We have already experienced some movement of our staff to positions within the new Administration, and further such changes are anticipated in coming months.

More than half of our Committee Members—including several newly elected Members—represent districts in western states. As a result, we expect that our travel expenditures will increase due to anticipated continued broader interest and need for field hearings. By definition, field hearings bring lawmakers closer to the people and issues being heard. During the 114th Congress, the Committee held field hearings in New Mexico, Maine, Florida, Utah, Nevada, Louisiana and New York, to name a few locations. These hearings are important for transparency to maximize the American public's awareness.

During my first term as Chairman, our budget reflected an increase in funds dedicated solely to Member and staff travel. We thoughtfully and economically used our resources to support an increased presence throughout the US. We expect the number of field hearings this Congress to be greater than in the 114th Congress and would thus allocate a portion of our awarded increase to our travel program.

At the end of last Congress, the Committee initiated a re-organization of its information technology strategy. This included the hiring of an entirely new IT staff who are focused on modernizing computer software, House-supported storage options, cloud services, and ensuring the security and accessibility of committee data. Today's budget request will ensure these issues

are appropriately addressed this Congress to maintain and improve operations of equipment necessary to handle the Committee's frequent hearings, publications and other needs.

We are pleased that the Committee has found and successfully implemented cost savings and efficiencies, including transitioning to near-paperless hearings and markups, circulating documents electronically, via email and through an intranet link to Members offices prior to hearings and markups. We have also successfully negotiated subscription renewal rates at lower than offered costs, and have moved away from bottled water and instead use filtered water, increasing monthly savings.

In sum, the Committee has made a concerted effort to use our budget conservatively while still maintaining a well-run organization, and we will aim to continue operating in that fashion.

Thank you for your time today and I look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. We appreciate the effort. Thank you for that impression that you did, Chairman Bishop.

I will now recognize Ranking Member Grijalva for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ARIZONA

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady, thank you, Members of the Committee. I am pleased to join with Chairman Bishop today to ask for your support for the Natural Resources budget request for the 115th Congress.

While Chairman Bishop and I have on occasion had some vigorous debates in the Natural Resources Committee, I agree wholeheartedly with his presentation of the budget facts and the value that a fully funded committee can provide the House and, for that matter, the American people.

I fully support the Chairman's stated request of a 2.5 budget increase each year, for a total of 5 percent for the entire duration of the 115th. I think it will keep our staff capacity that we have now. Although I am not confronted with the same problem that Chairman Bishop is, the administration is not coming readily soliciting any of our staff on this side of the aisle to go work for them, so I predict that we will have very stable personnel on our side of the aisle.

Nevertheless, I think travel is an important issue, particularly out West. The Members that have joined on our side are also almost entirely Westerners. And the need for field hearings and the need to be able to, particularly in the West, visit the sites, the locations, and the areas in which there is both opportunity and conflict and deal directly with people there, I think requires a more robust travel budget than we have presently. And I think the Chairman addressed that in his comments.

With that, let me concur with the Chairman's comments and prepare to answer any questions the Committee might have.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The statement of Mr. Grijalva follows:]

Statement of Congressman Raúl M. Grijalva
Ranking Member, House Committee on Natural Resources
Before the Committee on House Administration
Wednesday, February 15, 2017

Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee, I am pleased to join with Chairman Bishop today to ask for your support for the Natural Resources Committee's budget request for the 115th Congress.

While Chairman Bishop and I have vigorous debates in the Natural Resources Committee, I agree wholeheartedly with his presentation of the budget facts and the value that a fully funded Committee can provide to the House and the American people. I fully support Chairman Bishop's stated request of a 2.5% budget increase each year for a total of a 5% increase for the entire duration of the 115th Congress.

As you know, the Committee itself is one of the oldest committees in the House, having been originally established as the Committee on Public Lands in 1805 following the Louisiana Purchase. A lot of history resides in this committee, from the admission of States and the development of the West to the emergence of the modern conservation movement and what documentary filmmaker Ken Burns has called "America's Greatest Idea" – our magnificent system of national parks. But the Committee's jurisdiction goes well beyond our national parks, recreation areas, and seashores. It encompasses matters as diverse as onshore and offshore energy production, relations with Native Americans and the Insular areas of the U.S., management of Bureau of Land Management properties and Forest Service lands, regulation of fisheries and oceans, mining, management of precious water resources, and operation of the federal power marketing administrations. To carry out the duties entrusted to it by the House over all of these diverse and complex matters, the Committee needs a budget that will enable us to do our job.

Over the course of the last Congress, the Committee and its staff have worked long and hard to increase productivity. During the 114th Congress, the Natural Resources Committee:

- Had a total of 646 legislative bills and resolutions referred to the Committee;
- Held 137 legislative and oversight hearings;
- Held 14 Full Committee markup sessions;
- Was responsible for the House passage of 95 bills;
- Was responsible for 61 public laws (including all enacted bills).

The record indicates that our Committee has been one of the most active in the House in terms of bills referred to us, hearings we have held, and action we have taken on these bills. Sustaining this level of effort requires a dedicated workforce of Majority, Minority, and nonpartisan staff, and the Chairman and I wish to continue, and hopefully exceed, this level of legislative action in the 115th Congress.

The Natural Resources Committee is seeking a 2.5% budget increase for 2017 and 2018. The increased funding levels would be disbursed mainly for staff compensation and travel costs. Both the Chairman and I hope to maintain a full staff consisting of experienced, hardworking, and dedicated professionals who have devoted themselves to the Committee. We are also hoping to hold more frequent field hearings and conduct oversight travel, specifically out west, in order to speak directly with stakeholders and landowners in the areas, and related to the resources, the Committee oversees.

I would note that the Chairman has, consistent with the prior practice of our Committee, allocated 1/3 of the salary budget to the Minority. We have also agreed to continue the practice of the Committee to employ nonpartisan shared staff responsible for certain shared financial management, administrative, and support functions out of the 2/3rd share for the Majority. This arrangement has been fair to both the Majority and Minority. With respect to staffing, the Majority has also agreed to a 2/3-1/3 split for Committee staff—which results in 21 staff slots being allocated to the Minority.

In closing, I want to thank Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee for allowing us to present our budget request for the 115th Congress. Chairman Bishop and I are both honored to continue to serve in our leadership roles, and I look forward to working together in the upcoming years as stewards and managers of our country's natural resources.

Thank you, I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ranking Member Grijalva. I appreciate the presentation from both of you. And I will now recognize myself for 5 minutes for any questions.

As you look at your budget request, Chairman Bishop, what are you anticipating to be different in the 115th than it was in the 114th as we look at this?

Mr. BISHOP. Not a whole lot of difference in what we are trying to do, it is just the scope of what we are attempting to do is going to be different. As we mentioned, or as you all mentioned, we have a huge—in fact it is surprising the number of areas that we have to go through. Our committee deals with everything from Puerto Rico to Saipan, and it deals with a third of the land mass of the United States. I wish we didn't do a third of the land mass, but we do. We deal with water issues, we deal with Native American issues, we deal with insular issues. We have to deal with energy issues. And all those come into play, and I have probably forgotten something along the way here.

It also means that when we do our field hearings, which I think are extremely important to make sure that we are transparent and make sure that people have a chance to be heard, as well as getting that input from people, we have, I think, excessive travel needs that some other committees simply don't have, at the same time. And especially, as we said, most of our Members actually are from the West, which means their travel expenses will be more just from the get-go.

So it is our effort to try and expand that. As I said, the expansion we did last year was basically in doing more hearings and doing travel. What I am looking for the bulk of the money that would be increased here today is to maintain that effort to get out in the country and let people see what we are doing and let us learn from those people, and also to maintain our staff.

I think we have a funding level of about 69. We are close to that, if not. But once again, it presents the problem because we have such a wide, varied area of topics that we discuss. I need to have professional staff that understand that. It is not easy to shift somebody from committee A to committee B because the topics are totally different. So having staff that actually knows what is going on is extremely important, and that is where the bulk of the money goes.

So I think those are the two areas in which we are looking at expansion, both in the ability of getting out to do the hearings, as well as to maintain a staff, which I think will be in some kind of flux.

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

I will now recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Brady, for 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I only have one question to the Ranking Member.

I want to know, I have to be on record that you are okay with the financial situation and you have the finances that you need to do your job and your Committee to do its job.

Mr. GRIJALVA. As the financial breakdown has been the past custom and practice in this Committee, I think that that division is fine. We have lived with it, we have worked with it. An opportunity

to do more. I think this Committee will face and will be challenged by what is happening on the administrative level regarding energy production, what is happening regarding public land.

And as such, the request for additional support I think is appropriate insofar as while we might have, the Chairman and I might have different oversight goals and a different perspective to some of the issues we confront. For the minority to be fully staffed to carry out our agenda is important, and the breakdown presented by the Chairman meets the need as it is currently. And an increase would be tremendous, but at this point the 5 percent over 2 years would keep us going.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Brady.

I will now recognize Mr. Davis, the Vice Chairman of the Committee, for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to grant Chairman Bishop's wish, no questions.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

I now recognize the gentlelady from California, Ms. Lofgren. No questions.

I assume that we are fine with the two-thirds, one-third, that both of you are comfortable with that continuing?

Mr. BISHOP. Yeah.

The CHAIRMAN. With that, we thank you very much for being here. Thanks for the work that the Committee does. We will look forward to reviewing this request. Thank you.

[Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee now welcomes Chairman Walden and Ranking Member Pallone of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. Will the official reporter please enter a page break into the hearing record to begin a new section.

The House Committee on Energy and Commerce is tasked with oversight of digital commerce, consumer protection, technology, energy, environment, and public health policy, and many other subsets of those.

Chairman Walden and Ranking Member Pallone, welcome. And the Chairman now recognizes Chairman Walden for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. GREG WALDEN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OREGON

Mr. WALDEN. Well, Mr. Chairman, it is a delight to be before you and Mr. Brady and other Members of your Committee today. We come here thankful for the opportunity to make our case and look forward to any questions you may have.

I am grateful for this opportunity to testify before you today on the Energy and Commerce Committee's budget request for the 115th Congress. My Committee has previously provided you with a formal request, so my testimony will be brief.

Let me begin by expressing our deep appreciation for the resources that you provided to upgrade our primary Committee room in the last Congress. 2123 Rayburn is back in action and the high-tech upgrades are being put to good to use. We don't have electrical wires that are frayed or audio systems that don't work. So thank you for all of that.

Every committee has felt the pinch of budget cuts these last 10 years. Our total allocation is over \$4 million down from what it was in 2009, \$4 million less than what we were spending in 2009 through 2016, and that is in static funds, not taking into account higher costs across the board due to a decade of inflation.

With an eye toward fiscal responsibility, but fully acknowledging the significant work ahead of us in the 115th Congress, Ranking Member Pallone and I developed a budget that we believe is a realistic assessment of our coming needs. We request a 5 percent increase over what we were allocated last Congress to add a limited number of key staff positions. All of these additional funds would go towards staffing needs.

To be most effective we need to continue to attract and retain experienced staff. First year associates at K Street law firms receive salaries of at least \$160,000 a year, Mr. Chairman, as you probably know. Most, if not all the business before the Committee on Energy and Commerce requires the expertise of individuals with experience in their fields—telecommunications and technology policy, energy and environmental law, health care, and rigorous oversight and investigations ability. If lawyers just out of law school are getting \$160,000 a year, you can imagine what experienced professional staff and counsels can earn.

That is the competition in the marketplace that we face, Mr. Chairman. While our goal should not be to match K Street salaries, this is public service, we must acknowledge the realities of the market and adjust our compensation structure accordingly to attract and retain those interested in public service.

Beyond staffing needs, we also need help to effectively address some of the most complex and far-reaching issues before Congress in the coming months. A few thoughts on our agenda, if you would.

While Energy and Commerce is always busy, last Congress we held 185 hearings and we held 47 markups. We expect this Congress to be even more demanding. Regardless of who is in charge, our Committee's responsibility on healthcare issues requires an increased investment of Member and staff time and resources. The E&C Committee has an aggressive and legislative schedule that includes acting soon to reauthorize the expiring FDA user fee programs, there are three of those, reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program, and reauthorize the country's community health centers, and oversee implementation of 21st Century Cures. There is no doubt that health care will be a key policy issue for us.

Other issues on the agenda in which we intend to invest significant time and resources include the following.

Energy environmental infrastructure. We intend to answer the President's call to address the infrastructure crisis by moving bipartisan legislation through our Committee. We will look at all areas of infrastructure in energy, including nuclear, pipelines, and modernizing the grid. Our goal is to put the consumer first, create jobs, and invest in America's infrastructure and innovation.

Cybersecurity, we all know the threat there. Privacy, encryption, data breach are all high profile areas for this Congress and this Committee within our technology jurisdiction. Working with stakeholders, the Committee intends to examine and address the threats and opportunities present in each of these areas.

When it comes to communications law, for the first time in decades the Committee intends to move telecommunications reauthorization bills. The modern world needs modern regulatory structures. We intend to reauthorize the communications agencies, some of which have not been reauthorized since the 1990s.

As my predecessors from past Congresses have testified before you, there will be areas where Frank and I agree and areas where we may disagree on policy. But to properly serve the American people, we agree that we need additional, but modest increases in our Committee resources.

Again, I thank the Committee for the opportunity to come before you and testify and make our case. And of course I would be more than happy to answer any questions that you all might have.

And with that, I yield back the balance of my time.

[The statement of Mr. Walden follows:]

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY
THE HONORABLE GREG WALDEN
CHAIRMAN
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE**

BEFORE

**THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION
February 15, 2017**

**Budget Request for the Committee on Energy and Commerce
For the 115th Congress**

**Written Testimony of the Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
115th Congress Budget Request**

Chairman Harper, Ranking Minority Member Brady, and Members of the Committee, I am grateful for the opportunity to testify before you today in support of the Committee on Energy and Commerce's budget request for the 115th Congress. My Committee has previously provided you with a formal request, so my testimony will be brief.

Let me begin by expressing our deep appreciation for the resources you provided to upgrade our primary Committee room in the last Congress. 2123 Rayburn is back in action and the high tech upgrades are being put to good use. Thank you.

Every committee has felt the pinch of budget cuts these last ten years. Our total allocation is down over \$1.8 million from 2006 to 2016, and that is in static funds, not taking into account higher costs across the board due to a decade of inflation. With an eye towards fiscal responsibility, but fully acknowledging the significant work ahead of us in the 115th Congress, Ranking Member Pallone and I developed a budget that we believe is a realistic assessment of our coming needs. We request a 5% increase over what we were allocated last Congress to add a limited number of staff positions. All of these additional funds would go toward staffing needs.

To be most effective, we need to continue to attract and retain experienced staff. First year associates at K Street law firms

receive salaries of at least \$160,000 per year. Most, if not all, of the business before the Committee on Energy and Commerce requires the expertise of individuals with experience in their fields – telecommunications and technology policy, energy and environmental law, health care, and rigorous oversight and investigations ability. If lawyers just out of law school are being paid \$160,000 per year, you can imagine what experienced professional staff and counsels could earn.

That is the competition we face. While our goal should not be to match K Street salaries, we must acknowledge the realities of the market and adjust our compensation structure accordingly to attract those interested in public service.

Beyond staffing needs, we also need help to effectively address some of the most complex and far-reaching issues before Congress in the coming months. A few thoughts on our agenda:

While Energy and Commerce is always busy (last Congress, we held 185 hearings and 47 markups), we expect this Congress to be even more demanding. Regardless of who is in charge, our committee's responsibility on health care issues requires an increased investment of member and staff time and resources. The E & C Committee has an aggressive oversight and legislative schedule that includes acting soon to reauthorize the expiring FDA user fee programs, reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program and reauthorize the country's community health centers, and oversee implementation of 21st Century Cures – there is no doubt that health care issues will keep us busy.

Other issues on our agenda in which we intend to invest significant time and resources include the following:

- Energy and environmental infrastructure: We intend to answer the President's call to address the infrastructure crisis

by moving bipartisan legislation through our committee. We will look at all areas of energy infrastructure – including, nuclear, pipelines, and modernizing the electric grid. Our goal is to put the consumer first, create jobs and invest in America’s infrastructure and innovation.

- Cybersecurity, privacy, encryption, and data breach are all high profile areas of the Committee’s technology jurisdiction. Working with stakeholders, the Committee intends to examine and address the threats and opportunities present in each of these areas.
- Communications law: For the first time in decades, the Committee intends to move telecommunications reauthorization bills. The modern world needs modern regulatory structures and we intend to reauthorize the communications agencies in our jurisdiction so they can efficiently and expertly operate in the 21st Century.

As my predecessors from past Congresses have testified before you, there will be areas where Frank and I agree and areas where we will disagree. But to properly serve the American people, we agree that we need additional, but modest, increases in our resources.

Again, I thank the Committee for the opportunity to testify today, and of course will be happy to answer any questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that.
The Chair would now recognize Ranking Member Pallone for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR., A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Mr. PALLONE. Thank you, Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady, for the opportunity to testify before you in support of our Committee's budget request. And I want to thank Chairman Walden and his staff for working with me and my staff in putting our proposal together. As Chairman Walden said, we may disagree on policy, but we certainly agree on this proposal that is before us today.

I am going to try not to be repetitive of what my Chairman said, but coming out of the 2016 general elections and off the first 26 days of the Trump administration, it is really easy to foresee how extremely busy our Committee has been and will be if we are really going to engage and conclude on a very robust legislative and oversight agenda.

For starters, our majority has indicated our Committee obviously is looking at—is a primary actor in the debate surrounding the Affordable Care Act, and the 5 percent funding increase is necessary to ensure that Americans will continue to have affordable healthcare coverage. To finish the complex task, it is going to take a lot of skilled Committee staff, as well as new hires, to work with regard to this whole issue of the Affordable Care Act and its future.

A funding increase will also greatly assist our Committee in reauthorizing vital FDA programs, like the user fees that are coming up for reauthorization, the Children's Health Insurance which comes up, CHIP, in September, and all the telecommunication issues that Chairman Walden mentioned, as well as energy and environmental priorities.

I think it is a modest funding increase that we have asked for. Many of our staff, as the Chairman mentioned, have considerable specialized healthcare, telecommunication, and technology expertise, but it is very easy for them, as you can imagine, to command salaries that are double or triple what our Committee will be able to pay them. I mean, it is already happening and I think it is going to accelerate that we are going to see K Street and the lobbying industry going after our staff, and some of them will probably end up leaving because of the salary that they can command.

So of the total budget, 95 percent of our budget is allocated to hire, pay, and support our staff. So we are really just talking about staff here, Mr. Chairman.

Again, I don't want to repeat a lot of the statements that Chairman Walden has made, but I really think that this is a relative modest increase given what we face. I mean, in the last few weeks we have had many days when we have had two or three hearings, we have had markups. And so this is just an indication of what is to come for the rest of the 2-year session.

Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Pallone follows:]

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

**THE HONORABLE FRANK PALLONE, JR.
RANKING MEMBER
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE**

BEFORE

**THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION
February 15, 2017**

**Budget Request for the
House Committee on Energy and Commerce**

For the 115th Congress

**Written Testimony of the Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member
House Committee on Energy and Commerce**

115th Congress Budget Request

Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today in support of the Committee on Energy and Commerce's budget request for the 115th Congress. I would like to thank Chairman Walden and his staff for working with me and my staff in assessing our collective capabilities as a committee, and to project out over the next two years what resources we will require to meet our future needs.

Much will be expected from the Energy and Commerce Committee in the 115th Congress. Coming out of the 2016 general elections and off the first 26 days of the Trump Administration, it isn't hard to foresee how extremely busy our committee will be if we are to engage and conclude on such a robust legislative and oversight agenda.

For starters, our majority has indicated that our Committee will be looked to as a primary actor in the debate surrounding the Affordable Care Act. The five percent funding increase is necessary to ensure that Americans will continue to have affordable healthcare coverage. To finish these complex tasks, it will take knowledgeable and skilled committee staff as well as new hires to work in various staff roles.

A funding increase will also greatly assist our Committee in reauthorizing vitally important FDA user fee programs, the indispensably important Children's Health Insurance Program, as well as to move on other important telecommunications,

technology, energy and environmental priorities and legislation that Chairman Walden alluded to in his testimony.

The modest funding increase that we request will greatly enhance our Committee's ability to retain critically important Committee staff. Many of our staff have considerable, specialized healthcare, telecommunications, technology, energy, environmental, antitrust, and oversight and investigations know-how and experience. As a result, some of them can command salaries that are double or triple what our Committee would be able to pay them. These attributes hold even greater value to private (and some public) sector firms and academic institutions when legislative action on national health care coverage and insurance matters appears to be so imminent as to make legislative inaction or incompetence unthinkable. It can therefore be expected, and thus needs to be planned for, that a good number of staff will be courted aggressively and potentially even recruited away from the Hill. And where that is not possible, the Committee will still need to have adequate budgetary resources to recruit new staff quickly to replace these individuals. Part of that contingency planning calls for us to submit this proposed request for an increase.

The total allocation for the Committee has been reduced by more than \$1.8 million from 2006 to 2016. And, as was the case in the last Congress, over 95 percent of our respective budgets are allocated to hire, pay, and support our staffs. All of the matters on our Committee's agenda and in its authorization and oversight plan will require considerable staff and talent, administrative, technical, information and travel resources. We sincerely appreciate what you have allocated to us in the past, and Chairman Walden and I will continue doing our utmost to exercise the fiscal discipline that is essential for us to make the most out of what we are allocated.

Again, I'd like to thank your Committee for the opportunity to testify before you today. We are grateful for the support that the

House Administration Committee has shown to us and to our Committee.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Brady. With that, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ranking Member Pallone.

I will now recognize myself for 5 minutes for questions.

But having the privilege of serving on this Committee, you know, I have better knowledge of the inner workings than I will over some of the committees that may come before us today and tomorrow, and the work is very important. This Committee touches so many different areas of jurisdiction, and it is important to our country, and I appreciate the work that both of you are doing.

I assume that we are good with the two-thirds, one-third, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. WALDEN. Yes, Mr. Chairman, we are. We have, I think, always had that in place. We certainly have it in place now and intend to going forward.

The CHAIRMAN. It appears that much of what this increase would go towards is really towards staff retention as much as anything. Is it more for filling open positions or more for retention?

Mr. WALDEN. It is a bit of both because we do think we need some additional resources. It is within our cap of total FTE. We are not fully up to that level. But we need some additional resources to deal with the complexity and volume of issues we will be working on. So it probably would be a couple of additional staff, but also this retention thing is real, as you know, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. And as far as any field hearings anticipated by the Committee at this point?

Mr. WALDEN. We have been somewhat limited on our ability because we, frankly, kept the money more in terms of the staff. But we would like to be able to get out. We think that is important to do, to get out across the country and hear from Americans where they live, as opposed to the select few that can come back and testify.

The CHAIRMAN. Sure.

Mr. WALDEN. We also, Mr. Chairman, would like to thank this Committee for its work to get us into the 21st century digital age so we have the new technology now where we can use telecommunications to reach out and hear from people and we will. But there is nothing like being there in person, as you know.

The CHAIRMAN. But we have the technology now to do at least virtual field hearings?

Mr. WALDEN. That is true, and we will do that.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. That is great. I thank both of you.

And I will now recognize Ranking Member Brady for 5 minutes of questions.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just to thank the Chairman and Ranking Member for being here. And you already asked the question that I would ask of our Ranking Member, he is satisfied with the one-third, two-thirds. You are getting what you need to get and we appreciate that. We appreciate the cooperation.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I now recognize the Vice Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Davis, for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am sorry I walked in late and missed both of your opening statements. I am sure fantasy sports were addressed, Mr. Pallone, so I apologize if I did miss that and your eloquence.

And, Mr. Walden, great conversation this morning about this hearing today, and I really appreciate your comments.

I want to know, though, do you have the resources to fulfill your oversight responsibilities adequately in this budget request?

Mr. WALDEN. In the budget request, you would always like to have more, especially when it comes to oversight. Our Committee has a wonderful bipartisan tradition of doing oversight hearings, whether it was going after the Peanut Corporation of America when they poisoned people with salmonella, leaving eight dead, to the Enron hearings, to you name it.

And I think it is important, regardless of who is in the White House, to continue to do aggressive oversight over programs and policies of this government. We are a separate and equal branch, and it is our intent to look at programs and policies and things that haven't been reauthorized in a long time, root out waste, fraud, and abuse wherever it is. That is part of our mission.

And so, frankly, we don't have the oversight staff we used to have and certainly Mr. Dingell had when he was all-powerful Chairman of this Energy and Commerce Committee. We have a very talented staff. But we came knowing fiscal constraints of the Federal budget. We come to you with this 5 percent increase in our authorization for our appropriation.

Mr. DAVIS. I just had one more question. As you put this budget request together, was there anything that you would like to do more on your Committee that your budget request does not allow you to do?

Mr. WALDEN. Well, frankly, I think we can always do more on the oversight side of things. I was the Ranking Member of the Oversight Subcommittee. I know the value of its work to inform our policy efforts. That would be good.

We recognize the importance and complexity and controversial nature of our work on healthcare reform, and so we do need to staff up there a bit more.

And we are very excited, frankly, about figuring out how to create jobs through infrastructure expansion, and so in our energy and telecom world. Both of those can play key roles not only in producing jobs, but also making sure we break through unnecessary barriers.

So I mean, if we had more staff, we could do more work, certain to that, and we will do a lot of work. But again, we didn't want to over ask, frankly, but this would certainly help us.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you.

Mr. PALLONE. Can I ask the Vice Chair, I should mention that we didn't bring up the fact that we have jurisdiction over gaming, but you opened the door. And it is true, I mean, there really is a need for more oversight and more attention the gaming industry, whether it is fantasy sports, internet gaming, or whatever. So if you give us more money, then we can do some more oversight into that as well.

Mr. WALDEN. And we promise not to go gamble with it.

Mr. PALLONE. Yes, we won't go to Las Vegas.

Mr. DAVIS. The Ranking Member and I have a longstanding joke between each other about fantasy sports. So it is always good to have good humor in this hearing.

So thank you both very much.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Davis.

And I will now recognize Mr. Brady for a follow-up.

Mr. BRADY. I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. I would be remiss if I didn't thank Chairman Walden, because of him, through the transition years ago, and I appreciate him coming and having a conversation with me, we were able to have hearings not interrupted, before 12 o'clock. And I don't forget that and I appreciate that. Thank you, sir. Thank you.

Mr. WALDEN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. And also, as a final comment I want to just thank your Committee for its emphasis on cybersecurity issues. I think that is certainly something that deserves that emphasis now and certainly in this year and years to come. Thank you for your hard work and thank you for your time today.

Mr. WALDEN. Thank you very much, gentlemen, we appreciate it.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee now welcomes Chairman Royce and Ranking Member Engel of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Would the official reporter please enter a page break into the hearing record to begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The House Committee on Foreign Affairs is tasked with oversight over the Department of State, USAID, the Peace Corps, and the United Nations. It has been tasked with considering legislation regarding the diplomatic community and disarmament issues. So today we welcome Chairman Royce and Ranking Member Engel. And the Chair recognizes Chairman Royce for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. EDWARD R. ROYCE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. ROYCE. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. As you know, the legislation, the sanctions legislation that we have passed on Russia, on North Korea, on Burma, and on Sudan, that has come out of the work of the Committee which I Chair and which Mr. Engel is the Ranking Member of. And we appreciate the chance here to tell you about the Foreign Affairs Committee work, Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady, because we feel that this has become vital, especially in light of events that are unfolding.

We also know that we are very productive when we are working together. And I think it is very fair to say that we have been very productive. This last session we had 24 bills become law, Democrat, Republican Members on the Committee, Members off the Committee.

But looking ahead, there are some areas here that we have to tackle now, and one of them is reauthorizing the departments and agencies under our jurisdiction, which you just mentioned. The State Department needs to be reorganized and reauthorized, and so does USAID, and so does international broadcasting, and we need to get that up and running now.

And to do that, we need staff to do it. And in point of fact, we have cut the budget of this Committee some 25 percent and then upped it up a percentage point a couple of years ago.

But the reality is that for our slots we have many, many positions that are not filled. And nearly all of the funding authorities within our jurisdiction need to be reauthorized. And we now have an attitude in the Senate where they want to work with us to get that done. And so if we don't get it done, it is bad for the Committee, it is bad for Congress, it is bad for the departments, and bad for our interests abroad. And I think all of the Members here understand the consequences of that.

Many times we have been in a position here this last year where we have made progress. We got a mini-State bill signed into law. We have authorized and reformed the food aid program. We have abolished a dysfunctional Broadcasting Board of Governors, but we are moving forward with what we replaced that with in terms of the BBG, and we need to in terms of our broadcasting into Eastern Europe, into Russia, into China.

And we do all of this in a bipartisan way with Mr. Engel's support. And now, with a Senate, and we have teed this up so that we think the administration or the new Secretary of State will be in support of these efforts, I think we can do a great job here. And that is our goal, because the world is a mess. And, frankly, it is going to take more manpower and woman power to do this. It is going to take filling some of those slots that have been held vacant.

Our budget is a million dollars less per year than it was in 2012. So it means we have, for example, if you can imagine this, we have one staffer who has in-depth sanctions experience, and he is the staff member that we work with to have passed the bills that we have passed on Iran, on North Korea, on Russia, on Burma, on Syria, on Venezuela, on Cuba, and on Sudan. And he also is the individual that we work with to provide the Armed Services Committee in passing its huge NDAA. As you know, we have a major role in that. So we process dozens and dozens of provisions for that bill. And we also have the same staff member covering Israel and the Palestinian situation.

Now, I could go on in other areas and share the same challenges that we face, but I will save you that. What I will say is that we have great people, many who haven't had a raise in 4 years, people who have left in part because of the circumstance of the workload, and we are less effective, frankly, than we could be.

And for these reasons I respectfully request that our current budget be increased 7 percent in the 115th Congress, and this increase would be used to fill three of my seven vacant positions and Mr. Engel would make his decisions. And, Chairman, Ranking Members, we do face grave national security challenges, including right now Iran, North Korea, and Russia, and we will continue to focus relentlessly on these threats. But we were also trying to advance our economic, humanitarian, and so many other interests abroad, and we need the capacity to do that.

So I thank you very much for considering our request. I don't make this request lightly, but out of a sense of responsibility and optimism about what the two of us together, with our 45 Committee Colleagues, can accomplish.

Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Royce follows:]

Chairman Ed Royce
Committee on Foreign Affairs
Statement before the Committee on House Administration
February 15, 2017

Thank you Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady for this chance to tell you about the Foreign Affairs Committee's work, and how you can support it.

Ranking Member Engel and I work in a very bipartisan way. We believe our nation is stronger when we are together, regardless of party.

We also know that we're more productive when we work together. And I think it's fair to say that we've been productive. Twenty-four (24) bills we worked on this past Congress became law. That's Republican bills. Democratic bills. Bills authored by Committee members, bills authored by non-Committee members.

But looking ahead, I think we can do even better.

One area where we'd *all* like to do better is reauthorizing the departments and agencies under our jurisdiction, including the State Department and international broadcasting. Nearly all of the funding authorities within our jurisdiction have been lapsed for more than **13** years. That's bad for the Committee and the Congress, bad for the departments, and bad for our interests abroad. Many times, we did our work, and the Senate let us down.

Last year though, we made progress, getting a mini-State bill signed into law, authorizing and reforming an important food aid program, and abolishing a dysfunctional broadcasting board. All done in a bipartisan way, with Mr. Engel's support. Now, with a Senate and Administration interested in reform, I think we can do even better. That's our goal. The world is a mess and we have plenty of problems to solve.

But frankly, that will take more man- and woman-power.

I became Chairman in 2013. Our budget is nearly a million dollars less per year than it was in 2012. This means we have 7 unfilled staff positions on the Committee's majority side alone -- positions that I am unable to fund.

How does that show?

It means we have just *one* staffer with in-depth sanctions expertise. The Committee has worked legislation sanctioning Iran, North Korea, Russia, Burma, Syria, Venezuela, Cuba and Sudan. And I'm probably forgetting one. He also leads the support we provide the Armed Services Committee in passing its huge NDAA. We process dozens and dozens of provisions for that bill. And this staffer also covers the Israel and the Palestinian situation! I could, but I won't tell you about our other stretched staff.

What I will say is that we have great people, some who haven't had a raise in four years. People have left, in part because of that, making us less effective than we could and should be.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask that our current budget be increased 7 percent in the 115th Congress. This increase would be used to fill 2-3 of my 7 vacant positions. Mr. Engel would make his decisions.

Chairman, Ranking Member, we face grave national security challenges, including Iran, North Korea and Russia. We'll continue to focus relentlessly on these threats. We are also trying to advance our economic, humanitarian and so many other interests abroad.

I am very proud of the role that our Committee has played in pushing good policy, while asserting Congress' role, including doing oversight. But things aren't going to get any easier for us. I don't make this request lightly, but out of a sense of responsibility and optimism about what the two of us together with our 45 Committee colleagues can accomplish.

I thank you for considering this request.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
And the Chair will now recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Engel, for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting both of us to testify today.

I would like to, first of all, add my voice to everything that Chairman Royce has just said. I have always believed that foreign policy should be as bipartisan as possible, that partisanship should top at the water's edge. And over the past 4 years, Chairman Royce and I have established a very productive and close working relationship. We have worked together with Members on both sides of the aisle, at a consistently fast tempo, to address an unprecedented number of foreign policy challenges and crises around the world. Our staffs, our respective staffs work together.

That is the kind of atmosphere we have on the Foreign Affairs Committee. Ed and I would like to say that we believe that we are the most bipartisan Committee in Congress. And foreign policy needs to be bipartisan. So we do share our staffs to some degree. I can pick up a phone and call any one of Ed's staff people, and he can pick up the phone and do the same with mine. And that has enabled us to do a lot of things with a minimal amount of money.

We have been very productive in the 114th Congress. The Committee passed 24 bills that were signed into law on issues ranging from food security, to human trafficking, to promoting good relations with the nations of the Caribbean. We passed the State Department authorities bill, which we hadn't for a long, long time, and it included critical provisions on embassy security. And we held hearings on a wide range of critical issues, including the fight against ISIS, Russian aggression in Ukraine, Iran's nuclear weapons program, North Korea's development of weapons of mass destruction, and many others. And even in this time of great political polarization, I think we and our staffs can continue to get a lot done for the good of the country and the world.

But given the massive challenges we face around the globe, our ability to keep pace with international threats and opportunities has been hampered by significant cuts to the Committee budget. In 2013 alone, our budget was reduced by almost 12 percent, the highest percentage cut sustained by any committee. We think the Foreign Affairs Committee should be increased, not cut back, given all the problems we have in the world.

And in the 2 years before that, before the 12 percent cut, we were cut by 5 percent and 6 percent. In 2014 we were pleased to get a 1 percent increase, but that still leaves us well below where I think we need to be. And Ed and I, we have wonderful staffs. They try to do their best. But, you know, when you don't give people raises they leave, you lose the best people. And it is really not fair and not conducive to us doing what we need to do in such an important realm, foreign affairs.

So these cumulative cuts have made it more difficult to hire and retain experienced Committee staff to help us navigate the many complex national security challenges that confront our Nation. It has also complicated the efforts of the Committee to conduct effective oversight of the State Department, which is what we should be doing, oversight of USAID and other agencies under our jurisdiction, and to craft legislation authorizing these institutions.

So I strongly support Ed's, the Chairman's request for a 7 percent increase in the Committee budget. In this time of great change both at home and abroad, this would begin the process of rebuilding the capacity of the Committee to more effectively meet our responsibilities.

So I thank you again for inviting me to testify, and I look forward to answering any questions you might have.

[The statement of Mr. Engel follows:]

Ranking Member Eliot L. Engel
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Statement before the Committee on House Administration
February 15, 2017

Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify today.

I've always believed that foreign policy should be as bipartisan as possible, and over the past four years, Chairman Ed Royce and I have established a very productive working relationship. We've worked together with Members on both sides of the aisle at a consistently fast tempo to address an unprecedented number of foreign policy challenges and crises around the world.

In the 114th Congress, the Committee passed 24 bills that were signed into law on issues ranging from food security to human trafficking to promoting good relations with the nations of the Caribbean. We passed a State Department Authorities bill, which included critical provisions on embassy security. And we held hearings on a wide range of critical issues, including the fight

against ISIS, Russian aggression in Ukraine, Iran's nuclear weapons program, North Korea's development of WMD, and many others.

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These cumulative cuts have made it more difficult to hire and retain experienced Committee staff to help us navigate the many complex national security challenges that confront our nation.

It has also complicated the efforts of the Committee to conduct effective oversight of the State Department, USAID and other agencies under our jurisdiction and to craft legislation authorizing these institutions.

I strongly support the Chairman's request for a 7% increase in the Committee budget. In this time of great change, both at home and abroad, this would begin the process of rebuilding the capacity of the Committee to more effectively meet our responsibilities.

Thank you again for inviting me to testify, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ranking Member Engel.

Thanks to both of you. It is such an important Committee and the work that you have to do is a great responsibility. So I am going to now recognize Mr. Brady for any questions he may have.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just to the Ranking Member, I heard your testimony and I would assume that the funding is one-third, two-thirds, and you are both in agreement with that.

Mr. ROYCE. Yes, Mr. Brady.

Mr. BRADY. And one other thing. I hate to disagree with my dear friend, the Ranking Member, but I believe that me and the Chairman here would not agree with you with the fact that we have the best nonpartisan Committee.

Mr. ENGEL. Well, if you will give us an increase, we don't mind being a close second.

Mr. ROYCE. You can tell we have diplomats on this Committee, including the Ranking Member.

The CHAIRMAN. Now we will recognize the Vice Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Davis, for questions for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member.

You know, reauthorization of programs has been a major issue for the organizational task force that I serve on outside of this Committee. I know it was brought up, but can you specifically address what is the likelihood of reauthorizing the State Department—

Mr. ROYCE. Highly likely.

Mr. DAVIS. Highly?

Mr. ROYCE. Because of the attitudes now of our counterparts in the Senate. They would like to go forward and precisely that. And I think there is broad-based bipartisan support in the House and the Senate for us to do this reorganization and do it now.

But to do it, we have got to have some additional staff to handle it, to say nothing of the fact that, as I explained, we also need personnel with some sanctions expertise here besides the one individual we have. And we are going to have to have that authorizing expertise for the State Department and USAID. I think we all agree we want to do that as well.

And in terms of our counterterrorism, Middle East issues, ISIS, again, we need the personnel, we need personnel. And so we don't need a lot of bodies, but we need some. And that is why this increase after this experience of having a 24 percent reduction. We have got to ramp up enough to get this reauthorization through and handle these other issues.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. We now recognize Ms. Comstock for any questions she may have.

Mr. Loudermilk, any questions that you may have.

Okay. I want to thank you both for coming. We recognize the need and we have a constitutional responsibility to make sure that the legislative branch is indeed a coequal branch of government. And we want to make sure you have got the resources to your job, so we will look at this request.

Mr. ROYCE. Well, I thank you for that note, Chairman Harper, and I thank Ranking Member Brady. I think that is exactly right.

We have got to be a coequal arm of government. And I thank you, Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. ENGEL. I thank you also, Mr. Chairman. You know, I was thinking of ad libbing exactly what you said. I think all of us feel so strongly that a lot of through the years—I have been here now 28 years, and we have seen the eroding of legislative branch power. In large portion it is because of cuts and things like that. But the State Department, I mean, they need to be monitored. We need to play a very important role in that and everything else as well.

So I thank you and Mr. Brady. We really appreciate it.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. And on a personal note Mr. Engel, as the only Member who has a child with fragile X syndrome, I want to thank you for your work as being the Co-Chair of the Fragile X Caucus. Thank you for that, it means a lot. Thank you both.

Mr. ENGEL. But you do most of the work.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee now welcomes Chairman McCaul and Ranking Member Thompson of the Committee on Homeland Security.

Will the official reporter please enter a page break into the hearing record to begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The House Committee on Homeland Security has responsibility to provide oversight for the Department of Homeland Security. It has also been tasked with protecting Americans from potential terrorist attacks, as well as cyber-attacks and securing the borders. I want to welcome Chairman McCaul and Ranking Member Thompson. And the Chair would now recognize Chairman McCaul for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. MICHAEL T. MCCAUL, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS**

Mr. MCCAUL. Thank you Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady. I think it goes without saying that homeland security issues have never been more relevant or timely or threatening. And thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the working goals of the Committee. I am pleased to be sitting next to Ranking Member Thompson, who has been a great partner over the last 4 years in a bipartisan spirit.

I am proud of the work the Committee has done in the last 4 years in a bipartisan manner. In the last Congress we passed 89 bills, we passed 88 on the House floor, responsible for 32 public laws, despite our jurisdictional issues, and held almost 90 hearings, 19 markups, and produced more than 30 reports.

The 114th Congress was the most productive legislative Congress the Committee has ever had. In this Congress the Committee will again focus on counterterrorism efforts, both at home and abroad. We are still a Nation at war. In 2016 nearly a thousand people killed were either or injured in terror attacks in Western countries alone. Jihadists are being radicalized online and being urged to attack what they call the kuffar, the nonbeliever, in their own backyard.

This Committee will play a vital role, as always, in keeping Americans safe in the coming years. In the 114th Congress much of the legislation was used in response to the attacks in Paris and Orlando and Brussels. We also focused on the border, and we will focus on it heavily this Congress. Our borders remain insecure, are a matter of national security, and we need to put in place a multi-layered defense system that drug cartels and terrorists can't get through and slip through the cracks.

This Committee also needs to do our part to defend our digital frontiers. We are fighting a silent war in cyberspace with unlimited fronts. Nation-states, criminals, hacktivists, and terrorists are infiltrating our networks. Some want to embarrass us, others are seeking to copy our innovation, steal our intellectual property, our Nation's secrets, and acts of espionage and cyber warfare continue to be a real threat to the United States, and also the threat to undermine the very foundation of our Republic.

Unfortunately, I think the enemy is winning in this space. We have to get serious about playing defense and respond in a way that will make other adversaries think twice about doing it again.

Last but not least, we will finally reauthorize the Department of Homeland Security. Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, the Department of Homeland Security has never been reauthorized by Congress since its creation. That is something I want to change.

Since the 9/11 attacks and the creation it has never been reauthorized.

What we put in place was a MOU with seven other committees of jurisdiction and their Chairmen, led by the Majority Leader and the Speaker, and I am confident that this long-overdue responsibility will finally be accomplished and we will be able to provide the Department with the congressional direction that it has lacked in the last 15 years. This MOU is a result of a leadership-backed process and was submitted as an extension of remarks under the Speaker's signature in the Congressional Record. Our authorization effort will address all the issues I have outlined previously and also waste, fraud, and abuse, as well as streamlining and consolidating the offices within DHS.

In order to ensure that we will be successful in this effort we have spoken to other committees to gather some of the lessons learned, how to avoid common pitfalls. And what we learned, which was no real surprise, is that this will be a significant legislative lift. We have already hired one full-time dedicated staff to lead this effort. This staffer has more than 15 years of experience in the House and significant experience on legislative and parliamentary matters.

Due to the urgency of this effort, we took a leap of faith and hired her before we finalized our budget in 2017. This person is spearheading the reauthorization effort, which includes working with leadership, outside stakeholders, and other House and Senate committees.

We would also like to hire dedicated staff to work solely on the budget aspects of reauthorization, something we do not have expertise in currently. Therefore, the Committee is asking for a \$300,000 increase in our annual budget. As the majority, we will spend our portion of this \$200,000 on the reauthorization effort. The remainder will be at the direction of the Ranking Member and minority staff as to how best to spend this in support of the reauthorization.

Again, this will be a significant challenge for us, but if the Department is never reauthorized, it will never have congressional direction, it will never have the imprimatur of the Congress, and we will be abdicating our responsibilities as a separate branch of government.

With that, I want to thank you, and I appreciate your time and consideration. I look forward to a productive Congress.

[The statement of Mr. McCaul follows:]

**Michael T. McCaul - Committee on Homeland Security
Written Testimony - House Committee on Administration
February 15, 2017**

Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the work and goals of the Homeland Security Committee. I am happy to be sitting next to Ranking Member Thompson, who has been a great partner over the last four years.

I am proud of the work this Committee has done over the past four years in a bipartisan manner.

In the 114th Congress we passed 89 bills out of Committee, passed 88 on the House floor, and were responsible for 32 Public Laws. We also held almost 90 hearings, 19 markups and produced more than 30 reports.

The 114th Congress was the most productive legislative Congress the Committee has ever had.

In the 115th Congress, the Committee will again focus on counterterrorism efforts both at home and abroad. We must remember, we still are a nation at war.

In 2016, nearly 1000 people were either killed or injured in terror attacks in Western countries alone.

Young jihadists are being radicalized online, and being urged to attack the kuffar – the non-believer – in their own backyard.

This Committee will play a vital role in keeping Americans safe in the coming years.

In the 114th Congress, much of our legislation was used in response to the attacks in Paris and Orlando.

We will also focus on the border. Our borders remain insecure, and are a matter of national security. We need to put in place a multi-layered defense system so that drug cartels and terrorists don't slip through the cracks.

This Committee also needs to do our part to defend our digital frontiers. We are fighting a silent war in cyberspace with unlimited fronts. Nation states, criminals, hacktivists, and terrorists are infiltrating our networks.

Some want to embarrass us, others are seeking to copy our innovation, steal our nation's secrets, and even undermine the very foundation of our republic. Unfortunately, the enemy is winning. We have got to get serious about playing defense, and respond in a way that will make our adversaries think twice about doing it again.

Last, but not least, we will finally re-authorize the Department of Homeland Security.

The Department has not been reauthorized since its inception after the 9/11 attacks. With an MOU in place with 7 other Committees, I am confident that this long overdue responsibility will finally be accomplished, and we will be able to provide the Department with the Congressional direction it has lacked for the last 15 years.

This MOU was a result of a Leadership backed process and was submitted as an Extension of Remarks under the Speaker's Signature in the Congressional Record. (I have a copy which I would like to submit for the record).

Our reauthorization effort will address waste, fraud and abuse as well as streamline and consolidate offices within DHS.

In order to ensure that we will be successful, we have spoken to other Committees to gather some of the lessons learned – and how to avoid common pitfalls. What we learned, which was no real surprise, was that this will be a significant legislative lift.

We have already hired one full-time dedicated staff to lead this effort. This hire has more than 15 years of experience in the House and significant expertise on legislative and parliamentary matters. Due to the urgency of this effort, we took a leap of faith and hired her before we finalized our budget for 2017. This person is spearheading the reauthorization effort which includes working with Leadership, outside stakeholders, and other House and Senate Committees. We would also like to hire a dedicated staff to work solely on the budget aspects of reauthorization – something we do not have expertise in currently.

The Committee is asking for a \$300,000 increase in our annual budget. As the Majority, we will spend our portion of this (\$200,000) on the reauthorization effort. The remainder would be at the discretion of the Ranking Member and Minority staff on how to best spend it in support of the reauthorization effort.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to testify. I appreciate your time and consideration, and look forward to a productive 115th Congress.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Chairman McCaul.
I will now recognize my fellow Mississippian and the Ranking Member of Homeland Security, Congressman Thompson.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you very much, Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady and Members of the Committee. I might add, Mr. Chair, you look mighty fine as Chair.

I am pleased to be here to support the funding request submitted by my partner on the Committee on Homeland Security, Chairman McCaul. Last Congress the Committee was enormously active. In the 114th Congress the Committee conducted 90 hearings, including 6 field hearings, and held 19 markups, 59 Member briefings, and 3 site visits. That was a 70 percent increase in the number of CHS advanced bills considered by the full House over the previous Congress. Ultimately, we advanced nearly 90 measures to the House floor and succeeded in having 40 enacted into law in some form or fashion.

With respect to oversight, we had great success, particularly with respect to identifying efficiencies in DHS headquarters operations and improving operations at TSA and CBP. Another oversight highlight was the bipartisan work undertaken by the Task Force on Combatting Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel.

As we look to the next 2 years, there is an expectation that the Committee will be heavily involved in preparing and advancing comprehensive authorization legislation for the Department of Homeland Security. Congress after Congress jurisdictional barriers have prevented the Department, the third-largest Federal agency, from being reauthorized since it was established in 2002. The closest this Committee has ever gotten to fully authorizing DHS was a decade ago, in 2007, when the House approved comprehensive legislation that I authored.

With this Congress, Chairman McCaul executed an agreement to advance a package with the Chairmen of eight other committees with jurisdictional claims in the homeland security space. I compliment him for that. I am not aware of it being done in quite a while. As you know, jurisdiction is the Holy Grail in this institution, so I compliment him on that.

This important undertaking is expected to be resource intensive. As such, the Committee is seeking \$300,000 in increased funding. Of that amount, \$100,000 is necessary for Committee Democrats to fully participate in a DHS authorization process.

By approving our budget request for the 115th Congress, you would be helping Congress carry out its constitutional responsibilities to oversee the executive branch. Specifically, by doing so, you would be ensuring that CHS has the resources to translate our oversight findings into legislation to help the Department mature and succeed in its vital mission of securing the Nation from the many threats we face.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, for the opportunity to testify. And I look forward to answering any questions you might have.

[The statement of Mr. Thompson follows:]

MICHAEL T. McCaul, TEXAS
CHAIRMAN



BENNIE G. THOMPSON, MISSISSIPPI
Ranking Member

One Hundred Fifteenth Congress
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)
In Support of Committee on Homeland Security Budget Request
Before Committee on House Administration
Feb. 15 at 11:45 am (1310 Longworth House Office Bldg.)

Good morning, Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady and members of the Committee. I am pleased to be here to support the funding request submitted by my partner on the Committee on Homeland Security, Chairman McCaul.

Last Congress, the Committee was enormously active. In the 114th Congress, the Committee conducted 90 hearings, including six field hearings, and held 19 markups, 59 Member briefings, and three site visits. There was a seventy percent increase in the number of CHS-advanced bills considered by the Full House over the previous Congress. Ultimately, we advanced nearly 90 measures to the House floor and succeeded in having forty enacted into law in some form or fashion. With respect to oversight, we had great success particularly with respect to identifying efficiencies in DHS headquarters operations and improving operations at TSA and CBP. Another oversight highlight was the bipartisan work undertaken by the "Task Force on Combating Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel."

As we look to the next two years, there is an expectation that the Committee will be heavily involved in preparing and advancing comprehensive authorization legislation for the Department of Homeland Security. Congress after Congress, jurisdictional barriers have prevented the Department – *the third largest Federal agency*—from being reauthorized since it was established in 2002. The closest this Committee has ever gotten to fully authorizing DHS was a decade ago, in 2007, when the House approved comprehensive legislation I authored.

This Congress, Chairman McCaul executed an agreement to advance a package with the chairmen of the eight other Committees with jurisdictional claims in the homeland security space. Without changes to the black-letter jurisdiction, success is not guaranteed and roadblocks are a certainty. This important undertaking is expected to be resource-intensive. As such, the Committee is seeking \$300,000 in increased funding. Of that amount, \$100,000 is necessary for Committee Democrats to fully-participate in the DHS authorization process.

By approving our budget request for the 115th Congress, you would be helping Congress carry out its constitutional responsibilities to oversee the Executive Branch. Specifically, by doing so, you would be ensuring that CHS has the resources to translate our oversight findings into legislation to help the Department mature and succeed in its vital mission of securing the nation from the many threats we face.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ranking Member Thompson. So we have already voted in the extra increase just because you were so nice when you started out there.

But I thank you both for the great work that you do. The way you work together, even when you disagree on policy issues, you have exhibited a good working relationship. We are thankful for that.

One of the responsibilities we have is the constitutional responsibility to remember that we are a coequal branch of the government and we punish ourselves sometimes. As you look at what our funding levels historically have been on this Committee, you are still way under what we were probably back in the 2007, 2008 levels.

So we recognize you have gone through this and looked at it. We want to make sure you have got the resources to do this very important authorization of DHS. That is just not an easy undertaking. And so we want to make sure you are equipped to do that.

With that, I will recognize Mr. Brady for any comments or questions he may have, for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think that the Ranking Member already answered my question, but for the record I need to ask that you are okay with the financial one-third, two-thirds agreement that we have always had.

Mr. THOMPSON. Yes, sir.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you. That is it.

The CHAIRMAN. I now recognize the Vice Chair of the Committee, Mr. Davis, if you have any questions.

Mr. DAVIS. Yes. Mr. Chairman, do you feel that your budget request allows you to perform your oversight responsibilities up to a level that you would be comfortable with?

Mr. MCCAUL. Well, we would always welcome more from this Committee, but we were trying to be realistic in terms of our staffing for the reauthorization. I think this Committee will be very active this Congress with so much on its plate, the executive orders that have come out with respect to the building of physical barriers, to the travel restrictions, to the counterterrorism efforts, to the cyber mission. It is going to require intense oversight to make sure that the administration gets it right.

So I think, as the Chairman mentioned, we are probably still at pre-2007 levels with what I consider to be the most important mission under the Constitution, it is providing for common defense as I look at the homeland.

I just met with the outgoing National Security Director, the FBI, and talked about the threats as he sees it going out of office. And, unfortunately, they are still alive and well, and the homeland is still very much at risk. And it is difficult, given the current resource situation, to do our job adequately to provide that kind of oversight, which is essential.

Again, we are trying to be, I think, realistic in our quest, but certainly would welcome any additional funding.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair would now recognize Ms. Comstock for any questions that she may have.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I would just like to reiterate your comments and my interest in seeing, particularly we had Foreign Affairs before and now with Homeland, that you all do have the sufficient resources in this very dangerous time.

So I appreciate that as a former staffer and the need for you to have your staff there. And also, given the competition that I know on the majority side we are having with staff getting stolen from other areas, I think it is important that we make sure we have adequate resources for you also. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentlelady yields back.

I now recognize Mr. Loudermilk being for any questions that you may have, sir.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman McCaul, thank you for the testimony, and I commend you on the staff. After serving on your Committee the last couple of years, that is one of the most dedicated and loyal staffs and knowledgeable staffs of any of the committees we have in the House, and that it is commendable and shows your leadership as well.

It is extremely important that we make sure that we are well staffed, and I am excited about the reauthorization, I think it is something that we have to do.

My question would be, after a hopefully successful reauthorization and budgeting, what would be the plan for these two staff positions? Would you reallocate those to work on other things or would you go back to the previous staffing level?

Mr. MCCAUL. Well, we want to model this authorization after the NDAA model, which is really an annual authorization. Now, that is a very high challenge to my Committee, our Committee.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Right.

Mr. MCCAUL. That is, I think, the model. And if it is done on that basis, I think it really fulfills our responsibilities under the Constitution under Article I to exercise our proper role. I think too long we have ceded this authority to the executive branch, regardless of party, and I think it is time that Congress steps forward on this issue.

So I don't see these two staffers going away. They could always help in other functions with the Committee. But this will be a full-time effort on an annual basis.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Okay. Thank you.

No other questions. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

Again, thanks to both of you. I also want to commend you on the emphasis that you have had and will have in this Congress on dealing with cybersecurity issues. So we look forward to hearing back from you. Thank you.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MCCAUL. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee now welcomes Chairman Nunes and Ranking Member Schiff of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. Would the official reporter please enter a page break into the hearing record to begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence is tasked with oversight of the United States intelligence community, which includes the intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the following 17 elements of the U.S. Government and the military intelligence program. It is an unbelievable list of responsibilities that you have to provide that look into and oversight for.

So I want to welcome Chairman Nunes and Ranking Member Schiff. And the Chair now recognizes the Chairman for 5 minutes.

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

Mr. NUNES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And hopefully I don't take all the time, but I do want to just kind of briefly run you through what we do on our Committee and why we have asked for such a large increase.

And just to put it in perspective, in 2016 the Committee received less funding than we did in 2002. Since then an entire new superstructure of the intelligence community was created by the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act. The continual increase in the size of the IC has stretched the ability of the Committee and staff to conduct vigorous oversight demanded by the current security environment.

Today the Committee serves as an exclusive House oversight body over the intelligence community's 17 agencies and authorizes more than \$70 billion a year, which is more authorizing power than most Committees have. Unlike most Committees, the Intelligence Committee passes an annual Intelligence Authorization Act which requires significant dedication of staff resources. This is independent of the staff resources needed to conduct day-to-day oversight work.

The Committee also serves as a venue for all House Members to learn about sensitive intelligence programs. This again requires significant staff and resources to educate Members that are not on the Committee in the Committee spaces, a service typically not provided by other committees. For instance, this year alone the Committee staff has individually briefed approximately 100 noncommittee Members on specific classified intelligence reports.

Additionally, the Committee faces continual pressures from other committees to review bills in areas of shared jurisdiction. In order to respond to other committees in a timely and effective fashion the Committee requires numerous lawyers familiar with the intelligence community and its unique mission.

The Committee currently only employs five lawyers, that is Republicans and Democrats, three of whom are dual-hatted and perform other policy-related work. Just in comparison, most committees have dozens of lawyers, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member.

Under the direction from the Speaker, the Committee also has a significant domestic and international travel requirement to conduct oversight. In the 114th Congress Committee Members and staff traveled more than nearly all committees in Congress. This is especially significant considering the size of the Committee.

Although most Committee travel does not have a budget impact, it does take staff resources. Unlike other committees, the Intelligence staff cannot conduct normal work on the road since much of their work is classified and therefore must be performed in a secure facility. This in turn reduces the Committee's ability to be responsive to agencies.

Because of the nature of classified oversight work done by the Committee, the Intelligence Committee has a particular need to hire staff with specialized knowledge. These staff must also have the highest clearances authorized within the Federal Government. This clearance requirement causes the Committee to have higher than normal compensation levels, straining the Committee's budget.

In order to ensure that the Committee is fulfilling its mission while providing appropriate assistance to all House Members, the Committee hopes to hire additional staff in the 115th Congress. Over the past 6 years the Committee has maintained an average of 31 employees, less than half of the 6-year House average of 64 employees for standing committees. During this time the Committee staff has remained flat while the prominence of intelligence issues within the national discourse has dramatically increased.

Finally, the Committee seeks to improve security for its own computer systems by phasing out old servers and strengthening internet protections to reduce various risks, including intrusion by foreign actors. Because information about vulnerabilities of the Committee's system is classified, we can provide a detailed briefing on the Committee's information technology needs in a secure space.

And with that, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member and the other Members of the Committee, this is also a very bipartisan Committee. Mr. Schiff and myself work together behind closed doors and I think have produced very bipartisan products over the course of the last Congress. So I look forward to your questions.

[The statement of Mr. Nunes follows:]



Statement of Chairman Devin Nunes
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

Before the Committee on House Administration
Committee Budget Request for the 115th Congress

February 15, 2017

Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify about the Intelligence Committee's budget request for the 115th Congress.

During the 113th and 114th Congresses, the Committee received less funding than it did in the 107th and 108th Congresses. Since then, an entire new superstructure of the Intelligence Community was created by the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act. In fact, according to a recent article in *The Hill*, HPSCI "does not have the necessary resources to do its job" because "the Intelligence Community's budget is 18,421 times larger, than the Committee's." The rise in global terrorism, increasing threats from ISIL, homegrown violent extremists, cyber threats from our enemies, and a continual increase in the size of the Intelligence Community have stretched the ability of the Committee and its staff to conduct the vigorous oversight demanded by the current security environment.

Today, the Committee serves as the exclusive House oversight body over the Intelligence Community's 17 agencies and authorizes more than \$70 billion each year - which is more authorizing power than most committees have. Unlike most committees, the Intelligence Committee passes an annual intelligence authorization act, which involves extensive budget meetings, site visits to the respective Executive Branch agencies to discuss sensitive programs, and negotiations with multiple committees in the House and Senate.

The Committee also serves as a venue for all Members of the House to learn about sensitive intelligence programs. This requires significant staff resources to educate members within Committee spaces - a service typically not provided by other committees. For instance, this year already, committee staff individually briefed 100 non-Committee Members on a classified intelligence report related to a matter of national importance.

Additionally, the Committee faces continual pressure from other committees to review bills in areas of shared jurisdiction. In order to respond to other committees in a timely and effective fashion, the Committee requires numerous lawyers familiar with the Intelligence Community and its unique mission. The committee currently only employs five lawyers, three of whom are dual-hatted and perform other policy-related work, compared to 31 lawyers at the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

Under direction from the Speaker, the Committee also has a significant travel requirement to conduct oversight at domestic and international Intelligence Community sites. In the 114th Congress, Committee Members and staff traveled more than nearly all committees in Congress. This is especially significant considering the size of the Committee. Although most Committee travel does not have a budget impact, it does impact staff resources. Unlike other committees, HPSCI staff cannot conduct normal work on the road since much of their work is classified and therefore must be performed in a secure facility. This, in turn, reduces the Committee's ability to be responsive to agencies, Members, and other committees.



Because of the nature of the classified oversight work done by the Committee, HPSCI has a particular need to hire staff with specialized knowledge. These staff must also have the highest clearances authorized within the Federal Government. This clearance requirement causes the Committee to have higher than normal compensation levels, straining the Committee's budget.

In order to ensure that the Committee is fulfilling its mission of effective, efficient, and Constitutional oversight while providing appropriate assistance to all House Members, the Committee hopes to hire additional staff in the 115th Congress. Over the past six years, the Committee has maintained an average of 31 employees - less than half of the six-year House average of 64 employees for standing committees of the House. During this time, the Committee's staff has remained flat while the prominence of intelligence issues within the national discourse has dramatically increased.

Finally, the Committee seeks to improve security for its own computer systems by phasing out old servers and strengthening internet protection to reduce the risks of viruses, malware, and intrusion by foreign actors. Because information about the vulnerabilities of the Committee's systems is classified, we can provide a detailed briefing on the Committee's information technology needs in a secured space.

Thank you for allowing the Ranking Member and me to present our request for the 115th Congress. We welcome any questions the Committee may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
I now recognize Ranking Member Schiff for 5 minutes.

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Brady. I will be quick and won't need to use the full 5 minutes. But I fully concur with the Chairman's remarks. We have worked together extremely well on the Committee. We can do a lot, and do, but there is more yet to be accomplished.

Our funding is still at pre-9/11 levels. Since that time, the threats have only multiplied and increased in severity, from al-Qaida, to ISIL, to China, North Korea, and of course Russia. The size and complexity of the intelligence community has also kept apace. There are now 17 different IC agencies and the budget tops many tens of billions of dollars.

In coping with these challenges and increased responsibilities our size and budget on the Committee have fallen behind. We have a staff of 31 and a spending average of \$3.9 million a year, ranking in the lowest tier of House committees and at the very bottom of our fellow national security committees. Foreign Affairs and Homeland Security, for example, have in excess of two and a half times as many staff as we have.

Additionally, because of the classified nature of the IC, we cannot rely on outside groups to raise issues to our attention as other committees can. We have to find out these issues ourselves, often from agencies that happen to be very good at keeping secrets, at least most of the time.

It is also worth reiterating that the Intelligence Committee passes an intelligence authorization every year, which is essential to our detailed oversight mission. It involves countless budget meetings, site visits with agencies, negotiations with multiple committees, as well as an interagency process.

So there are enormous challenges. National security obviously is not the exclusive province of the intel community, but we are increasingly called upon to review and comment on other shared bills of jurisdiction.

And it is worth also noting that in addition to the oversight of the intelligence community, in addition to the IT threats that we face, obviously there are cyber threats that we all face, but the Intel Committee in particular. We also have a major investigation to conduct. And for those reasons and others we could use this additional assistance.

With that, I yield back.
[The statement of Mr. Schiff follows:]



Statement of Ranking Member Adam B. Schiff
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

Before the Committee on House Administration
Committee Budget Request for the 115th Congress

February 15, 2017

Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify with Chairman Nunes about the Intelligence Committee's budget request for the 115th Congress.

I agree fully with the Chairman's testimony. Thanks in large part to his leadership, we have remained a bipartisan Committee, and together we have accomplished a lot. But, we can do more, and need to do more, which is why we are asking for additional resources.

Our funding is at pre-9/11 levels. Since that time, the threats have only multiplied and increased in severity—from Al Qaeda, to ISIL, to China, North Korea and, of course, to Russia. The size and complexity of the Intelligence Community has also kept apace. There are now 17 different IC agencies, and the budget tops 70 billion dollars.

In coping with these challenges and increased responsibilities, the Committee's size and budget has fallen behind. We have a staff of 31 and a spending average of 3.9 million dollars per year, ranking in the lowest tier of House Committees, and at the very bottom of our fellow national security committees. The Foreign Affairs and Homeland Security Committees, for example, have in excess of 2.5 times as many staff as we have.

Additionally, because of the classified nature of the IC, we cannot rely on outside interest groups to raise issues to our attention as other Committees can. We have to find them ourselves—often from agencies very good at keeping secrets.

It's also worth reiterating that the Intelligence Committee passes an Intelligence Authorization Act every year, which is essential to our detailed oversight mission, but which is also incredibly time and labor intensive. It involves countless budget meetings, many site visits to Executive Branch agencies, vast international travel, and negotiations with multiple committees in the House and Senate, as well as with the interagency.

We also assist in providing classified services and education for the wider House. For instance, this year Committee Staff has briefed 100 non-Committee Members on a classified intelligence report related to Russia, and the Committee will be reaching out to work with all Members on surveillance reform and other critical national security issues.

And, as national security is not the exclusive province of the Intelligence Community, we are increasingly called upon to review and comment on important bills of shared jurisdiction. That too requires resources from Members and Staff already stretched thin. The Committee currently employs five lawyers, three of whom are dual-hatted and perform other policy-related work, compared to 31 lawyers at the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform alone.



Now, size isn't everything. We have the benefit of being able to attract the best talent among staff, and we have found every way to maximize our impact. For example, we recently undertook a review of allegations at U.S. Central Command of intelligence manipulation. We came to essentially the same conclusions as did the DoD Inspector General with their vastly superior resources.

But we can do much more. That's why we are here today asking for this increase.

Finally, it's worth re-emphasizing the threat the Committee itself faces, which justifies our request for additional IT funds. The Committee has many sensitive documents, so we need the necessary funds to modernize our security against a rapidly evolving cyber threat, as well as to be an example of sound, risk-based cybersecurity practices. We have also partnered with staff on your Committee, and with the House Sergeant at Arms, to share best practices about improving cybersecurity for the entire House.

Thank you for allowing us to present our request for the 115th Congress. We welcome any questions the Committee may have.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ranking Member Schiff, and appreciate your testimony here.

What we want to make sure of is that you have the resources you need as we as Congress fulfill our constitutional responsibility to be that coequal branch of government and do the job that we need to do. It is hard to identify another Committee that has more things that have fallen into your lap that have to be looked at very, very closely. So we will look at this very carefully, and appreciate you being here today.

I now recognize Mr. Brady for 5 minutes for any questions or comments he may have.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just one with the Ranking Member, to make sure, I think I heard that you are okay with the one-third, two-thirds, but I need you on the record that you are getting your one-third, two-third resources from the majority.

Mr. SCHIFF. Yes, we do. And we also have shared employees, and it has been a very good and productive working relationship.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair will now recognize Mr. Davis, the Vice Chair of the Committee, for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Loudermilk.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just one quick comment and question. After working in the military and the intelligence community, I am gravely concerned over the conduct that we have seen in our intelligence community. Will this help with our oversight efforts to make sure that it is conducted properly and for its purposes?

Mr. NUNES. Thank you, Mr. Loudermilk.

What I would say is that the—I think we—I think Adam and I, the Ranking Member and I, view this, our Committee, as a Committee that provides—not only does the oversight work, but also provides a service to all of you. And we hope that we have done our best to take—bring Members in, give them briefings, walk them. We have had numerous briefings where we have brought in people from the IC to actually brief Members, and we try to accommodate all of those needs.

And I think you would appreciate this, but one of the big concerns that we have here is because our Nation's secrets are kept down there, security is so, so important we can never forget that, which is part of the reason why we need to update our cybersecurity systems, which we would be, as I said in my testimony, we would be glad to bring you down and talk about some of those threats.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. I have visited there, being on Homeland Security, I have spent a lot of time in the SCIFs. And, Mr. Chairman, I really appreciate this and only wish we could only do more in this instance. And I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I am confident that they would not object if we did more, but we will see.

But thank you for your time and we greatly appreciate it. I want to thank all the Chairs and Ranking Members that have appeared

so far for their testimony and I also want to thank the Committee Members for their participation.

I now recess the hearing. The Committee will reconvene subject to the call of Chair. We will reconvene at 2:00 p.m.

[Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee will come to order. The Committee now welcomes Chairman Conaway and Ranking Member Peterson of the Committee on Agriculture. Will the official reporter please enter a page break into the hearing record to begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The House Committee on Agriculture is tasked with oversight of conservation, food transparency, and innovation in agriculture among many other areas. Its primary focus is to maintain and create commonsense solutions regarding food and farm policy. I want to welcome Chairman Conaway and Ranking Member Peterson, and the Chair now recognizes Chairman Conaway for 5 minutes.

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

Mr. CONAWAY. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I won't take 5 minutes. My good friend and I, Collin Peterson, are here today to visit with you about the budget that we submitted. In the 114th Congress, we got everything we authorized that is under our Committee's responsibility. There are no other authorizing Committee that can lay claim to that. The one piece that did not get fully reauthorized is the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, which we await Senate action on that, but we reauthorized it again this—in this time as well. We had 84 hearings, 24 investigations, did great work.

The 115th Congress will be dominated by the Farm Bill. That is job one for the next 2 years to get that done. We haven't done one on time in 16 years. Collin and I are deeply committed to getting it done on time. The drama associated with expirations and short-term extensions is unnecessary, and I look forward to working with our Senate colleagues to try to make that happen.

In that regard, we requested additional funding for field listening sessions. Typically, in the past, Members—the Committee has held field hearings. Those are basically Cecil B. DeMille's productions where you bring a lot of gear and you bring a lot of extra people and all that stuff.

We will not do that. We will listen. We will transcribe the events, so it will be a part of the public record, but we are going to hear it up from not only the groups that are there, we will also hear from individual producers, farmers, and ranchers, I think, as a part of this deal.

We have also asked for money to handle the conference Committee report in 2018 that we anticipate being there, the mechanics for that. We believe we have been good shepherds of the resources we have had before.

We have migrated all of the IT stuff. We saved a lot of money there, done the things we are supposed to do to get off the stand-alone things that some committees have had out there, and we have gotten that fixed. We also ask for additional money for our staff.

We remind the Committee last year, I was encouraged—last year, I was encouraged to ask for more money. We chose not do that. I am not—I am a CPA by profession, and I don't spend up budgets just to be spending it so that I can defend it the next year. But I also rely on the decision makers to recognize that we only ask for the money we think we need, and if we turn out we don't need it, we don't spend it in order to try to defend the following year's budget. That is not a really good, particularly good practice,

so with those, those brief remarks, we stand ready to answer any questions and forward to my colleagues' comments.
[The statement of Mr. Conaway follows:]

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

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE
ADMINISTRATION FEBRUARY 15, 2017**

Good afternoon Chairman Harper, 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 115th Congress. As you know, the Committee has a long history of bipartisan cooperation and a history of fiscal responsibility. As Chairman, I am committed to continuing that legacy by running an effective and financially responsible Committee.

In the 114th Congress, the Committee had the 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). Despite having several staff vacancies and despite turning down a budget increase, the Committee managed to hold 84 hearings, complete 24 investigations, and address every expired or expiring authorization of appropriations within its jurisdiction.

Over the past 7 years, the Committee's annual budget has decreased by \$1.5 million or 22.5 percent. Despite that significant decrease, the Committee still managed to return more than \$700,000 to the Treasury in 2016. While part of that budget surplus was due to consolidation of staff portfolios and 11 staff vacancies, Committee staff also worked diligently to reduce any duplication of House-funded technology. These actions included migrating to the House domain, utilizing the House Recording Studio, removing redundant firewalls, and reducing wasteful printing. This is an on-going initiative, and Committee staff will continue to look for other areas to increase efficiency.

While we will continue to look for additional savings, the Committee is facing its largest legislative undertaking during the 115th Congress: reauthorizing the farm bill that expires on September 30, 2018. Put simply, if we are going to be successful in that effort, we must hire additional staff. It is also vitally important that we get outside of Washington, D.C., to hear from those who are directly affected by the decisions we make. We are also proposing a one-time infusion to make much needed IT upgrades to facilitate farm bill conference with the Senate. While we are requesting an overall budget increase of 12.4 percent to address these three key areas, we are asking for level funding in all other budget categories.

We certainly have our work cut out for us this Congress. But we are committed to working toward 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, Chairman Conaway, and thank you for that testimony. We now recognize Ranking Member Peterson for 5 minutes.

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

Mr. PETERSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good afternoon to you and Mr. Brady. Members of the Committee, I am pleased to be here today with my friend and colleague in support of the Agriculture Committee budget request. I look forward to continuing the Agriculture Committee's tradition of working together and getting things done, and during the 115th Congress, as we begin the process to reauthorize legislation which expires this Congress, we will be looking at the Agriculture Act of 2014, known as the Farm Bill and the Pesticide Registration Improvement Act referred to as PRIA.

As Chairman Conaway has outlined, it is important that we have the necessary resources to meet our ambitious agenda, conduct proper oversight, and get out in the countryside to actually see and hear what is and what is not working. The Ag Committee has proven to be efficient, fair, and prudent with its resources. Maybe that has something to do with the fact that both the Chairman and I are CPAs and we are committed to operating within our budget confines.

That said, under Chairman Conaway's guidance, the Committee has addressed duplicative areas with House funded technology, and though I understand the Committee's current data exceeds—data exceeds what the House will allocate, I would ask that the Ag Committee be granted additional cloud storage space to share documents with other House offices in the Senate for the upcoming Farm Bill.

I look forward to working with him and to find the—and implement additional efficiencies in this area, and I also want to say that the Chairman has been respectful of the rights of the minority. I appreciate his efforts to maintain this relationship, and I want to thank this Committee for the opportunity to testify here today and appreciate your consideration of the Ag Committee budget request.

[The statement of Mr. Peterson follows:]

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

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
FEBRUARY 15, 2017**

Good afternoon Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and members of the Committee. I am pleased to be here today with my friend and colleague in support of the Agriculture Committee's budget request.

I look forward to continuing the Agriculture Committee's tradition of working together and getting things done during the 115th Congress as we begin the process to reauthorize legislation which expires this Congress, including the Agricultural Act of 2014, known as the farm bill, and the Pesticide Registration Improvements Act, referred to as PRIA.

As Chairman Conaway has already outlined, it is important that we have the necessary resources to meet our ambitious agenda, conduct proper oversight, and get out into the countryside to actually see and hear what is and what is not working.

The Agriculture Committee has proven to be efficient, fair and prudent with its resources, maybe that has something to do with the Chairman and I both being CPAs, and we are both committed to operating within our budget confines.

That said, under Chairman Conaway's guidance the Committee has addressed duplicative areas with House-funded technology, though I understand the Committee's current data needs exceed what the House will allocate, so I would ask that the Agriculture Committee be granted additional cloud storage space to share documents with other House offices and the Senate for the upcoming farm bill. I look forward to working with him to find and implement additional efficiencies in this area.

Chairman Conaway has been respectful of the rights of the Minority, and I appreciate his efforts to maintain this relationship.

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

Mr. CONAWAY. Would the gentleman yield for a moment?

Mr. PETERSON. Yeah.

Mr. CONAWAY. I would like to—I forgot to say this. When I was working at a bank and responsible for hiring and firing folks, if I had somebody leave, I would not replace them for some period of time. We left several vacancies on both staffs during this past session because we didn't have the Farm Bill in front of us.

We now need to fill those staff positions, and so rather than do that ahead of time and just have folks sit around, we chose not to do that. I don't want to be penalized for that because I do need—I now need them and look forward to being able to have the resources to bring the staff up to speed to be able to allow us to get the Farm Bill work done. With that, I yield back to my friend.

Mr. PETERSON. I have no further comments. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, and I appreciate both of your testimonies. Thank you for yielding back. We recognize, too, that we have a responsibility as Congress to remember that we are a co-equal branch of the government, and we have to make sure that we are equipped to do what our job is, to make sure that we are there and not at a disadvantage.

And I certainly want to commend you for not asking for money when you didn't really need it at that point, because that increases your credibility when you come back and say we really could use it this time, and you are coming off what I believe is maybe 3 years of level funding for the Committee. You have got a major undertaking coming up in this Congress, and we want you to be successful in getting this done, because it is no easy task, and so we appreciate what you are doing in that regard.

I also want to acknowledge what you are doing on the IT area. Cybersecurity issues are an ever increasing threat and will continue, and I am thankful that that is also a part of your focus as you are going here to be ready for that, and do what you got to do to retain good staff that you have got and add to that for this Farm Bill authorization. With that, I will recognize Mr. Brady for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think I did hear from the Ranking Member that I would assume you mentioned the one-third/two third ratio is working. That is all I care about. But I also must note you are two CPAs, and not attorneys.

The CHAIRMAN. I just want to remind Ranking Member Brady that lawyers are people, too. Okay.

Mr. BRADY. He says that all the time, but I don't believe him.

The CHAIRMAN. With that, I will recognize Mr. Davis, the Vice Chairman of the Committee, 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would have to agree with the Ranking Member on the attorney comments, so—I—it is an honor to actually serve on the Committee with both of you, and I want to echo some of the statements that Gregg made that it was pretty impressive, you know, a couple of years ago, I asked you, Chairman, you know, what would you do if you could get extra funding? And you were adamant, and you said, we don't need it, we don't want it, we are not going to ask for it. We believe we can accomplish every goal that the Committee has with the funding levels that you requested at the time, and you did that.

And now, I agree, we are moving into a new Congress, a new Farm Bill. We need to be the voices—or we need to be the listeners to the voices out in our communities, out in this great country. So I appreciate you coming in and your honesty. I have always been honored to serve with both of you because you have such a great working relationship together, and I look forward to, if you get your budget request, getting every single priority of mine in the Farm Bill, too. I won't ask for a commitment.

Mr. PETERSON. Maybe you can take up some of mine, too.

Mr. DAVIS. No. Thank you. Is there anything that—well, I have one question. Is there anything that you would do above and beyond your budget request if you were to get any other funding?

Mr. CONAWAY. Thank you for the question. I don't think so. Given the immense importance of a Farm Bill, it is going to dominate our collective thoughts and work.

The other thing about this Farm Bill is that we just spent 2 years of doing 16 hearings on SNAP, the first time the oversight work has been done on that program in a couple of decades. We have gleaned from that some things that we need to do. We need to reform the program. There are policy changes we are going to need to make in that. I am going to need to—we all need to spend time convincing our colleagues of that and working through that.

So this Farm Bill will be less easy, although you never call one of them easy, but be less difficult maybe, or be a little bit more difficult, because we are going to go at both sides of it. The safety net, conservation, trade, rural development piece, as well as the SNAP piece, and so I don't believe that the Committee would take—could do anything else besides get that done.

We want to get it done on time. I can't emphasize that enough. The reason is, one, it would allow Collin and I to brag, but the real reason is, farmers and ranchers, bankers, implement dealers, everybody wants a stable program, and so having one that is done ahead of time and ready to go with into position on October 1, will allow them to look at that next 5-year window to begin making their business plans.

If you are in the farming business, you don't make 1 year at a time plan. You have got a multiyear plan. If you are banker, you are going to lend over a series of period of time, so that stability and the impact it has on the production and agriculture and the impact that has on rural economy, rural America, I think, is enough of a reason why we need to get it done and get it done on time.

So thank you for the question, but I don't believe there is anything else we would do beyond getting that done and done on time.

Mr. DAVIS. Well, we can tell you are an accountant by trade because you are very comfortable with your numbers and your request.

Mr. CONAWAY. Sure.

Mr. DAVIS. Two times in a row, I have asked that question and two times you have been brutally honest to say that you have asked only for what you need, so thank you, Mr. Chairman, thank you, Mr. Ranking Member. I yield back, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Davis. Thank you for being here. We appreciate the testimony, the information that you have pro-

vided, and we will give it a really good look, and thank you for the hard work you are doing. Thank you.

Mr. CONAWAY. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee now welcomes Chairman Sessions and Ranking Member Slaughter. Would the official reporter please enter a page break into the hearing record to begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The House Committee on Rules considers both a special rule that provides the terms and conditions of debate on a measure or matter, and original jurisdiction measures, which commonly represent changes to the standing rules of the House. It is a very busy Committee, and we thank you for your work on that, sometimes thankless job.

So I want to welcome Chairman Sessions and Ranking Member Slaughter, and the Chair will now recognize Chairman Sessions for 5 minutes.

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much and to the Committee, Mr. Brady, thank you for allowing us to be here. Mr. Chairman, both Louise Slaughter, the Ranking Member and I, approach you respectfully today not only with this Committee that has to make very difficult decisions about the allocations of this body, but we recognize that much of what is done here is based on a prioritization that needs to take place so that the work on behalf of the American people can be accomplished.

It is said that both Louise and I approach you and the entire Committee respectfully today to ask you for—to hear our thoughts and ideas about the Rules Committee, our performance, our jobs, and the things which we need to perform for the United States House of Representatives on a day-by-day basis, or perhaps more importantly, we place ourselves before you with your ideas about how we might perform not only better, but make ourselves better prepared for what lies ahead to us.

It would be true, Mr. Chairman, to recognize that almost every Member of this Committee also does business with the Rules Committee, and I recognize that there are some Members of the Committee that may not have always have received exactly what they wanted to be made in order, and I know the gentleman from Illinois probably would express those ideas.

But I would like to say to each of you that both Louise and I have tried our very best, not only to work together, but to understand the responsibilities that come from me as Chairman, when she was Chairman, and when she is now Ranking Member, and I think that we attempt to run our Committee, the staff, and the presentations that we get at the Rules Committee in the highest of professional standards of the House of Representatives as we work together.

Mr. Chairman, it is important for you to understand that we believe that the function of the Rules Committee as a standing Committee is to function perhaps—function perhaps different than other committees, and that is, without the Committee on Rules at its—operating at its peak efficiency, the House of Representatives cannot do so either. We do business on a day-to-day basis. We have to be prepared for things that are weeks out. We have to do a lot of homework. We have to stay up late at night preparing the homework that needs to be prepared not only for our clients, which will be other Members of Congress, but also the committees that need to do work with the Rules Committee to prepare themselves on the majority and minority basis.

It is true that while much of the responsibility rests on the majority, I would say equally the minority has to prepare themselves, they need great employees, they need employees that have wise knowledge, not only of the House of Representatives, but, in many ways, specialties in dealing with the rules of the House of Representatives and the things that allow us to prepare our clients so that they may be prepared as they enter the Rules Committee and move forward on their work.

We have requested, as you know, for quite a number of years, simply a flat budget. We recognize the circumstance not only that the United States of America, our constituents back home are in, but also, we recognize that the need of the House of Representatives to trim its costs back as we trim back all of government. However, we have requested, as you know, an opportunity to receive a slight increase this year, a slight increase of some 5 percent that we believe would represent an opportunity for us to not only offer the efficiencies that are necessary, but prepare for the larger workload that we see.

I would also say that, as I speak to you, we are following through on a one-third/two-thirds basis, but rather than just on staff money or salaries, we operate that across the board. We give them one-third of all the money that might come. And, so, we believe that based upon the workload that lies ahead as well as, as you are aware, Mr. Chairman, we worked with you on an additional request for \$100,000 that would not be for the Rules Committee, but, rather, work that the Rules Committee and this Committee accomplish together with other important parts of the House of Representatives so that we can move forward to be prepared for a meeting of House rules that we have been directed by the Republican conference to do.

I want to thank you for the time to allow me to be here today. I open myself up for questions, and I am sure that you will want to welcome Louise for the strong support that she gives not only to the House of Representatives, her party, but also the United States Congress. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The statement of Mr. Sessions follows:]

FEBRUARY 15, 2017

**STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN PETE SESSIONS BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
REGARDING THE COMMITTEE ON RULES' 115TH CONGRESS BUDGET
REQUEST**

Thank you Chairman Harper, 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 Fifteenth Congress.

We greatly appreciate your thoughtful and thorough process to ensure that committees have the resources they need to do the work of the American people. The Rules Committee's primary mission is to ensure that the House can consider critical legislation that touches nearly every other committee in any given year—this is true in Republican and Democratic majorities.

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 smallest budget of any committee in Congress.

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 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 look to 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 as a whole. 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 systems and would give us the financial flexibility to make improvements when the needs arise.

The Rules Committee is often required 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 heavily 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, printers as well as engage with outside contractors to ensure that all of our equipment and automated systems are operating at peak efficiency.

Unlike 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 and will be earning overtime. Even a short delay can cost the House tens of thousands of dollars in increased operating expenses.

Ultimately, insufficient funding to the Rules Committee's staffing and technology 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. In the 114th Congress, the Rules Committee partnered with the Office of the Clerk and the Government Printing Office to increase the number of House prepared documents that are available to the Public in "xml" format. The xml format is the current gold standard in machine readability and functionality. While it is my intent to eventually hand over operational control of this project to the Government Publishing Office, we are again requesting funds to continue our progress on this front in the 115th Congress. Our requested increase for the 115th Congress includes a continuation of publishing the House Rules in xml, as well as additional publications that may be identified.

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. Insufficient funding would compromise maintenance, proper staffing, upkeep, and development of these public resources.

If the Rules Committee does not receive adequate funding, 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.

EFFECT 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, 113th, and 114th Congresses, and it is a tradition that I intend to continue.

The effects of any cut on the Minority 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 and furloughs or purchasing office supplies for basic office functionality. Also because the Minority staff is so small, they have no dedicated IT personnel and contract out that function. Any 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 to fund the Rules Committee at \$3,030,281 in annual budget authority for base committee operations for each session of the 115th Congress. The base budget we are presenting reflects a 5% increase over the 114th Congress, calendar year 2016, authorized level for base committee needs. We propose this level to maintain a minimal level of flexibility in spending,

funding for one field hearing, and allow the Committee to maintain staff at a level that matches the functional needs of the Committee.

Additionally, the Committee is requesting an additional \$100,000 per funding year, which would be used exclusively to assist with the implementation of a new House rule that requires the production of comparative prints for unreported bills—similar to the current “Ramseyer” requirement for reported bills. This increase in funding would only be used, if necessary, in support of this project and would not be used to fund any base committee operations for the majority or the minority. This additional project would increase our total request to \$3,130,281 per calendar year.

We have the smallest budget of any committee. While a five percent 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.

We strive for better governance with a Committee and House that deliver better work product in a faster and more cost effective manner. Our purpose and responsibilities will not go away, but improperly funding them at the more cost effective Committee level will only move the financial burden to the House level where focused cost saving and efficiencies will be lost.

Mr. Chairman, 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. Thank you, Chairman Sessions. I will now recognize Ranking Member Slaughter for 5 minutes.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. All right. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Brady, and the other Members of the Committee. We are delighted to be here this morning. I am very pleased to join Chairman Sessions to present the Committee on Rules' budget request for the 115th Congress.

It is no secret that our Committee is often a place of heated policy debate. Our meetings are representational of the same type of conversations happening all across the country during this particularly contentious environment. But at the same time, I am proud to say these debates have always remained solely about legislative substance and the process by which legislation goes to the floor, and not about the Committee functions and administratively.

This Committee stands alone in its unique mission of facilitating the work of all other committees in the House of Representatives. Chairman Sessions and I take this responsibility seriously, and have worked in lockstep to ensure this Committee fulfills its unique mission fairly and justly.

This principle guides the division of everything from equipment and office supplies to the allocation of space and personnel. I am grateful that Chairman Sessions is continuing the tradition of providing the minority full control over a third of the Committee's overall budget.

The House Rules Committee has the second smallest budget of any Committee in Congress, and this approach of administrative equity has helped to ensure that we are able to fulfill our mission efficiently and effectively. I fully support Chairman Sessions' request of the House Administration Committee and join him in the request.

As Chairman Sessions has said, it is essential for our democracy that every majority have a fully functioning minority. This request will ensure that the majority/minority alike can robustly fulfill their obligations to the body and to the American people.

I also want to take the moment to thank the extraordinary staff of our Committee on both sides. The Rules Committee is like family, and I believe it has the most respected staff on Capitol Hill. In order for the House to fully function, the Rules Committee must be able to consider legislation quickly, and that often means working long hours and sometimes late into the night.

The majority and minority staffs work hard and they work together, whether this Committee meets in the morning or at midnight. They embody the collaborative approach that this Committee is known for. I am proud to present this budget with Chairman Sessions today, and I want to thank Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady once again, and all of the Committee Members for your time and attention, and I will be happy to answer any questions that you may have, and I thank you.

[The statement of Ms. Slaughter follows:]

PETE SESSIONS, TEXAS
CHAIRMAN

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ROB WOODALL, GEORGIA
MICHAEL C. BURRIS, TEXAS
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Testimony Before the Committee on House Administration
Louise M. Slaughter
February 15, 2017

Thank you, Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady. I'm pleased to join Chairman Sessions today to present the Committee on Rules' budget request for the One Hundred Fifteenth Congress.

It is no secret that our committee often is a place of heated policy debates. Our meetings are representational of the same type of conversations happening all across the country during this particularly contentious environment. At the same time, however, I am proud that these debates have always remained solely about legislative substance and the process by which legislation goes to the floor, and not about how the committee functions administratively.

This committee stands alone in its unique mission of facilitating the work of all other House committees. Chairman Sessions and I take this responsibility seriously, and have worked in lockstep to ensure this committee fulfills its unique mission fairly and justly.

This principle guides the division of everything from equipment and office supplies to the allocation of space and personnel. I am grateful that Chairman Sessions is continuing the tradition of providing the minority full control over one-third of the committee's overall budget. The House Rules Committee has one of the smallest budgets of any committee in Congress, and this approach of administrative equity has helped ensure we are fulfilling our mission efficiently and effectively.

I fully support Chairman Sessions' request to the House Administration Committee. As Chairman Sessions has said, it is essential for our Democracy that every Majority has a fully functioning minority. This request will ensure that the Majority and minority alike can robustly fulfill their obligations to this body and the American people.

I want to also take a moment and thank the extraordinary staff of our committee on both sides. The Rules Committee is like family and I believe it has the most respected staff on Capitol Hill. In order for the House to fully function, the Rules Committee must be able to consider legislation quickly, and that often means working long hours sometimes late into the night. The Majority and minority staffs work hard and they work together, whether this committee meets in the morning or at midnight. They embody the collaborative approach that this committee is known for.

I'm proud to present this budget with Chairman Sessions today. I want to thank Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady once again, and all the committee members, for your time and attention. I am happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Ranking Member Slaughter and Chairman Sessions. You know, this is—you know, we all love this institution. The House of Representatives is a special place, but I think you are right in what you said, Chairman Sessions. This is not—the House cannot function without a properly functioning Rules Committee, so your work is vital to what we do.

We realize, too, that we have a constitutional responsibility, and that we are a coequal branch of government. We want to make sure that we don't give up that to where we are out of balance. We want to make sure that we are what we should be, and that certainly necessitates what you are doing.

In looking at your request for a funding increase over last year, specifically, just so I am sure about this extra \$100,000, this would be for the data transparency initiative. Is that correct?

Mr. SESSIONS. In fact, that would be correct, Mr. Chairman, and this—this comes as a request from the Republican conference and the House rules that were adopted, and it deals with what we might call the Posey request. And while we think we have scoped this as an opportunity for \$100,000 per year, there are a number of people who are working on it, and we have simply chosen outside of our normal budget and outside of what would be shared as a project that would be held pending a final agreement about how it would be used.

The CHAIRMAN. Just so I am clear, general funding that we have is done two-thirds/one-third?

Mr. SESSIONS. That is correct, across the board.

The CHAIRMAN. And what about that 100,000? How would that—that would be—

Mr. SESSIONS. That would not—that is a set-aside that would not be shared. It would be entirely for what I would say above the line. I would not use that for the normal necessary processes that would take place at the Rules Committee. If I did, I would notify Louise and we would do that allocation. His is for the project that is necessary.

The CHAIRMAN. And then you would agree with that, Ms. Slaughter?

Ms. SLAUGHTER. So far.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, we can only—we can only cover as far as February the 15th, 2017 at 2:22 in the afternoon, so right now that is good.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Chairman, she has a saying that pretty much goes: Let's compromise and do it my way. Yeah. And so Louise and I—

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Pete is very easy to work with.

The CHAIRMAN. That is good.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. And he strives to be fair, and we are very grateful for that.

The CHAIRMAN. That is great. Thank you very much, and on that—

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Our Committee was founded in 1789, and we have got a great history to defend.

The CHAIRMAN. And you weren't here then, were you, Mr. Sessions?

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I was.

Mr. SESSIONS. She knew Abraham Lincoln.

The CHAIRMAN. You know, my mom, who passed away last year, never forgave me for asking her as a child if she lived during the Civil War, so you know, that stuff goes on. But thank you, and please give our regards to your father, Judge Sessions, if you will.

Mr. SESSIONS. I will do that, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. SESSIONS. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. And I will now recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Brady for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just—you answered my question. The Chairman answered my question to the Ranking Member about the one-third/two-third. I appreciate that. Many years ago, I got asked to go on the Rules Committee, and I made the best decision of my life not to, because you are the hardest working Committee in Congress, and thank you for all your services and what you are doing. And also, Mr. Chairman, give my regards to your father also.

Mr. SESSIONS. I will do that, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. You know, Mr. Brady, though we get to know more about bills than almost anybody.

Mr. SESSIONS. Yeah. There is a positive side to the hard work.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. There is.

The CHAIRMAN. I now will recognize Mr. Davis, the Vice Chairman of the Committee, for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, Madam Ranking Member. I like the Lincoln talk as somebody who represents part of the Lincoln district. I just had a question for clarification, because I didn't see it in your materials.

I see you are asking for an increase in your travel budget that is much higher than what you spent last year. Are you planning to do field hearings? What type of issues may we, as a Committee, want to consider with that request?

Mr. SESSIONS. Yes. Thank you very much. In fact, while there is not necessarily the provision for that, we have taken on the role, both Louise and myself, with the authority and the responsibility to look at what would be the congressionally directed spending effort, and that may involve some bit of travel that could be involved, perhaps a field hearing. We have not really scoped that out, but we do believe that it was appropriate to request that with the additional workload that we have now been given, yes, sir.

Mr. DAVIS. Well, thank you for your clarification. Is there a contingency built in for maybe landing at the wrong airport?

Mr. SESSIONS. If the gentleman would allow me an opportunity. The gentleman is well aware that I did come to visit him one time and landed at St. Louis Lambert International Airport, and he was across the river, and my plane did need to divert, and the gentleman would be correct, even Eagle Scouts make mistakes.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you, Chairman. Thank you, Ranking Member.

Mr. SESSIONS. Yes, sir.

Mr. DAVIS. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize Mr. Smith if he has any questions for 5 minutes. None. Mr. Loudermilk, you are recognized.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chairman Sessions, thank you for being here. Just one quick question. With an IT background, I applaud our efforts in moving forward with the data transparency initiatives. At the same time, we have to balance that with security, and I just wanted to bring that up and make sure that that is at the forefront of us going forward, that we do have to balance that transparency with the security, because we know that there are bad people out there wanting to do bad things.

Mr. SESSIONS. Thank you very much. The gentleman knows that I spent a number of years at Bell Communications Research, which took over after Bell Labs, and I spent several years in that organization, had a chance to see not only computer security, but, really, the future that would lie in having data that would reside in something that could be tapped into.

The facts of the case are that what we believe is this is an internal process that would need to take place, and we are not necessarily exporting or allow people to export into that at this point, but the gentleman makes a really great point, and that is, every single one of us, whether it is our own personal offices or those committee jurisdictional offices that we have, we have a responsibility to ensure the data integrity.

I think you and I both know that all it takes is someone tapping in, and they could cause enormous damage to us, so we are constantly on that. And we will go back and reassert not only your question, but ask the question inside, and I appreciate the gentleman bringing that once again to my attention.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. All right. Thank you. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back. I want to thank both of you for coming today. We will look at this very carefully, and I appreciate your time today.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee now welcomes Chairman Chabot and Ranking Member Velázquez. Would the official reporter please enter a page break into the hearing record to begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The House Committee on Small Business is tasked with oversight of the Small Business Administration and its programs. Its primary focuses are matters relating to small business financial aid, regulatory flexibility, and paperwork reduction.

I want to welcome the Chairman and Ranking Member, and the Chair will now recognize the Chairman for 5 minutes.

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

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and we thank you for your time; also, Ranking Member Brady as well. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the 2017 budget request of the Committee on Small Business.

I would like to take a moment to recognize our Committee's Ranking Democratic Member, Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez with whom I have served for a number of years with one of us in the Chair, and the other as Ranking Member. We traded off a few times. We don't want to do that any time in the future, but we have a very good—

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. I disagree.

Mr. CHABOT. She disagrees for the record, but we really do have an excellent working relationship, and I know that we will continue to build on the Committee's strong record of accomplishment for entrepreneurs in the future with this Committee's help.

Since its founding, America has relied on small businesses to turn ideas into economic opportunity. Some have, by choice, remained small and become pillars of their communities; others have grown into the large companies of 20th and 21st centuries. They changed how Americans and others around the world go about their daily lives.

For much of its history, our government crafted policies that focused on spurring commerce. As a result, those new jobs are created by small businesses, and about 50 percent of Americans are employed by small businesses.

Recently, however, that emphasis, unfortunately, has changed. Rather than encouraging economic growth, Washington has imposed a regulatory regime that can only be described as a death by a thousand cuts. It can be said that the single biggest problem facing America's entrepreneurs is burdensome regulations. It is one reason I was very happy to see the President announce in an executive order recently that he was going to do away with two new rules or regulations for every one that is implemented. I think that is certainly a step in the right direction.

Some small businesses are still struggling in a difficult economy, but stakes could not be higher for small firms, and the role of the Committee on Small Business is increasingly vital. Our legislative jurisdiction may be narrow, but this Committee brings critical oversight scrutiny and public attention to the vast array of issues that confront small business owners in every congressional district. Scarce capital, unfair labor regulations, tax complexity, crushing energy rules, and the unworkable Dodd-Frank law, and the so-called Affordable Care Act. And again, my colleague and I would disagree on a couple of those things for sure, but those are my opinions.

The new administration shares many of our policy views and priorities. While we are hopeful of progress, our experience with the oversight reminds us that our duty to the taxpayer in keeping Washington accountable has not diminished. Accountability and oversight are nonpartisan values, and we will remain vigilant. Every major piece of legislation that makes its way through Congress will impact small businesses in some way.

We must have the resources to ensure that America's 28 million small businesses and the millions of families that depend on them are considered in every debate from healthcare reform to the repeal of Dodd-Frank to the Farm Bill and many others. Our Committee is fortunate to have representatives not only from coast to coast and everywhere in between, but also beyond our coast.

We have two Members who represent the people of the U.S. territories of American Samoa, and now this Congress, Puerto Rico. The small businesses of these islands are valuable players in the American economy and may well hold the key to further unleash the power of entrepreneurship and innovation. We must have the resources to ensure that these constituents, as well as our own, are considered and heard.

For the 114th Congress, the Committee was level funded at \$6,045,228. Traditionally, the Committee has provided a full one-third of Committee resources to the minority, which they control. We appreciate the difficult decisions that the Ranking Member has made to ensure we stay within our allotment while also meeting our important responsibilities.

Over the last 2 years, we purchased much needed equipment, replaced computers and a copier, and redesigned the Committee's website. Both the majority and minority staffs reorganized, excuse me, to boost efficiency and redistributed duties to other staff to save funds, but our professional staff is severely strained and we must hire additional professional staff and dedicated investigative staff just to maintain the status quo.

We do not have significant nonsalary spending to cut as these categories give us the tools needed to do our work, material, supplies, equipment, et cetera. A new administration focuses on the need to closely monitor news, and media subscriptions are very expensive. In addition, to traditional media, for example, our government contracting and financial services staff needs specialized subscriptions geared to those sectors to remain informed.

We appreciate the difficult decisions that this Committee must make, and we hope that you will consider what we have achieved and allow us a very modest 4 percent increase to continue working hard for America's best job creators, which are small businesses. We thank you, and we appreciate your consideration.

[The statement of Mr. Chabot follows:]

**Written Statement of
The Honorable Steve Chabot
Chairman
Committee on Small Business
Hearing on Committee Funding
Committee on House Administration
February 15, 2017**

Thank you, Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the 2017 budget request of the Committee on Small Business.

I would like to take a moment to recognize our Committee's Ranking Democratic Member, Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez, with whom I have served for several years -- with one of us as Chair and the other as Ranking Member. We have an excellent working relationship, and I know we will continue to build on the Committee's strong record of accomplishment for entrepreneurs.

Since its founding, America has relied on small businesses to turn ideas into economic opportunity. Some have, by choice, remained small and become pillars of their communities. Others have grown into the large companies of the 20th and 21st centuries that dramatically changed how Americans and others around the world go about their daily lives.

For much of its history, our government crafted policies that focused on spurring commerce. As a result, most new jobs are created by small businesses, and 50 percent of Americans are employed by small businesses. Recently, however, that emphasis has changed. Rather than encouraging economic growth, Washington has imposed a regulatory regime that can only be described as "death by a thousand cuts." It can be said that the single biggest problem facing America's entrepreneurs is overly burdensome regulations.

Small businesses are still struggling in a difficult economy. The stakes could not be higher for small firms, and the role of the Committee on Small Business is increasingly vital. Our legislative jurisdiction is narrow, but this Committee brings critical oversight scrutiny and public attention to the vast array of issues that confront small business owners in every Congressional district: accessing scarce capital; unfair labor regulations; tax complexity; crushing energy rules; and the unworkable Dodd-Frank law.

We are pleased that the new Administration shares many of our policy views and priorities. While we are hopeful of progress, our past experiences with oversight remind us that our duty to the taxpayer in keeping Washington accountable has not diminished. Accountability and oversight are nonpartisan values and we will remain vigilant. Additionally, every major piece of legislation that makes its way through Congress will impact small businesses in some way. We must have the resources to ensure that America's 28 million small businesses, and the millions of families that depend on them, are considered in every debate from healthcare reform to the repeal of Dodd-Frank to the Farm Bill to the National Defense Authorization Act, and others.

Our Committee is fortunate to have representatives not only from coast to coast and everywhere in between, but also beyond. We have two Members who represent the people of the U.S. territories of American Samoa and Puerto Rico. The small businesses of these islands are valuable players in the American economy and may well hold the key to help further unleash the power of entrepreneurship and innovation. We must have the resources to ensure that these constituents are considered and heard.

We are proud of the Committee's accomplishments in the 114th Congress. The Committee was extremely productive: we held 75 hearings, including 5 field hearings; engaged in aggressive oversight of the Administration across 27 agencies; reauthorized important research grant legislation; enacted major federal contracting reforms; and utilized crucial communications tools to reach out to small businesses across America. We have partnered with a number of other House committees on hearings and oversight, and served as a resource for all Members of the House who request assistance for their small business constituents. During the 114th Congress, the Committee reported 8 broad legislative measures which incorporated many smaller bills, 11 of which passed the House and were signed into law. These successes included major federal government small business contracting reforms; bills to increase entrepreneurs' access to capital; assistance for veteran entrepreneurs; improvements to the popular Small Business Innovation and Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs; and small business protections from cyber security threats. I am pleased that the Committee has made these accomplishments by working in our customary bipartisan manner, and on a very lean budget. The Committee expects to be equally vigorous in the 115th Congress, and additional staff is needed to share the workload.

The Committee took aggressive steps on oversight in the 114th Congress. For example, the Committee responded quickly to the Wells Fargo account incident, holding the company accountable for the impact on its small business customers. We joined with other House committees to fight back against the Obama Administration's flood of labor, environmental, health care, tax and procurement regulations and Executive Orders that affect small businesses in Committee hearings, roundtables, briefings and agency comment letters. Our plans are to move even more forcefully on oversight in the 115th Congress. Providing this kind of tough oversight requires additional professional staff, who will need equipment, including computers, on-site and off-site servers, printers, supplies and office space. The Committee has secured space in the O'Neill House Office Building which we plan to utilize.

Traditionally, the Committee has provided a full one-third of Committee resources to the minority, which they control. We appreciate the difficult decisions that the Ranking Member has made to ensure that we stay within our allotment while also meeting our important responsibilities.

For the 114th Congress, the Committee was level funded at \$6,045,228.00. Over the last two years, we have purchased much needed equipment, replaced computers and a copier, and redesigned the Committee's website. Both the majority and minority staffs reorganized to boost efficiency, redistributing duties to other staff members to save funds.

Today, we are here to talk about the Committee's needs going forward. Our professional staff is severely strained. Experienced staff are essential to our work, and we need to hire additional professional staff and dedicated investigative staff just to maintain the status quo. We do not have significant non-salary spending to cut, as these categories give us the tools needed to do our work: materials, supplies and equipment.

A new Administration has focused us on the need to closely monitor news, and media subscriptions are very expensive. In addition to traditional media, for examples, our government contracting and financial services professional staff need subscriptions geared to these sectors to remain informed.

We appreciate the tough decisions that the Committee must make. We hope you will consider what we have achieved, and allow us a very modest 4% increase to continue working hard for America's best job creators.

I thank the Committee, and I would be pleased to answer any questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Chairman Chabot, and now I will recognize for 5 minutes 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, Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the 115th Congress budget submission for the Committee on Small Business. Small businesses create two-thirds of new jobs in the U.S. economy, and are critical drivers of innovation. For these reasons, I often say there is no Republican or Democratic approach when it comes to small businesses.

Fortunately, Chairman Chabot leads the Committee with the same mindset, working in the best interest of America's small businesses. While the Chairman and I may not agree 100 percent on all matters, particularly on repealing ACA or Dodd-Frank, gutting Dodd-Frank, one thing is certain: we are both committed to working together. This means a funding level that provides sufficient resources for Committee Members to focus on legislation, hearings, roundtables, covering the numerous issues facing small businesses.

Chairman Chabot generously allows the minority full control of one-third of the funding to cover salaries and operating expenses. Recruiting and retaining staff is a challenge many committee offices face. And again, funding is vital in order to attract experienced specialized personnel.

Since our Committee covers a wide range of policy issues, we employ experts in procurement, tax, financial services, regulation, to name a few. This requires the resources to attract and retain qualified personnel.

At the end of last year, the minority was left with approximately 1.4 percent of our allocation. Unfortunately, this does not allow us to operate the computer equipment, but we are hopeful we will have enough funding to purchase new computers this year.

Chairman Harper, if a modest 4 percent increase is not foreseeable, we respectfully ask you consider flat funding the Committee so that we can move forward with all the work that lies ahead of us this next 2 years. I wasn't supposed to say that. We are asking for 4 percent increase.

The CHAIRMAN. I understand, and I appreciate it.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. And let me just say—

Mr. CHABOT. I move to have that stricken from the record.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. In terms of historically, the Committee on Small Business has been underfunded compared to all other committees. It wasn't until the 111th Congress where there was an increase which was of great help to us. In the 112th, we got a little bump only to be impacted, as we are all aware, by sequestration in the 113th.

The Members of the Committee on Small Business are committed to working together in a bipartisan matter, which is something Chairman Chabot and I always strive for. We ask for full and fair consideration when determining our funding for the 115th Con-

gress. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, and all the Members of the Committee.
[The statement of Ms. Velázquez follows:]

**Statement of Ranking Member Nydia M. Velázquez
Committee on House Administration Full Committee Hearing:
“Committee Funding for the 115th Congress”
February 15, 2017**

Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the 115th Congress budget submission for the Committee on Small Business.

Small businesses create two-thirds of new jobs in the U.S. economy and are critical drivers of innovation. For these reasons, I often say there is no Republican or Democratic issue when it comes to small business; and fortunately, Chairman Chabot leads the committee with the same mindset – working in the best interest of America’s small businesses.

While the chairman and I may not agree 100% on all matters, one thing is certain, we are both committed to working together. This means a funding level that provides sufficient resources for committee members to focus on legislation, hearings, and roundtables covering the numerous issues facing small business.

Chairman Chabot generously allows the Minority full control of 1/3 of the funding to cover salaries and operating expenses. Recruiting and retaining staff is a challenge many committee offices face, and again, funding is vital in order to attract experienced, specialized personnel. Since our committee covers a wide range of policy issues, we employ experts in procurement, tax, financial services, and regulation, to name a few. This requires the resources to attract and retain qualified personnel. At the end of last year, the Minority was left with approximately 1.4% of our allocation. Unfortunately, this did not allow us to upgrade the computer equipment but we are hopeful we’ll have enough funding to purchase new computers this year.

Chairman Harper, if a modest 4% increase is not foreseeable, we respectfully ask you consider flat-funding the committee so that we can move forward with all the work that lies ahead of us these next two years.

The members of the Committee on Small Business are committed to working together in a bipartisan manner, which is something Chairman Chabot and I always strive for. We ask for full and fair consideration when determining our funding for the 115th Congress.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you both for your testimony, and we all realize that small businesses really are what drive the economy in this country, and their success determines our success as a country. So thank you for the work that you do.

And we also, as I have told some of the other committees, we have a constitutional responsibility to be that effective coequal branch of the government, and it seems that sometimes, not due to our own fault, we have not had the resources to do what we need to do. So we want to—we will take a serious look at what you have done here, what your request is, and look forward to getting—getting through this.

At this time, I will recognize Mr. Brady, the Ranking Member, for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, but the Ranking Member has answered my only question about the two-thirds/one-third, making sure it is divided up equally. Thank you.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Sure.

The CHAIRMAN. We will now recognize Mr. Davis for 5 minutes for any questions that he may have.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Madam Ranking Member. You know, just—if you could, if you could get more resources for any possible reason, are there anything that you—is there anything you may have left out in the budget request that you would want to do if you were able to get extra resources, especially in the oversight?

Mr. CHABOT. Yeah. Thank you for asking that question. We take our oversight responsibilities very seriously. We have a new Chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight, Trent Kelly from Mississippi who has a tremendous background in this area. He is also a colonel in the Guard, and we discussed this, and there is a whole range of things that we would like to go into. And obviously, you know, we have a new administration here, and it happens to be the same party I am in, but we are going to go after any—anything here that we think needs to be investigated to make sure that small businesses are getting the best end of the deal here.

And we—the two of us here are committed to doing this, for the most part, in a bipartisan manner. When we found—we found challenges that were—that needed to be looked into in the Obama administration, we looked at them very carefully. We did that—we both—I have been on the Committee for 20 years now, and I think Nydia has been on there maybe a couple of years longer than that, so we have gone after both administrations.

And so, wherever there are problems, if we can have efficiencies, we are going to look at those things to make sure that the American taxpayer is getting the best bang for his or her buck.

Mr. DAVIS. One more question. Your Committee asked in your request for an increase in your travel budget, a pretty substantial increase. Are there plans to do field hearings, issues like that would require more travel that you didn't use in 2016?

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you for asking that question. Yes, we have had field hearings. We haven't scheduled everything out yet, but we have done field hearings in both Democratic and Republican districts. We did one with—and there were three Democratic Mem-

bers, Nydia as well as—there were two others. I am trying to remember who they were.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Grace Meng.

Mr. CHABOT. Grace Meng, and there was one other one that showed up at that hearing in—

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Yvette Clarke.

Mr. CHABOT. Yes, Yvette Clarke, yeah. So we did them there, we did them at Carlos Curbelo's district, Steve Knight's district in California. We don't fly first class, by the way, when we go to these kinds of things. I am always back in coach with the rest of my fellow American citizens when it comes to these kinds of meetings and things.

So, yes, we do intend to hold field hearings and which we will be going through things like access to capital, tax reform, depending on when the repeal and replace of the Affordable Care Act/Obamacare, whichever terminology one prefers, that is going to be ongoing, because some of these things will happen soon, some a little further down the road.

So anything that we think needs to be looked into, we certainly intend to use the resources to the Committee's advantage and to the American taxpayer's advantage.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. If I may, you know, our Committee, the resource, to not only the Members of the Committee, but other Members, who wants to organize events in their districts. So our staff are very helpful to help them try to organize those events. But also, it is important for our Committee to conduct hearings in different States of the country, because not every small business have the capacity or the resources to come here to Washington. So it is important that we go to those areas to listen to them.

Mr. CHABOT. And if I could just follow up Mr. Davis with just one other point. I mentioned that we did a field hearing in Ms. Velázquez's district in New York, and some other Members came. When she was the Chair of this Committee, she came to my district as Ranking Member in Cincinnati, too. I understand she may have got a little grief from the leadership, because I was on the target list at that time, but she came, and I think it shows a real bipartisan point of view on her part, and these were hearings that we had that were significant.

We did them in an urban African-American neighborhood, we did them down in the Over-the-Rhine, where there has been a lot of new markets, tax credit, and rehabbing going on down there. So these weren't just fluffy kind of hearings. These were substantive hearings that were held.

Mr. DAVIS. Well, thank you.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you.

Mr. DAVIS. I appreciate your responses. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back. I now will recognize Mr. Loudermilk. I believe Mr. Smith will pass. Okay. Mr. Loudermilk, 5 minutes.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be brief. Just looking at the very moderate increase that you are asking for indicates to me that you must manage your budget very well, especially with the amount of workload we have got going forward.

My question, Mr. Chairman, are these skills something you learned through our mentorship program? I mean, how important do you feel that program really is?

Mr. CHABOT. Just for those who may be wondering where that question is coming from. Mr. Loudermilk was my mentee and I was his mentor when he first came to Congress, and I think he will—he will acknowledge that I was a tremendous mentor, I think.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. I can honestly say you were the absolute best I have ever had since I have been in Congress.

Mr. CHABOT. And now he is following in that line of leadership because he is now a mentor, so I hope that answers your question.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. It does.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back. Thanks again. We appreciate your time. We will study this and look forward to being back in touch with you. Thank you so much.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee now welcomes Chairman Brooks and Ranking Member Deutch of the House Committee on Ethics. Would the official reporter please enter a page break into the hearing record to begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The House Committee on Ethics, your Committee is tasked with oversight of all bills, resolutions, and other matters related to the Code of Official Conduct. Its primary focus is to enforce policies relating to the House rules.

I want to welcome the Chairman and Ranking Member, and I will now recognize Chairman Brooks for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. SUSAN W. BROOKS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF INDIANA

Mrs. BROOKS. Good afternoon, Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and the Members of the Committee. Thank you for providing Ranking Member Deutch and myself an opportunity to speak with you today about the ongoing work of the Ethics Committee. With your indulgence, we will do our best to answer your questions, although as you may know, much of our work is confidential.

And the House has tasked the Ethics Committee with interpreting, advising, and enforcing the rules of conduct that pertain to House Members, officers, and employees. The Committee undertakes that task through three different offices, three different parts of the House Ethics Committee, advice and education, financial disclosures, and investigations.

The Ethics Committee is solely unique amongst House committees in that it is the only committee that is evenly divided between both parties. The Committee is also the only Committee in the House where there is neither a Republican or Democratic staff. Our staff is nonpartisan.

As a Member of the Committee for the past 4 years, I have grown to admire and appreciate the nonpartisanship and the integrity of the staff of the Committee as they work to administer the functions of the Committee. Oftentimes, any publicity about our Committee's work surfaces only when there have been allegations of misconduct by a Member or a staffer that have been aired.

What is often not publicized is just how much work the Committee and the staff performs to help ensure Members and staff abide by the rules. We often only hear when the rules are being alleged to have been broken. And how many Members and their staff actively seek out the Committee's advice to ensure their conduct is above reproach.

I would like to share with you some of those statistics to highlight the amount of work the Committee conducts. In the 114th Congress, the Committee responded to nearly 55,000 informal telephone calls, emails, and in-person meetings from Members and their staff seeking guidance on the Ethics rules. This number actually increased by nearly 15,000 from the previous Congress.

The Committee provided nearly 900 written advisory opinions regarding proposed conduct. The Committee also approved 3,900 requests for privately sponsored travel, and it received nearly 16,000 financial disclosure statements and amendments, and also received and reviewed 3,000 periodic transaction reports.

These numbers, while they are quite high, are actually very encouraging to me. I believe it illustrates the large majority of House Members do want to and work hard to abide by the rules, and do want to serve their constituents with the highest regard to ethical

rules. I also believe it shows how much the work of the Committee continues to increase each Congress.

When I came to Congress 4 years ago, I wanted to do everything possible to try to restore some confidence in Congress, restore the public's trust. The Ethics Committee has a tremendous role to play in accomplishing that goal. As Chairwoman, I truly believe that one of the values of the Ethics Committee lies in its ability to continuously seek new avenues to ensure that the House community is educated regarding the laws, rules, and regulation that govern its conduct.

And I brought a copy of the House Ethics manual to just remind the Committee how many rules there are that the House Members and staff must abide by, and they are complex, and it is vast. Also we have a highlights version, kind of the primer book, but there are a lot of rules to follow.

Ranking Member Deutch and I share a commitment to making the Committee more accessible to Members and their staffs through more direct communication, such as periodic tips about common questions the Committee is asked. We are talking about a more mobile-friendly website, and simply educating Members on the services the Committee offers, and I hope it is by doing so we have less need to utilize that third function of investigations.

Just as Members and staff can trust and rely on the fact that members of our staff who serve on advice and education will conduct themselves in professional and nonpartisan manner, they can also trust and rely on the fact that Members who serve on our investigations committee conduct themselves in the same way.

So my colleagues on the Committee and the staff that serve the Committee solemnly undertake review of allegations regarding misconduct. It is a serious responsibility, and I have seen our Committee and our staff do so in a very professional way.

In the 114th Congress, the Committee dealt with 78 investigative matters, only 14 of which were carried over by the 113th Congress, because we have a commitment to resolving matters quickly. So we were able to cut in half the number of investigations that carried over.

One other fact I would like to highlight regarding investigations is of the 64 matters initiated by the Committee, less than a third were referrals from OCE. The others were—two-thirds were as a result of Committee-initiated investigations. Thank you for the opportunity to speak, and I look forward to your questions.

[The statement of Mrs. Brooks follows:]

**Testimony of Susan W. Brooks
Chairwoman, House Committee on Ethics
before the
Committee on House Administration
February 15, 2017**

Good afternoon, Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and the members of the Committee. Thank you for providing Ranking Member Deutch and me an opportunity to speak with you today about the ongoing work of the Ethics Committee. With your indulgences, we will do our best to answer your questions, although, as you may know, much of the work of the Committee is confidential.

The House has tasked the Ethics Committee with interpreting, advising, and enforcing the rules of conduct that pertain to House Members, officers, and employees. The Committee undertakes that task through its three main offices: Advice and Education, Financial Disclosures, and Investigations.

The Ethics Committee is solely unique amongst House Committees in that the Members of the Committee are evenly divided between both parties. As equally unique, the staff of the Committee is non-partisan. It is the only Committee in the House where there is neither a republican nor democratic staff. As a member of the Committee for the past four years, I have grown to admire and appreciate the non-partisanship and integrity of the staff of the Committee as they work to administer the functions of the Committee.

Oftentimes, any publicity about the Committee's work surfaces only when allegations of misconduct by a Member or staffer have aired. What is not often publicized is just how much work the Committee performs to help ensure Members and staff abide by the rules – and how many Members and their staff actively seek out the Committee's advice to ensure their conduct is above reproach.

In the 114th Congress, the Committee responded to nearly 55,000 informal telephone calls, emails, and in-person meetings from Members and their staff

seeking guidance on the Ethics rules. This number increased by nearly 15,000 from the previous Congress.

The Committee also provided nearly 900 written advisory opinions regarding proposed conduct, almost triple the number provided in the previous Congress.

It approved 3,900 requests for privately sponsored travel; received nearly 16,000 Financial Disclosure Statements and amendments; and received and reviewed 3,000 Periodic Transaction Reports.

These numbers are very encouraging to me. I believe it illustrates the majority of House Members do want to abide by the rules and do want to serve their constituents with the highest regard to ethical rules. I also believe it shows how much the work of the Committee continues to increase each Congress.

When I came to Congress, I wanted to do everything in my power to help restore the public's trust in this great institution. The Ethics Committee has a tremendous role to play in accomplishing that goal. As Chairwoman, I truly believe one of the values of the Ethics Committee lies in its ability to continuously seek new avenues to ensure the House community is educated regarding the laws, rules and regulations that govern its conduct.

Ranking Member Deutch and I share a commitment to making the Committee more accessible to Members and their staffs through more direct communications such as periodic "tips" about common questions the Committee is asked, a mobile-friendly website, and simply educating Members on the services the Committee offers. My hope is that by doing so, the Committee will have less need to utilize its third function: Investigations.

Just as Members and staff can trust and rely on the fact that the members of our staff who serve in the Committee's Advice and Education office will conduct themselves in a professional, non-partisan manner, they can also trust and rely on the fact that the members of our staff who serve in the Committee's Investigations office will conduct themselves in the same manner. My colleagues on the Committee, and the staff that serve the Committee solemnly undertake review of allegations regarding misconduct by Members or their staff. It is a serious responsibility, and I'm proud to say in my four years of service on the

Committee, I have always witnessed them conducting themselves in such a manner.

In the 114th Congress, the Committee dealt with 78 investigative matters – only 14 were carried over from the 113th Congress. Through a commitment to resolving matters quickly, the Committee was able to cut in half the number of investigations that carried over from the previous Congress. I share that commitment and will continue to ensure that allegations are investigated and resolved in a timely manner. One other fact I'd like to highlight regarding investigations – of the 64 matters initiated by the Committee less than 1/3 were referrals from OCE and the Committee began more than two-thirds of the matters as a result of Committee-initiated investigations.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Chairman Brooks. And I now will recognize Ranking Member, Mr. Deutch, for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. THEODORE E. DEUTCH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady for the opportunity to be here today to speak about the vital work of the Committee on Ethics. I am pleased to be here with Chairwoman Brooks. We are new to our roles as Chair and Ranking Member, but have previously served together on the Ethics Committee, and I look forward to continuing our work together, and we hope to continue in the model set by our previous Chairs and Ranking Members, Chairman Conaway and Chairman Dent, and Ranking Member Sanchez, follow that model in working together in a bipartisan way.

The Chairwoman described some of the ways that the Ethics Committee is unique. We know it is something that you, Chairman Harper, a former Member of the Committee, and our colleague, Representative Lofgren, former Chair of the Ethics Committee know firsthand, but I think it is fair to say that all of us know that ethics in government and the integrity of our Nation's elected officials remains a grave concern to the public, as it should.

In the House, the Committee on Ethics has the responsibility for administering and interpreting the various standards of conduct that apply to Members and staff in helping them to understand and comply with those standards. In addition, when it is alleged that a Member or staff person has violated one of those standards, the Committee is charged with determining whether a violation occurred, and if so, recommending an appropriate sanction or other remedial action.

You invited us to talk about the Committee's budget needs. The overwhelming majority of the Committee's modest budget is spent on salaries for our nonpartisan professional staff, so we are focusing today on providing you with more information about how our staff serves the entire House.

The Chairwoman noted some statistics about the scope of the Committee's work in the last Congress providing advice, education and training to Members and staff of the House. All of those statistics and a detailed overview of the Committee's work are available in a 210-page report that the Committee filed with the House, this report, in early January. It is also available on the Committee's website ethics.house.gov.

The Chairwoman provided some background as well about the Committee's investigative work. Although the Committee can begin an investigation after receiving a formal complaint, a self-reporter or referral from the Office of Congressional Ethics, the majority of the Committee's investigations are begun on its own initiative.

Although the Committee is probably best known for its critical investigative work, just as vital is the significant work of our talented nonpartisan staff to provide advice and education to House Members and staff. This outreach is particularly important with respect to new Members. This Congress and last, each of the last two Congresses has seen more than 50 new Members.

As in prior years, our Committee was pleased to partner with your Committee to provide ethics training to incoming freshmen Members during the orientation session that you organized in November. We will continue to look for opportunities to educate all Members about the rules and standards of conduct that apply to them as public servants in the House.

In short, we would like to build on the Committee's existing advice and education efforts to provide more information to help more Members on a more timely basis. All of the Committee's work that we have summarized for you is made possible by our terrific non-partisan professional staff. And as you consider funding for the Committee, please keep in mind that modest investments in recruiting and retaining the highest caliber ethics professionals for the Committee returns great dividends to the House and to the American public.

I know that other Chairmen and Ranking Members who have appeared before your Committee today have noted their committee staffs have a high proportion of lawyers because of the nature of the Committee's work. It is also true of the Committee on Ethics, but our attorneys also play a unique and a very important role in serving not just the Committee, but the entire House. And when any of our colleagues or any House employee calls the Committee on Ethics with an urgent advice question, we want to ensure they continue to get the best and most timely guidance possible.

Similarly, it is imperative that the Committee is able to retain and recruit talented and experienced investigative attorneys who can help us resolve investigative matters thoroughly, fairly, and expeditiously, so the House and public can remain confident in the work that we do. Our staff who are not attorneys also play essential roles supporting the work of the Committee. It has been a pleasure getting to know the talented and nonprofessional staff in the last two Congresses, and I am looking forward to working with them as Ranking Member.

We thank you again for the opportunity to appear before your Committee today and look forward to answer any questions you may have for us.

[The statement of Mr. Deutch follows:]

**Testimony Before the Committee on House Administration
Committee on Ethics
Remarks by Ranking Member Ted Deutch
February 15, 2017**

Thank you Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady for the opportunity to be here today. We appreciate the opportunity to speak to your committee about the vital work of the Committee on Ethics.

I am pleased to be here with Chairwoman Susan Brooks. Chairwoman Brooks and I are new to our roles as Chair and Ranking Member, but we have previously served together on the Ethics Committee, and I am looking forward to continuing our work together.

The Chairwoman and I both joined the Committee on Ethics in the 113th Congress. During the last two Congresses, the Committee was led first by Chairman Michael Conaway and Ranking Member Linda Sánchez, and then by Chairman Charlie Dent and Ranking Member Sánchez. Together, they set a tone of bipartisanship and collegiality that all of us who served on the Committee appreciated, and the Chairwoman and I plan to follow that model.

The Chairwoman described some of the ways that the Ethics Committee is unique. We know that's something that Chairman Harper, a former Member of the Committee, and our colleague Representative Lofgren, a former Chair of the Ethics Committee, know firsthand.

And I think it is fair to say that all of us know that ethics in government and the integrity of our nation's elected officials remains a great concern of the public. In the House, the Committee on Ethics has the responsibility for administering and interpreting the various standards of conduct that apply to Members and staff, and helping them understand and comply with those standards. When it is alleged that a Member or staff person has violated one of those standards, the Committee is charged with determining whether a violation occurred and, if so, recommending an appropriate sanction or other remedial action.

You have invited us to talk about the Committee's budget needs. The overwhelming majority of the Committee's modest budget is spent on salaries for our nonpartisan professional staff, so we are focusing today on providing you with more information about how our staff serves the House.

The Chairwoman noted some statistics about the scope of the Committee's work in the last Congress providing advice, education, and training to Members and staff of the House. All of those statistics and a detailed overview of the Committee's work are available in a 210-page report the Committee filed with the House in early January. That report is available to the House and the public on the Committee's web site, ethics.house.gov.

Although the Committee is probably best known for its important investigative work, just as important is the significant work our talented nonpartisan staff do providing advice and education to House Members and staff.

This is particularly important with respect to new Members. This Congress, 55 Members are serving their first term in the House. Another 55 Members are beginning their second term.

As in prior years, our Committee was pleased to partner with House Administration to provide ethics training to incoming freshman Members during the orientation session you organized in November. We will continue to look for opportunities to educate all Members about the rules and standards of conduct that apply to them as public servants in the House.

All of the Committee's work we have summarized for you is made possible by our terrific nonpartisan professional staff. As you consider funding for the Committee, please keep in mind that modest investments in recruiting and retaining the highest caliber ethics professionals for the Committee can return great dividends for the House and the public.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before your committee today. We look forward to answering any questions you may have for us.

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The CHAIRMAN. Thanks to both of you for being here and giving this testimony. I did, indeed, as you noted, have the privilege to serve not quite two full terms, because I came in, I think, around May of my first year, and it is a privilege, and it is—probably Rules and Ethics are the two most necessary and thankless jobs that you can—that you could do in the House, and, so, I thank you for the work that you are doing.

I know firsthand what a great staff you have, and I know that it is a staff that really wants to help the Members do right. And Congress, as you know, the one thing—the old adage does not apply here, ask—better to ask forgiveness rather than permission. Not here. You want to know on the front end that it is okay to do it before you step off into a real problem.

I do know also how well this Committee functions as the only evenly numbered committee in the House, and in my experience was that almost every situation, we got to unanimous vote, that they look—the Members looked past what party it is you are concerned with, so I commend you for the job you are doing, and we look forward to working on that.

One question I do have is, I noticed you held up the House Ethics manual, which has a rather old date on it. Are there plans when we might be printing a new edition to that?

Mrs. BROOKS. Thank you for the question, Mr. Chairman. You are right. This edition is from 2008. It has not been revised since then, and prior to that, it was in 1992, and so that is in our plan for this Congress is to begin that process of revising and updating the House Ethics manual, so this actual 115th Congress.

Mr. DEUTCH. And as the Chairman referred to earlier in her testimony, we would also like to make it more accessible so that we don't have to rely just on that book, but people will actually be able to have all of the standards of conduct on their mobile devices as well.

The CHAIRMAN. That sounds great, and obviously, it is also—it is always good to have people like your staff that you can go to and ask that question about how does this work. You know, sometimes we would rather have somebody tell us or reply to an email request or letter, and so, I want to commend you for the job you are doing, and we will look forward to looking at your request here.

At this time, I will recognize Mr. Brady for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you. For the record, this is the only time I want to be face-to-face with the both of you. But every time we address new Members, I always tell them to make sure to either come in front of us when they have a question or come in front of the Ethics when they have a question. A lot of times they are a little bit afraid or leery to come in front of Ethics, but they do come in front of us, come to me.

And I do go to your staff people. And they are professional, they are courteous, and they understand. And as the Chairman said, it is much better to ask at that particular time for permission instead of having to at a later time ask for forgiveness.

But you do a great job. You do a great service to the House. I only wish and hope that a lot of us, myself included, would use your services. And if that would happen, I think it would keep a

lot of us on the straight and narrow rather than falling off to the wayside for a moment or two.

And I have to say something I probably shouldn't say, but this other ethics committee, so-called, whatever their names are, the advocate committee or whatever, I am not too happy with them because they brought a lot of our Members up in front of them and found out that there was nothing there before they come in front of you. But in that process, our Members have to get representation, and representation costs money. And it is a shame that they bring some frivolous suits because anybody can bring a suit against anybody over an accusation.

And I would like for you to look into that, or we all should look into that, having to pay those legal fees, and maybe we should put something in if they bring something frivolous, then maybe they should be responsible for legal fees. There is a law, Dragonetti—I am not a lawyer, but I know a little bit about the Dragonetti case—that I think that they should be able to recover some of those legal fees, not in front of you, in front of this advocacy committee that we have.

But thank you for your service. And, again, I continually tell new Members and old Members, former Members even, that they should come in front of you and get a ruling, that it is in confidence and it is confidential and you do honor that, and we appreciate that. Thank you.

Mrs. BROOKS. If I might, Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, if you would like to respond to that, Chairwoman Brooks.

Mrs. BROOKS. Thank you, and thank you Ranking Member Brady.

We have a new Chair of what is called the Office of Congressional Ethics, OCE. Doc Hastings, former Member from the State of Washington, has just agreed to be the new Chairperson of the independent body, working with the Ranking Member, David Skaggs. And Doc Hastings, who actually I realize when I brought this book, was responsible for the rewrite of this ethics manual. He is a former House Ethics Chairman himself. And so he is very familiar with how the House ethics process works.

He wants to improve the process between OCE and between our Committee. I believe there is room for improvement. So I am hopeful. We plan to sit down with the, as the new Chair and Ranking, we plan to sit down with them in the very near future to figure out how we can work in a very positive way moving forward, making sure that, again, Members are held at the highest standards, but that there also is due process for Members and/or staff who are brought before OCE. And we think there are some improvements that can be made to the process, and we are committed to working on that.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you. That increases my standings on what we are doing here. Doc Hastings is a friend and he is an ethical and a very decent human being. And I am really glad, my confidence will be restored in that. Thank you.

Mr. DEUTCH. I would just add to that, again, as I said before, the majority of our investigations are begun by the Committee, but we understand that there have been some concerns raised by some of

the Members about the operations of the Office of Congressional Ethics. To the extent that there are any clarifications to the process or anything else that happens, obviously and most importantly, all of that will be done in both a transparent and a bipartisan manner.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Brady yields back.

I now recognize the Vice Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Davis, for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Madam Chairman, the Ranking Member. It is always great to see one of my fellow freshman colleagues a few terms back elevate to this Chairmanship. And we are very proud of you, Susan, and we know you are going to do a great job.

I noticed you have asked for level funding once more for the Committee. If other, more resources were available, what could you use them for?

Mrs. BROOKS. Thank you for the question.

I have certainly spoken with the staff, and if there is one area that we would like to improve upon, it is the amount of advice and education we provide and the timeliness of the advice and education. And so if there were to be additional resources, right now we have two open spots, so we are not completely full at the present time.

But if there were additional resources, we have talked and agreed that we continue to need to do more outreach and maybe in some new ways to Members, some new training mechanisms or maybe new training modules to educate staff and Members about the importance of not just following the rules, but the pitfalls in some of the rules and some of the things people need to be familiar with that aren't necessarily commonsense and very well known.

And so I would say the advice and education staff is where we would focus. But we would always want to leave the opportunity in case there should be an incredibly significant investigation of a large number of Members—and all I would say is, God forbid that, we hope that does not happen. And that is because if we do a great job in advice and education, we can keep the amount of investigations down because people will understand the rules maybe better than they currently do.

But we would like the opportunity to return to the Committee if we needed to plus up even the investigative staff if we didn't have the resources that a new massive investigation might require. But I would say currently it would be to focus on beefing up our advice and education staff, resources, and maybe even technology.

Mr. DAVIS. Okay. Well, I appreciate your willingness, especially in the advice and education section. I helped lead a review of our spending policies in the House last year, and we held numerous listening sessions with this Committee and other Members from throughout the House. And many of the questions that we took in, Madam Chairman, actually related to advice that would have been given through the House Administration Committee or the House Ethics Committee, and sometimes that advice was not similar.

And part of the results, the positive results of that review were with your predecessor addressing maybe more use of joint pink sheets so that we are all on the same page, because we are going

to get asked the same questions on this Committee that you are going to get asked and we ought to be able to have the same responses.

Now, a big frustration of mine too is the fact that we see House rules change, and we are waiting for Ethics guidance on how to implement those changes. And I know in one instance we are not getting any guidance on that rule change, and that makes it frustrating for somebody like me to be able to explain how is this happening and what can we do to make sure that we get that guidance out.

So if it is an increase in your budget that would allow you to have more opportunities to look those over, please do let us know, because we all want to work in conjunction with you, and we truly appreciate the job you and your team do.

So with that, I yield back.

Mr. DEUTCH. Well, if I may, Mr. Chairman, and likewise, Mr. Vice Chairman, to the extent that the Chair or I can be helpful on these matters, please, you should always feel free to reach out to us. And, in fact, we have been having conversations about these pink sheets and the fact that some good number of our colleagues I suspect aren't altogether either up to date or even familiar with pink sheets. One of the things that we hope to accomplish is to provide, is to make sure that there is greater access to the information that comes out of our Committee on a timely basis.

Mr. DAVIS. Well, thank you, Mr. Deutch. And this is where, I think, our Committee and your Committee need to work in conjunction with each other, because we can help educate the rest of the Members and their staffs on many of the changes and the advice that you are getting through the pink sheet process and through working with us.

We don't need to be two silos, and I think that was the message that we got out of our Members during that review process, and it is something that we worked on with Chairman Dent. And we would love to see it continue under the leadership of both of you, and we stand willing to work with you.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

I now recognize Mrs. Comstock for 5 minutes. Okay. She will pass.

And now Mr. Smith, any questions?

I want to thank you both for coming, and we want to thank you for this, job because this is one of those things you can't talk about what you are doing. Sometimes the media has no idea what you are doing—hopefully they don't, because it is supposed to be obviously very personal and not to be divulged. But it is an incredible amount of paperwork and hours, and we recognize that job that you are doing and we want to thank you for that and look forward to working with you.

Thank you.

Mrs. BROOKS. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee now welcomes Chairwoman Foxx and Ranking Member Scott of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. Would the official reporter please enter a page break into the hearing record to begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The House Committee on Education and the Workforce is tasked with oversight of education for students, as well as workplaces for working America. Its primary focus is to maintain and create commonsense solutions regarding Federal education and labor policy. I want to welcome Chairwoman Foxx and Ranking Member Scott, and at this time the Chair recognizes Chairwoman Foxx for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. VIRGINIA FOXX, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

Ms. FOXX. Thank you very much, Chairman Harper, 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 budget request for the 115th Congress.

I want to give a special thanks to Dianna Ruskowsky and Elizabeth Podgorski for their hard work on putting together this budget. They really have done a fantastic job, and I appreciate it so much.

I am going to move as quickly as possible to be brief here. The work of the Committee on Education and the Workforce touches practically every aspect of American life. In that light, we have proposed a fiscally prudent budget that will allow the Committee to advance bold legislative and oversight agendas while continuing to serve as trusted stewards of the resources we have been given by the American public.

The Committee respectfully requests a modest 2.9 percent budget increase for the 115th Congress. The request will allow the Committee to improve access to high-quality education for students and provide Americans safe and productive workplaces, as well as ensure the policies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction are efficient and effective.

The Committee will help advance a significant number of legislative priorities this Congress, including delivering a stable, patient-centered ObamaCare alternative, reauthorizing the Higher Education Act, addressing the needs of at-risk youth and juvenile offenders, reining in the runaway Department of Labor and National Labor Relations Board, protecting small businesses and the men and women they employ from flawed rules and regulations, and strengthening retirement security, to name a few.

The Committee also will conduct vigorous oversight ensuring the Federal bureaucracy administers laws responsibly and as Congress intended. The Committee will work on examining the nearly two dozen laws within our jurisdiction with authorizations that have expired or will soon expire. Everything we do will focus on holding the Federal Government accountable for how it spends taxpayers' hard-earned money.

Additionally, Committee activities will support and complement a number of relevant priorities of the new administration. To enhance the Committee's legislative and oversight efforts, we will pursue a robust schedule of hearings in Washington, D.C., regional field hearings, and relevant site visits to hear directly from affected parties and see firsthand the challenges facing our schools and workplaces.

In order to execute the Committee's robust legislative and oversight workload, as well as a renewed focus on Member services and

coalitions outreach, the Committee must be properly staffed. In previous years we have maintained lean staffing levels. However, it is evident that additional staff, as well as staff retention, are needed to enhance the Committee's institutional knowledge and productivity.

The American people expect us to ensure that Federal policies support and do not undermine their ability to pursue a lifetime of success and prosperity. Personally, my reputation for frugality is well-deserved, which is why we commit to spending each dollar we are allocated efficiently and effectively as we do the work the American people send us to do. We respectfully ask the committee to take these factors into account as you consider our budget request.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I appreciate your time, and will be happy to answer any questions.

[The statement of Ms. Foxx follows:]

**Testimony of Rep. Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman, Committee on Education and the Workforce
before the Committee on House Administration
on "Committee Funding for the 115th Congress"
February 15, 2017**

Chairman Harper, 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 budget request for the 115th Congress. In my experience, when it comes to opening statements, "less is more," so hopefully I can live up to my own standards of brevity, here.

The work of the Committee on Education and the Workforce touches practically every aspect of American life. In that light, we have proposed a fiscally prudent budget that will allow the Committee to advance bold legislative and oversight agendas, while continuing to serve as trusted stewards of the resources we have been given by the American public.

The Committee respectfully requests a modest 2.9 percent budget increase for the 115th Congress. The request will allow the Committee to improve access to high quality education for students and provide Americans safe and productive workplaces, as well as ensure the policies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction are effective and efficient.

The Committee will help advance a significant number of legislative priorities this Congress, including delivering a stable, patient-centered Obamacare alternative; reauthorizing the *Higher Education Act*; addressing the needs of at-risk youth and juvenile offenders; reining in the runaway Department of Labor and National Labor Relations Board; protecting small businesses and the men and women they employ from flawed rules and regulations; and strengthening retirement security, to name a few.

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the nearly two dozen laws within our jurisdiction with authorizations that have expired or will soon expire. Everything we do will focus on holding the federal government accountable for how it spends taxpayers' hard earned money.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Chairwoman Foxx.

We will now recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Scott, for 5 minutes.

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

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee with Chairwoman Foxx to discuss the budget of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Let me first thank Chairwoman Foxx for her leadership in developing our Committee budget and thank her and her staff for working so closely with my staff in this effort. I fully support her request for the 115th Congress, which represents, compared to other budget requests you have heard today, a fiscally prudent, modest 2.9 percent increase over the last Congress. With this request, I know the Committee will be able to carry out its activities, both legislative and oversight, in a robust and efficient manner.

Per past practice, one-third of the budget will be allocated to the minority, and I appreciate Chairwoman Foxx's commitment to continuing this custom and providing the minority with the autonomy over that allocation. This modest increase in our budget will allow the minority to continue its work with a high level of expertise and professionalism. I have placed a high priority on ensuring the staff is diverse, highly educated, and credentialed. As the policy and legal workplace continues to be highly competitive, it is key that we attract, train, and retain talented staff who are knowledgeable and capable of delving into a wide array of complex issues facing the Committee.

Although our Committee has jurisdiction over many of the most partisan and divisive issues, during the last Congress we were successful in producing several bipartisan authorizations that became law: the Every Student Succeeds Act, the Older Americans Act, and amendments to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. The Committee reported and the House passed several higher education bills, career and technical education reform, and juvenile justice reform. I am eager to continue the work in a bipartisan manner, as I know the chairwoman is.

Our Committee has a robust agenda this year as well. We have been active at the full Committee level and subcommittee level, already holding hearings on issues within the Committee's jurisdiction, and we have been called on on floor action as well. In fact, two resolutions that are being debated as we speak are within the Committee's jurisdiction.

As we look ahead, we expect to engage in reauthorizations of the Higher Education Act, Head Start Act, and Child Nutrition Act. And I hope we can finish the work we started on CTE and juvenile justice, as I mentioned earlier. Completing all of these authorizations in Congress is a tall order, but I believe that we can be successful, and your support for this request will assist in that.

For the minority, we believe that it is our responsibility to engage in comprehensive oversight for programs within our jurisdiction, such as in the areas of civil rights, Federal student aid, work-

er safety, fair pay, and retirement security. We are committed to carrying out this work in addition to our legislative responsibilities with the resources provided to us by asking our staff to take on more and be as efficient as possible in doing so.

So I join Chairwoman Foxx in asking the Committee to support our request and provide the Committee on Education and the Workforce with sufficient funding to do the quality of work the American people deserve and that will help strengthen America's working families.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here. I yield back the balance of my time.

[The statement of Mr. Scott follows:]

Statement of Rep. Robert C. Scott (D-VA)
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and the Workforce
Before House Administration
February 15, 2017

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

Let me first thank Chairwoman Foxx for her leadership in developing our Committee budget and thank her staff for working so closely with my staff on this effort. I fully support her request for the 115th Congress which represents a 2.9 percent increase over last Congress. With this request, I know that the Committee will be able to carry out its activities, both legislative and oversight, in a robust and efficient manner.

Per past practice, one-third of the budget will be allocated to the Minority and I appreciate the Chairwoman's commitment to continuing this custom and providing me with autonomy over the Minority's allocation.

This modest increase to our budget will allow the Minority to continue its work with a high level of expertise and professionalism. I have placed a high priority on ensuring my staff is diverse, highly educated and credentialed. As the policy and legal workplace continues to be highly competitive, it is key that we attract, train, and retain talented staff who are knowledgeable and capable of delving into the wide array of complex issues facing this committee.

During the last Congress we were successful in producing several bipartisan reauthorizations that became law: the Every Student Succeeds Act, the Older Americans Act and amendments to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. We also worked together on 5 higher education bills, career and technical education reform, and juvenile justice reform. I am eager to continue to work in a bipartisan manner as I know the Chairwoman is.

Our Committee has a robust agenda this year as well. We have been active at the full committee level and subcommittee level already holding hearings on issues within the Committee's jurisdiction and we have been called on for floor action as well. As we look ahead, we expect to engage in reauthorizations of the Higher Education Act, Head Start Act, and the Child Nutrition Act to name several. And I hope we can finish the work we started on CTE and JJ as I mentioned earlier. Completing all of these reauthorizations in this Congress is a tall order, but I believe we can be successful and your support for this request will assist with that.

For the Minority we believe it is also our responsibility to engage in comprehensive oversight for programs within our jurisdiction, such as in the area of civil rights, federal student aid, worker safety, fair pay and retirement security. We are committed to carrying out this work in addition to our legislative responsibilities with the resources provided to us by asking our staff to take on more and to be efficient in doing so.

I join Chairwoman Foxx 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 and that will help strengthen America's working families.

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

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The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize myself for 5 minutes for questions.

I just want to thank you both for being here, for the work that the Committee does. It is a very complex area that not just anyone can walk in and start working on. So I commend your staff for their knowledge level that they have.

One thing that we are trying to make sure of is that we keep in mind that we are a coequal branch of government, that we have to function in the way that we need to, and there have been times it seems we have turned some of that authority over where we should retain it.

So when you look at the list that you have for the reauthorization of so many things, not just the big ones that you mentioned, but a lot of other ones that have to be authorized for this year or for this Congress, it is going to take a lot. So I know this, and I do understand that, Chairwoman Foxx, and I am sure you as well, Ranking Member Scott, that this is something that you take the money seriously and you use it wisely, as has been proven by your track record here. So we will take a good look at it and see where we are.

At this time I will recognize Mr. Brady, the Ranking Member, for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have heard both of your testimonies. It seems to me you do work well together. I just need to ask for the record the Ranking Member, the one-third, two-thirds is in operation, it is working?

I appreciate it. Thank you for the job you do for the American people. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Anyone else on our side have any questions they care to ask?

Seeing none, I just want to thank you for this. I appreciate the information that you have provided. It is detailed enough we can look at. I understand, you know, looking at the travel budget request where you plan to do more work out, that I think really helps take us to where those issues are.

And so thank you for your hard work. We will be back in touch. Thank you.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee now welcomes Chairman Brady and Ranking Member Neal. Would the official reporter please enter a page break into the hearing record to begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The House Committee on Ways and Means is tasked with oversight of revenue and related to issues such as tariffs, reciprocal trade agreements, and the bonded debt of the United States. In addition, the revenue-related aspects of the Social Security system, Medicare, and social services programs are under the Committee's jurisdiction as well.

I want to welcome Chairman Brady and Ranking Member Neal. And the Chair now recognizes Chairman Brady for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. KEVIN BRADY, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS**

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, Members of the Committee, I am here today to present the proposed budget for the Ways and Means Committee for the 115th Congress, and I am joined by our Ranking Member, Congressman Neal. So thank you for having us.

I would like to start today by offering my congratulations to Chairman Harper for being selected to lead the Committee on House Administration. You have done tremendous work. It is great to see you leading this. Your Committee serves an essential role in ensuring the House functions in the efficient, accountable, and transparent manner that the American people deserve. Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady, thank you both for your leadership in fulfilling that vital responsibility.

As the Committee considers our budget request, I ask that you please keep a few important things in mind. First, the vast jurisdiction of the Ways and Means Committee. Secondly, our ambitious agenda for the 115th Congress, which is focused on addressing several major challenges facing our Nation. Finally, our strong track record of legislative accomplishment and efficient use of taxpayer resources.

In my opinion, the staff of the Way and Means Committee on both sides of the aisle are among the brightest and the hardest working on Capitol Hill. They are tasked with handling an incredibly large workload at an incredibly fast pace. They do it day in and day out with remarkable effectiveness.

Our Committee's jurisdiction includes tax, international trade, health care, Social Security, Medicare, and welfare. We also have a constitutional responsibility to conduct oversight of the administration of our Nation's tax laws. In total, our jurisdiction covers more than half of all mandatory spending, all revenues, and the debt limit.

The efforts of our Committee will be front and center during the 115th Congress as we work with the President and our Senate colleagues to advance a pro-growth agenda that helps Americans from all walks of life. It is essential that our Members and staff have the resources needed to do their jobs to the best of their abilities. This is especially true as relates to two critical agenda items, pro-growth tax reform and repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act.

These are historic opportunities, but they are also massive undertakings. We are committed to delivering the results Americans deserve on tax reform and health care, and to do this we are re-

questing resources for a handful of additional staff dedicated specifically to these historic efforts.

Along with our work on tax and health care, our Committee will also be pursuing a pro-growth trade agenda that helps our businesses and our American workers compete and win around the world. Additionally, we will continue taking actions on solutions to help more families permanently escape poverty.

Many of our agenda items for this year and next year will build off the legislative progress and the accomplishments of the last session of Congress during which our Committee was highly productive. Last Congress, we held a combined total of 69 full Committee and subcommittee hearings, held 8 organizational meetings and 22 markups. And during these 22 markups, we passed and sent 92 bills to the House floor.

If the numbers alone are not enough to show the kind of record we have in the Committee, consider how historic some of these bills were.

The PATH Act provided American families and job creators with more than \$600 billion in permanent tax relief. This bipartisan bill also brought an end to the counterproductive and retroactive tax extenders process.

The Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act, also bipartisan, provided our Nation with the strongest trade enforcement powers in modern history.

And the American Manufacturing and Competitiveness Act, another bipartisan measure, provided critical tariff relief for our manufacturers so they can grow their businesses and create local jobs.

These bills, all of which passed with strong bipartisan support, were just 3 of 35 Ways and Means bills which became law during the last session of Congress.

Finally, it is important to note all these legislative successes were achieved while using our Committee's taxpayer-provided resources in the most efficient and effective way possible. One example is how we have continued to modernize the Committee's printing process by making more of our publications available electronically but not in print. This has eliminated waste, reduced cost, and helped us make Committee publications which are vast, related to the Tax Code and other matters, as transparent and accessible to the public as possible.

As for the Committee Democrats' budget, we propose to continue our tradition of allocating one-third of the Committee's budget and staff to the minority. These resources can be deployed as they see fit with no interference from the majority. That has long been our practice on the Ways and Means Committee, and we will continue it during the 115th session of Congress.

In closing, I again want to thank you, Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, all the Members of the Committee, for your time and consideration. I do want to mention as well, as we head into healthcare and tax reform, the critical role of the Joint Committee on Taxation for us to do our job. And I will look forward to answering your questions.

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

**Statement of Chairman Kevin Brady
Committee on Ways and Means
Testimony before the Committee on House Administration
Regarding the Ways and Means Committee Budget for the 115th Congress
Wednesday, February 15, 2017**

Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee, I am here today to present our proposed budget for the Ways and Means Committee in the 115th Congress. I'm joined today by our Ranking Member, Congressman Neal. Thank you for having us.

I would like to start today by offering my congratulations to Chairman Harper on being selected to lead the Committee on House Administration. Your Committee serves an essential role in ensuring that the House functions in the efficient, accountable, and transparent manner that the American people deserve. Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady, thank you both for your leadership in fulfilling that vital responsibility.

As the Committee considers our budget request, I ask that you please keep a few important things in mind. First, the vast jurisdiction of the Ways and Means Committee. Secondly, our ambitious agenda for the 115th Congress, which is focused on addressing several major challenges facing our nation. Finally, our strong track record of legislative accomplishment and efficient use of taxpayer resources.

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The efforts of our Committee will be front and center during the 115th Congress as we work with the President and our Senate colleagues to advance a pro-growth agenda that helps Americans of all walks of life. It is essential that our Members and staff have the resources needed to do their jobs to the best of their abilities. This is especially true as it relates to two critical agenda items –pro-growth tax reform, and repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act.

These are historic opportunities, but they are also massive undertakings. We are committed to delivering the results Americans deserve on tax reform and health care. To do this, we are requesting resources for a handful of additional staff dedicated specifically to these historic efforts.

Along with our work on tax and health care, our Committee will be pursuing a pro-growth trade agenda that helps our businesses and workers compete and win around the world. Additionally, we will continue taking action on solutions to help more families permanently escape poverty.

Many of our agenda items for this year and next will build off the legislative progress and accomplishments of the 114th Congress, during which our Committee was highly productive.

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Finally, it’s important to note that all of these legislative successes were achieved while using our Committee’s taxpayer-provided resources in the most efficient and effective way possible. One example is how we have continued to modernize the Committee printing process by making more of our publications available electronically but not in print. This has eliminated waste, reduced costs, and helped us make Committee publications as transparent and accessible to the public as possible.

As for the Committee Democrats’ budget, we propose to continue our tradition of allocating one third of the Committee’s budget and staff to the minority. These resources can be deployed as they see fit, with no interference from the majority. That has long been our practice on the Ways and Means Committee. We will continue it during the 115th Congress.

In closing, I again want to thank Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and all Members of the Committee for your time and consideration.

I look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Chairman Brady.
I now recognize Ranking Member, Mr. Neal, for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. RICHARD NEAL, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS

Mr. NEAL. Thank you, Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady and Members of the Committee.

We are in support of the Ways and Means Committee budget submission which requests a modest increase in our Committee allocation. We have consulted as this budget was being developed and had the opportunity for input.

As you can see, the largest part of our funding is dedicated to salaries, with the rest going toward telecommunications, publications, water filtration service. Despite seeing a slight increase in our funding levels last year and in the last Congress, we still rely heavily on House-negotiated contracts with publication vendors.

The Committee on Ways and Means has been tasked with a broad area of jurisdiction that includes tax, trade, and entitlement reform. While we differ from our Republican colleagues in our Democratic agenda, I believe that Chairman Brady and I can agree that the bulk of the legislation in this body comes from the Committee on Ways and Means.

What is apparent by the expenses incurred in the last Congress is that if more cuts are forthcoming, this Committee cannot operate without cutting core legislative work. In fact, given the likelihood of both tax and health reform, an increase in the Committee's budget commensurate with this increased legislative work would certainly be appreciated.

So I am pleased to report that the Democrats will have full control over one-third of the Committee's share of the budgeting, and I hope that you will consider these facts when you make your determination.

[The statement of Mr. Neal follows:]

**Richard E. Neal, Ranking Democrat
Committee on Ways and Means
Before the Committee on House Administration
Wednesday, February 15, 2017**

We are in support of the Ways and Means Committee budget submission which requests a modest increase in our Committee allocation.

We were consulted as this budget was being developed and had an opportunity for input.

As you can see, the largest part of our funding is dedicated to salaries with the rest going toward telecommunications, publications and water filtration service.

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While we differ from Republicans in our Democratic agenda, I believe that Chairman Brady and I can agree that the bulk of legislation in this body comes from the Committee on Ways and Means.

What is apparent by the expenses incurred in the last Congress is that if more cuts are forthcoming this Committee cannot operate without cutting core legislative work. In fact, given the likelihood of both tax and health reform, an increase in the Committee's budget commensurate with this increased legislative work would be appreciated.

I am very pleased to report that the Democrats will have full control over our 1/3 share of the Committee's budget.

I hope that you consider these facts when you make your decision.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

And we recognize you have some major items on your Committee plate for this Congress, and there is a lot that has to be done. And we are also trying to keep in mind that there are coequal branches of government, and we have given up some of that authority over the years, and we want to make sure that we have and the committees have what they need to function. It certainly has been the Speaker's wish that the committees would do their job and giving you that opportunity and the means to do that. So we will look at the request carefully.

And I will now recognize Mr. Brady for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, but the Ranking Member has answered my question about the one-third, two-thirds, and I appreciate that.

But one additional side note. Hey, Brady, use your first name, will you? When you were in Philadelphia, it is all I heard, was, "I was meeting with President Trump." Now I don't mind meeting with him, but the press were killing me. So will you please use your first name and quit getting me in trouble?

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Yes, sir, Mr. Ranking Member, who by the way, the integrity of the Ranking Member is unquestioned, so when one of my early paychecks went to Mr. Brady's office, it was promptly returned, just so you know. So thank you.

Mr. BRADY. But one other thing now. I said I will mail it to your house. He said, "No, no. Don't let my wife see it."

The CHAIRMAN. Was that off the record, by the way?

Thank you very much.

I now recognize the Vice Chair of the Committee, Mr. Davis, for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS. Chairman Brady, I don't know if he would return that check today.

It is always great to have you in front of us, and I want to commend you because last year you allowed Members of other committees to come in and testify and talk about some of the issues that were very important, those of us who don't serve on your Committee, and they were issues under your jurisdiction. As we move ahead and we have some major issues in front of us and in front of your Committee, is that a process that you are looking at continuing?

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Yeah, we love this. So we had Member days in both tax reform and health care. We are going to continue those because, look, our conference has remarkable ideas, and we want to hear them. We want to be able to move those bills through regular order, which I love the fact it has been reestablished. We have more accountability, more openness. There is a process for everyone to weigh in. And so, yes, sir, we intend to continue that across our broad jurisdiction.

Mr. DAVIS. Well, I appreciate that, and I know a lot of other Members on other committees do too. And, frankly, I know other committees are looking at following that lead, too, so that was something that was very well noticed.

You have got a lot of issues in front of you with new legislation and new ideas. Do you think that is going to impact your oversight

responsibilities? And if you were to be able to get any more funding than what you even requested, what would you use it for?

Mr. BRADY of Texas. So our request right now is focused on tax and health care. Our tax staff is actually smaller than it has been in past years. And so the request there is just to pull it up for this historic responsibility we have in this session. The same with our health staff as well.

The rest, we are going to continue oversight. We have very aggressively with the IRS. In fact, the IRS accountability in the last year was very successful. And I think one of the key parts of that was the bipartisan work that was done with Mr. Lewis and Mr. Roskam on civil asset forfeitures, when the IRS seizes the assets of small businesses who are innocent, you know, who did that, one, we think wrongly. But then because of the pressure bipartisan, we forced them to go back many years and start weighing those decisions and actually began the process of returning that money in a bipartisan way.

So we are going to continue our aggressive oversight in all areas.

Mr. DAVIS. You would use any possible extra funding for more oversight?

Mr. BRADY of Texas. So I think we are fairly level there. I will double check.

April, on the oversight?

Yeah, I think we are good.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you.

And, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

Does anyone else have any questions they would like to ask?

Mr. Smith, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH. A previous questioner here touched on these issues a little bit. But in terms of tax reform in a historical context, can you perhaps give a little more detail as to how heavy a lift just the supporting work that will be taking place might be?

Mr. BRADY of Texas. So it has been 30 years since America has looked at completely redesigning its Tax Code. As you would imagine, it has tripled in size since President Reagan last conducted tax reform. It is incredibly complex.

And so while we have worked 5 years as a Committee to get to this point, a very intense effort last year, rewriting the text of that, also key to CBO and Joint Tax. Putting these policies forward, the listing we do to make sure that this very bold approach, the mechanics, design, and transition right, it is a stunningly complex and intensive process. And our tax writers spend a good part of each day writing the text, reviewing these major changes, because the Tax Code, as you know, is just stunningly complex.

And health care, frankly, is no less of an undertaking. These are two historic reforms happening at exactly the same time.

Mr. SMITH. Obviously, the topics being discussed in the public square these days, regardless of where one might come down on either side, or a number of sides to a particular issue. Can you perhaps, either one of you or both, reflect a little bit on the Committee work that needs to be done regardless of a particular advocacy position?

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Well, it does. So a couple thoughts. Look, we may have differences on health care in certain areas, but we have found some very productive ways to make improvements in Medicare, Medicare Advantage, in a bipartisan way, working together over the last session. I anticipate that to happen going forward as well.

Oversight also has found bipartisan ways to work together, also time-intensive as you are dealing with the IRS and the Tax Code there as well. And trade, as we engage in a new administration, which, frankly, they want to engage both the Republicans and Democrats in this trade agenda, these consultations start this week and next and accelerate.

And then overall, look, I think where we hope there could be bipartisan support is on getting people out of poverty, I mean, really helping people grab that first rung of the economic ladder. That is a big challenge with 80 different programs tied to that.

And so our workload from a complexity standpoint, I would say, is as tough as any, and I am absolutely confident we are going to do our job and deliver on those. The resources we have asked for we think are fair but critical.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. Mr. Neal.

Mr. NEAL. Thank you, Mr. Smith. Thanks for the question.

As to the institutional network of the Ways and Means Committee, I think we all share a great sense of pride in having the opportunity to serve there. And I also, as Kevin just mentioned, how difficult it is to do tax reform. Bill Archer was a friend of mine, took the gavel in 1995 and said that he was going to pull the Tax Code up by its roots, he was going to drive a stake into the heart of the Tax Code, and we were going to change it fundamentally.

Well, here we are in 2017, and there is broad agreement on the Committee as to what is wrong. There is less agreement as to the path forward.

I think to reiterate a point that the Chairman made a moment ago, was that we found a way forward on the PATH Act. That was a longstanding series of issues that many of us had more than a passing interest in seeing come to a concrete solution when we did that.

But I do think that Bill Archer's words, dating back to 1995, or Chairman Rostenkowski's words—and just by way of institutional framework, I went to the Committee when Mr. Rostenkowski was the Chairman. So it is not as though these issues have just come up. And I frequently point out to people, if they were easy, they would have been done.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

Again, thank you, Chairman Brady, Ranking Member Neal, for being here, and we look forward to working with you.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Thank you, Chairman, Ranking Member.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee now welcomes Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member DeFazio. Would the official reporter please enter a page break into the hearing record to begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure is tasked with the oversight of the Department of Transportation, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the Army Corps of Engineers, among many others. Its primary focuses are matters relating to all modes of transportation, as well as national infrastructure, such as water management, economically depressed area development, and federally owned real estate.

I want to welcome Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member DeFazio, and the Chair now recognizes Chairman Shuster for 5 minutes.

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

Mr. SHUSTER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It is always great to come before your Committee, especially when the Committee appears to be stacked in our favor, two T&I Members and, of course, a fellow Pennsylvanian. So I feel pretty good about being here today. We won't mention Nebraska, unless Penn State has beaten them recently.

Mr. SMITH. But only if that is the case.

Mr. SHUSTER. Exactly. I am glad you pointed that out.

No, seriously, I appreciate having the opportunity to be here in front of you. Thank you for what you do and making sure that the House operates in an efficient manner and with the funds necessary to achieve our goals.

Our goal in this Congress is to build upon the successes that we had in the 114th Congress and be responsible stewards of the public's tax dollars as we work to rebuild or build the 21st century infrastructure.

Last Congress, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee passed 56 public laws and concurrent resolutions. We moved 104 bills through the House, held 54 hearings, 12 markups, and 12 Committee field hearings and meetings outside the beltway. We initiated 34 GAO and inspector general oversight reports and audits.

Among the laws we passed last Congress were large, complex pieces of legislation, including the Fixing America's Surface Transportation or the FAST Act, the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act, the WIIN Act, Protecting our Infrastructure of Pipelines and Enhancing Safety Act, the PIPES Act, and the Coast Guard Authorization Act. These bills became law because we were able to build a consensus and get things done for the American people. We could not have accomplished any of this without the support of the Committee on House Administration. So thank you very much for that support.

Even with all these successes, there is still more work to do. Not only must we oversee the implementation of the laws that we passed last Congress, we also must lay the groundwork for the future. Our population will move towards 400 million people over the next couple of decades, and that infrastructure must be ready to physically continue to unite the people of this country. With your support the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will be poised to help our Nation meet those needs.

We must build a 21st century infrastructure for America which will include reauthorization and reform of the Federal Aviation Administration, a Water Resources Development Act that keeps Congress on a 2-year cycle addressing America's water infrastructure, and an authorization of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other Federal programs to improve disaster response, reforms to the General Services Administration to help save billions of Federal dollars, and a bill to authorize the U.S. Coast Guard to ensure it has the resources, vessels, and technology it needs.

Finally, we are prepared to roll up our sleeves and work with the new administration and other congressional leaders on an infrastructure package that will reassert America's greatness by ensuring we remain competitive in the global marketplace.

In everything we do, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will continue to ensure the American people's tax dollars are put to good use. To help us achieve our goals, we request a modest budget increase to ensure we have the necessary oversight and infrastructure specialists.

Recognizing the reality of our constrained budgetary climate, Ranking Member DeFazio and I have together developed a bipartisan budget that implements this agenda. We have important objectives, but I believe with our dedicated Members and with your support, we can meet this.

So, again, I thank you very much for having the opportunity to be here today, and I yield back.

[The statement of Mr. Shuster follows:]

**Statement of Chairman Bill Shuster
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Testimony before the Committee on House Administration
Hearing on “Committee Funding for the 115th Congress”
February 15, 2017**

Chairman Harper, 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 the 115th Congress. Our goal this Congress is to build upon the successes of the 114th Congress, and be responsible stewards of the public’s hard-earned tax dollars as we work to build a 21st century infrastructure for America.

In the 114th Congress, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee focused on strengthening our Nation’s infrastructure and improving federal programs through common-sense reforms that cut red tape, reduced regulatory burdens, increased transparency, and encouraged fiscal responsibility.

The Committee’s record in the 114th Congress included 56 public laws and concurrent resolutions, 104 bills approved by the House, 61 bills ordered reported or discharged by committee, 54 hearings, 12 markups, 12 committee field hearings and meetings outside the beltway, and 34 Government Accountability Office and Inspector General oversight reports and audits initiated.

Among the public laws passed last Congress were large, complex pieces of legislation to improve America’s infrastructure, including the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST), the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN), the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act (PRRIA), the Protecting our Infrastructure of Pipelines and Enhancing Safety Act (PIPES), and the Coast Guard Authorization Act. These bills all became law because we were able to build consensus and get things done for the American people in a bipartisan manner.

While this track record speaks to the hard work of our Members and staff, none of this could have been accomplished without the support of the Committee on House Administration. So, thank you.

Even with all these successes, there is still more work to be done. Indeed, we held a kickoff hearing at the beginning of this month entitled “Building a 21st Century Infrastructure for America”. At that hearing, prominent CEOs of several major manufacturers and job creators underscored some important facts about our infrastructure and our economy. America’s infrastructure is the backbone of our economy, and transportation infrastructure is what physically binds us together as a people and a Nation. A strong infrastructure means a strong America – an America that competes globally, supports local and regional economic development, and creates jobs.

However, our infrastructure will face significant challenges in the future. As our population grows from 319 million in 2014 to 400 million by 2051, so must the infrastructure that unites us. Therefore, with your help the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is poised to meet those needs. But what does that mean?

For us, it means reimagining and building a 21st century infrastructure—leveraging resources from all levels of government and the private sector. It means improved roads and bridges that reduce bottlenecks that slow the flow of commerce. It means an aviation system with truly modern, efficient, and transformational air traffic control technology. It means ports and waterways that let our farmers and manufacturers move their crops and products to remain competitive with other nations. It means rail systems that focus on more effective, efficient service in regions of the country where rail transportation works well. It means pipelines that can transport the energy products that will power us into the future. It means infrastructure that is resilient when natural disaster strikes. It means infrastructure that can be built faster, unburdened by bureaucracy and impediments to private investment. It means infrastructure that encourages innovation and unleashes the next revolution in mobility.

We will take those steps this Congress, as the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee plans to move a number of important pieces of legislation to build a 21st century infrastructure for America, including:

- A reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration that will deliver real benefits to the flying public, enhance safety, reduce delays, improve the reliability of the system, streamline regulatory processes, and keep America at the forefront of aviation. The current authorization expires at the end of September 2017, and failure to reauthorize the FAA will lead to a shutdown of the agency and a lapse in its funding.
- A Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) that keeps Congress on the two-year cycle of addressing the needs of America's harbors, locks, dams, flood protection, and other water resources infrastructure – a two-year cycle that we reestablished in the 113th Congress.
- Legislation to authorize the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the federal programs that help reduce the loss of life and property and help communities and individuals recover from disasters.
- Legislation to reform the General Services Administration (GSA), and enable the agency to better facilitate consolidations, reduce space, negotiate the best possible office space lease deals, and sell unneeded property to save taxpayers billions of dollars.
- A bill to reauthorize the U.S. Coast Guard, support one of our Nation's five armed services with the resources, vessels, and technology it needs, and strengthen the service to ensure it can successfully conduct its critical missions of maritime border protection, migrant and drug interdiction, search and rescue, and fisheries law enforcement.

- An infrastructure package, in accord with the Administration and other Congressional leaders, that will help reassert America's greatness by ensuring that our Nation has the transportation infrastructure to remain competitive in the crowded global marketplace of today and tomorrow.

In addition to these legislative goals, we must also ensure that we oversee the implementation of the accomplishments in the 114th Congress. This includes educating a new Administration on the Congressional intent of those laws. The success of the reforms and improvements we envisioned and worked so hard on last Congress depend upon it.

We also must ensure that our Members, especially those new to the Committee and new to the 115th Congress, understand the importance of what we have achieved in the last four years, and what we plan to do going forward. So, Member education, including the hands-on education afforded by travel and field visits, will continue to be a large part of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's focus. We continue to believe that the people's representatives must more frequently leave the confines of Washington, go to the people, and develop first-hand insights about the Nation's many needs and issues. Further, such travel provides better opportunities Members to understand the impacts and effects of our policies and choices.

The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will continue to ensure the American people's hard-earned tax dollars are put to good use by the agencies and budgets we oversee. On that note, Ranking Member DeFazio and I have developed a bipartisan budget that will help implement our legislative and oversight agenda, and continue to take our work to the people outside Washington, D.C., while maintaining a highly specialized staff that understands the intricacies of the policies and programs within our jurisdiction. In order to do so, we will need a modest increase to ensure we have the oversight and infrastructure specialists to achieve our objectives.

These are heady goals, and I believe with the Members and staff we have in place, and with your support, we can meet them. Thank you for the opportunity to present our Committee budget. I am happy to answer any and all questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
I now recognize Mr. DeFazio, the Ranking Member, for 5 minutes.

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the Chair. Thank you for having us here today to discuss our budgetary needs in the coming Congress.

I think the Chairman summarized things pretty well, and I am not going to bore the Committee by repeating all of the legislation that we must pass in the coming Congress, but there are several very important, large items. Obviously, the Federal Aviation Reauthorization. The Chairman has us, for the first time that I can remember, we are doing Water Resources Development as the law would require, every 2 years. And we have Coast Guard and others coming up.

The administration has talked about potential for a trillion dollars of investment. Now, not all of that would be under our jurisdiction, but I believe a substantial portion of that would fall under our jurisdiction, between the WRDA and surface transportation and FAA. So we are anticipating a very busy year.

And I think the Chairman and I have worked out that we have requested three additional staff to help with oversight and anticipated additional workload with the administration on a very ambitious infrastructure agenda. So I am hopeful that the Committee can look favorably upon that.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

[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 15, 2017

Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to join Chairman Shuster in presenting the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's budget request for the 115th Congress.

The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has a history of true bipartisan cooperation, with both sides realizing the importance of investing in our Nation's roads, rail, aviation, waterways and other vital infrastructure. That cooperation allowed the Committee to be very productive in the last Congress.

In the 114th Congress, I worked with Chairman Shuster to reauthorize the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) pipeline safety program, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (Corps) navigation, flood control and environmental restoration projects.

We also passed the FAST Act, a five-year surface transportation reauthorization that provides \$281 billion in guaranteed funding for highways, highway safety, and transit infrastructure – all of which will create good-paying, family-wage jobs and boost domestic manufacturing.

The FAST Act was a step in the right direction, but it failed to provide the level of investment needed to really begin to repair and rebuild our Nation's backlog of aging and deteriorating transportation infrastructure.

President Trump's focus on infrastructure gives us an opportunity in this new Congress to make additional investments that will strengthen our economy, ensure U.S. economic competitiveness, and improve the daily lives of our citizens. I look forward to working with Chairman Shuster and the Trump administration to do just that.

As Chairman Shuster noted, we have a full legislative agenda for the 115th Congress. First and foremost, we must pass legislation reauthorizing the Federal Aviation Administration. We need to break the cycle of multiple extensions and enact a reauthorization before the end of September.

As Chairman Shuster mentioned, the Committee also intends to stay on a two-year cycle and develop another Water Resources Development Act, reauthorize FEMA, reauthorize the Coast Guard, and reform the General Services Administration (GSA).

For us to do our jobs for the American people, we request that you fund the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee at a modest increase to ensure we have oversight and infrastructure specialists who can help us achieve our objectives.

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.

I look forward to a continued partnership with the Chairman in the 115th Congress. With your help, I know the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee can lay the groundwork for a modern, efficient, 21st century infrastructure network.

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

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

Thank you each for your testimony. There are some incredibly important things that your Committee is going to be tasked with for this Congress. We want to make sure that you have got the resources that you need to do that job. We have looked at what your request is. We will certainly give that careful consideration.

One thing I have said to the other Chairs and Ranking Members has been that we have a constitutional role to play as a body, that we have coequal branches of government, and some of that we seem to have let kind of slip away over the years. And we want to make sure that we do our job and we do it in the way that we have.

And we are dependent upon the committees. The Speaker has made it clear he expects the committees to do their jobs and be equipped to do that. And your challenges that you have are really very many in how we are going to come up with the funding, how we are going to oversee the things that you have in your jurisdiction, and we will look forward to working through this process with you.

At this time, I will recognize Mr. Brady, the Ranking Member of the Committee, for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I did hear how you have cooperation together, but I have to ask the Ranking Member for the record, is the one-third, two-thirds working, is that working out in your Committee?

Mr. DEFAZIO. I would look upon the one-third, two-thirds apportionment with much more favor were we in the majority.

Mr. BRADY. Me too, sir.

Mr. DEFAZIO. However, the administrative travel budget and other things that we split, I mean, they are just a function of the Committee. So it is the personnel staffing that is the one-third, two-thirds on our Committee. And I have a very good staff and they are adequate to do the job, not optimal, but adequate, and we can make do with it.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you.

And, Mr. Chairman, many years ago when you came in front of us the first time as the Chairman, I told you, you had big shoes to fill. In my opinion you haven't filled them yet. Tell your dad I said hello please.

Mr. SHUSTER. Yeah, he will remind me when he sees me of that.

The CHAIRMAN. I now recognize Mr. Davis, the Vice Chairman of the Committee, for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, it is an honor to serve with you on this Committee, and I am going to do nothing to jeopardize my status on that Committee with questions today. But your T&I Committee has shown me what a committee can do when you work in a bipartisan way, similar to the House Administration Committee, too.

I really appreciate the oversight responsibilities that our Committee takes very seriously. And the question I would have, I have asked others here before, is if we were to get access, if we had the ability to give you more than what you have requested, what would you possibly use it for so that we could understand any more positive impacts the T&I Committee could make?

Mr. SHUSTER. Great question. I think that our request reflects what my answer to that is going to be. We want to add more oversight staff because it is a big job, especially the legislation that we have passed and what we are looking at passing, not only the last Congress but the Congress prior to that, making sure the administration is doing what we intended under the law, making sure the timelines are hit.

So it is a huge job for us, and that is where we are spending the bulk of that increase request, to put more staff on to have just that function be increased. And to add to that, we have got a new administration that we have got to make sure we are helping to educate them to what we are trying to do, what we have done as we move forward. So it is oversight mainly.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you.

Mr. DeFazio.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I would just echo the Chairman's remarks. I mean, as you see from our list, we have a very busy legislative agenda. Some of it will be issues of first impression dealing with this administration, which will be a tremendous amount of work, but just reauthorizing the programs that we mentioned keeps the staff very busy.

And essentially we are trying to ask them both to keep up with a quick and very heavy legislative burden and, oh, in your spare time, we want you to be doing oversight. So having more staff to focus on oversight I think would be really critical.

Particularly we go back to a number of things we did in the FAST Act that we would like to oversee. We put in some environmental streamlining. Has it been adopted yet or not? How is it working and implemented? And can it be instructive to any legislation that we might do this year in surface? We just had the FAA in today, and I would note that some things that we have required of them have not been implemented. Same with PHMSA, pipeline and hazardous safety materials agency. And then over in Federal Railroad Administration.

So we really would very, very heavily utilize some additional investigative staff to see whether the will of Congress is being followed by the current administration, the past administration mostly at this point, and find out pressure points where we need to push them.

Mr. DAVIS. Well, thank you.

And I yield back the balance of my time, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

I would now recognize Mr. Smith for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

In the oversight vein, I mean, take an issue like Waters of the U.S., it is in the courts right now, do you anticipate Committee action on that or the need that might be reflected in operations?

Mr. SHUSTER. Last Congress we actually passed something. Wasn't complete agreement on the Committee. But I think the Committee is in agreement that there needs to be a rule, it needs to be clarified how it goes about doing that for debate within the Committee. But being that it is in the courts, we are sitting here waiting for that to happen. But my view is when the time comes,

when it is necessary, when Congress needs to act, we are happy to—

Mr. SMITH. Within a typical workload?

Mr. SHUSTER. Excuse me?

Mr. SMITH. Within a typical workload then for the Committee?

Mr. SHUSTER. Yes.

Mr. SMITH. Okay. Thank you.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

I want to thank the Chair and Ranking Member for being here with us.

Any final comments before we close?

Mr. SHUSTER. Yes, if I may?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, please.

Mr. SHUSTER. This is the third time I have been here and the third time I have ended with this. As somebody that has an office now in Rayburn and traveled the halls of Rayburn, I would just encourage the Committee that that building is a very complicated building to get around, and quite frankly, if you don't know exactly where you are in the Rayburn Building, you don't know where the hell you are.

So I would encourage, as I have done in the past, a simple thing. And I think Bob Brady and Peter DeFazio redoes his own boat, so the three of us could figure out how to stencil on the walls which street side we are on, Independence Avenue, C Street, to give us some point of view reference. I think that would not only help Members of Congress, especially freshman Members of Congress, but the public to be able to tell where the heck they are when they are in the Rayburn Building. So I will continue to beat that drum until you tell me not to come back anymore.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I am able to find my way back to my office in Rayburn, we will give that proper consideration.

I want to thank all the Chairs and Ranking Members that have appeared today for their testimony, and also thank the Committee Members for their participation.

I now recess the hearing. The Committee will reconvene subject to the call of the Chair, and we will reconvene at 10:45 tomorrow morning.

[Whereupon, at 3:52 p.m., the Committee recessed, to reconvene at 10:45 a.m., Thursday, February 16, 2017.]

COMMITTEE FUNDING FOR THE 115TH CONGRESS (DAY 2)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2017

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

The Committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:50 a.m., in Room 1310, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Gregg Harper [Chairman of the Committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Harper, Davis, Comstock, Walker, Smith, Loudermilk, Brady, and Raskin.

Staff Present: Sean Moran, Staff Director; Kim Betz, Senior Advisor; Bob Sensenbrenner, General Counsel; Max Engling, Franking Director; George Hadijski, Director of Member Services; Erin McCracken, Communications Director; Nick Hawatmeh, Member Services Counsel; C. Maggie Moore, Legislative Clerk; Dan Jarrell, Staff Assistant; Jamie Fleet, Minority Staff Director; Matt Pinkus, Minority Senior Policy Advisor; Eddie Flaherty, Minority Chief Clerk; and Kim Stevens, Minority Financial Director.

The CHAIRMAN. I now call to order the continuation of the Committee on House Administration hearing on Committee funding for the 115th Congress. The hearing record will remain open for 5 legislative days so that Members may submit any materials they wish to include. A quorum is present, so we may proceed.

I want to thank my colleagues on this Committee, as well as the Chairs and Ranking Members who are here today to provide testimony on the individual budget requests. As I said yesterday, our Committee has worked to find the right balance over the years, and our goal is to do that again for this Congress. Today's testimony will be used to draft a budget resolution that sets funding levels for each Committee. The resolution will ultimately be considered by the full House.

I also want to take a moment to thank the staff of all of our House Committees, both Republican and Democrat, who worked together in a very timely and cooperative manner to organize the information that each Committee has presented to House Admin.

I would now like to recognize my colleague and Ranking Member of the Committee, Mr. Brady, for the purpose of providing any statement he chooses.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, but I have no statement.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, sir.

We will now hear from our first panel of witnesses for the day. The Committee now welcomes Chairman Hensarling and Ranking Member Waters of the House Committee on Financial Services.

Would the official reporter please enter a page break into the hearing record to begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The House Committee on Financial Services is tasked with oversight of the Federal Reserve, the Treasury Department, and the Securities and Exchange Commission. It also oversees banking, insurance, financial aid, and housing, among others.

I want to welcome Chairman Hensarling and Ranking Member Waters. And the Chair now recognizes Chairman Hensarling for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. JEB HENSARLING, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS**

Mr. HENSARLING. Thank you, Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and members of the Committee. I am pleased to appear before you today. I certainly believe Congress must lead by example in matters of budgeting, especially at a time of historically high deficits and debt. So you have tough decisions to make about budgeting limits and priorities and balance, as we do.

To help in this effort, I am here to explain our Committee's jurisdiction, priorities, and discuss how we plan to use valuable resources of the taxpayers to better serve them, serve consumers, and serve the members of our Committee.

As you mentioned, and as you know, the Financial Services Committee has jurisdiction over the entirety of the U.S. financial system. This includes the banking system, our capital markets, housing, insurance, monetary policy, and international finance. So from Main Street to Wall Street there are few financial transactions that are not impacted by the policies considered in this Committee.

Among the many agencies we oversee are the Federal Reserve, the Securities and Exchange Commission, Housing and Urban Development, the CFPB, and many components of the Treasury Department; banking and credit union regulators, such as the OCC, the FDIC, and the NCUA; entities created by the Dodd-Frank Act such as the OFR, the FSOC, FHFA, the PCAOB, the MSRB, SIPC, FASB, FINRA, and others.

Our 34 Republicans and 26 Democrats and committed staffers, whose salaries comprise the vast majority of our Committee's budget, work to make sure that the agencies falling within our jurisdiction treat the taxpayers' dollars with the respect they deserve because, after all, it is not Washington's money, it is the taxpayers' money.

As I testified in prior Congresses, just like every American family has had to prioritize their spending, so have we. We have trimmed costs in a number of different ways, including delaying important IT investments and staffing hires.

At the same time, Mr. Chairman, we believe that we have given taxpayers good value for their money. The vast majority of the 88 bills we marked up made it to the floor in this last Congress. Thirty-six bills were signed into law, increasing economic opportunity for everyday Americans and strengthening our financial system.

Building on our success, the 115th Congress is set to be our busiest yet. The 2008 financial crisis, as we all know, was the worst since the Great Depression, and Congress' response, the 2,300-page Dodd-Frank Act, is the most dramatic change in our Nation's financial regulatory system since the New Deal. Every pocketbook and wallet in America is impacted by it, from families trying to buy or

sell a home, to single moms purchasing groceries with their credit cards.

But while major laws like the Affordable Care Act span across three committees, our Committee oversees almost the entirety of Dodd-Frank's implementation. This year the Committee will advance several important pieces of legislation related to the Dodd-Frank Act designed to create economic opportunity and protect the financial system from future shocks, and obviously work with our administration that has called for increased legislation in this area.

We look forward to finally ending taxpayer-funded bailouts in too-big-to-fail financial institutions and looking to streamline regulations in our community financial institutions so that consumers can have greater access to loans and other financial services.

We are also undertaking legislation that would reform the Federal Reserve and reauthorize and modernize the National Flood Insurance Program.

We also, importantly, will work to reform our Nation's mortgage finance system. Regardless of the merits or attributes of Dodd-Frank, it failed to do so. Recognizing that the current government-dominated system of mortgage finance cannot be sustained, our Committee will advance proposals so that consumers can choose mortgage products that best suit their need, and ensuring that government-sponsored enterprises like Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac never again threaten the economy or threaten taxpayers with bailouts. Also, Mr. Chairman, again, this is one more area where the administration has called for legislative action.

Additionally, following the 50th anniversary of HUD's creation, we will tackle the unfinished work of welfare reform by developing proposals to bring hope and opportunity to the neighborhoods that need it most, and will examine how to bring welfare-to-work principles to our Nation's housing problems.

Finally, we have created a new Subcommittee on Terrorism and Illicit Finance to investigate the financial support networks of national security threats. We hope to provide appropriate staffing resources as the new subcommittee begins its important work.

In closing, the Financial Services Committee is hard at work on the priorities of the American people. We have already moved three bills through the House, one of which has already been signed into law by the President. With additional resources, we will be well positioned to secure economic opportunity and financial independence for the hardworking taxpayers and consumers we serve.

We thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today, Mr. Chairman.

[The statement of Mr. Hensarling follows:]

**Statement of Chairman Jeb Hensarling
Committee on Financial Services before
the
Committee on House Administration
Hearing on Committee Funding for the 115th Congress
February 16, 2017**

Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady and Members
of the Committee:

I am pleased to appear before you today. I certainly believe Congress must always lead by example in matters of budgeting, especially at this time of historically high deficits and debt. You have tough decisions to make about budgeting limits and priorities, as do we. To help you in this effort, I am here to explain our Committee's priorities and discuss how we plan to use these valuable resources to better serve taxpayers, consumers, and our members.

As you may know, the Financial Services Committee has jurisdiction over the entire U.S. financial system. This includes the banking system, our capital markets, housing, insurance,

monetary policy, and international finance. From Main Street to Wall Street, there are few financial transactions that aren't impacted by the policies considered in this committee.

Among the many agencies we oversee are the Federal Reserve, the SEC, HUD, the CFPB, and several components of the Treasury Department; banking and credit union regulators such as the OCC, the FDIC, and the NCUA; entities created by the Dodd-Frank Act such as the CFPB, the OFR, and the FSOC; and the FHFA, the PCAOB, the MSRB, SIPC, FASB, and FINRA. Our 34 Republicans, 26 Democrats and committed staffers, whose salaries comprise the vast majority of our committee's budget, work to make sure the agencies under our jurisdiction treat the taxpayers' dollars with respect because, after all, it is not Washington's money; it is the taxpayers' money.

As I testified in prior Congresses, just like every American

family has had to prioritize their spending, so have we. We have trimmed costs in a number of ways, including delaying important IT investments and staffing hires.

At the same time, we have given taxpayers good value for their money. Last Congress, we marked up 88 bills, the vast majority of which received consideration on the House Floor. Importantly, 36 of our bills were signed into law. These bills increased economic opportunity for everyday Americans and strengthened our financial system.

We want to continue to work with our members – both in the majority and the minority, in the House and the Senate – on additional bipartisan approaches that will promote economic growth, opportunity, and job creation. Regulatory relief that helps small businesses, entrepreneurs and emerging growth companies gain access to capital will help build a healthier economy and create good-paying jobs on Main Street.

Building on our track record of success, the 115th Congress is set to be our busiest yet. The 2008 financial crisis was the worst since the Great Depression, and Congress's response to the crisis – the 2,300 page-long Dodd-Frank Act – is the most dramatic change to our nation's financial regulatory system since the New Deal. Every sector of our economy, every town and every pocketbook and wallet in America is somehow impacted by it.

From manufacturers of the latest smartphones to families trying to buy or sell a home, to single moms purchasing groceries with their credit cards, virtually no one in America is left untouched by Dodd-Frank. But while major laws like the Affordable Care Act span across three committees of jurisdiction, our committee has sole responsibility for overseeing the bulk of Dodd-Frank's implementation.

This year, the Committee will advance several important

pieces of legislation to create economic opportunity for all while protecting the financial system from future shocks and downturns – matters that Dodd-Frank did not adequately address. Thus, we will look to finally end taxpayer-funded bailouts and “too big to fail” financial institutions; streamline regulations on community financial institutions so that consumers have greater access to loans and other financial services; reform the Federal Reserve; and reauthorize and modernize the National Flood Insurance Program.

We will undertake the important work of reforming our nation’s mortgage finance system – something that Dodd-Frank failed to do. Recognizing that the current government-dominated system of mortgage finance cannot be sustained, our Committee will advance proposals based on free markets and competition so that consumers can choose the mortgage product that best suits their needs while also ensuring that the

Government Sponsored Enterprises – Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac – never again threaten the economy and taxpayers with bailouts.

Additionally, following the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, we will tackle what some have aptly called “the unfinished work of welfare reform.” The committee will work with housing advocates to identify reforms that will bring hope and opportunity to the neighborhoods that need it most, and we will examine how to bring welfare-to-work principles to our nation’s housing problems.

Finally, when we adopted our rules for this Congress, we made permanent our Task Force to Investigate Terrorism Financing. Our new Subcommittee on Terrorism and Illicit Finance will continue the work begun by the Task Force of thoroughly investigating the financial support networks of

national security threats. We hope to be able to provide appropriate staffing resources so that the new Subcommittee can undertake this critical work; our budget submission for this Congress reflects the creation of this Subcommittee.

In closing, the Financial Services Committee is already hard at work on the priorities of the American people. The Committee has already moved three bills through the House and one was signed into law by the President on Tuesday. With additional resources, will be well-positioned to secure economic opportunity and financial independence for the hardworking taxpayers and consumers we serve.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Chairman Hensarling.
 The Chair will now recognize the Ranking Member for the Committee on Financial Services, Ms. Waters.
 You are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. MAXINE WATERS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Ms. WATERS. Thank you very much.

Good afternoon, Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady. I am pleased to have the opportunity to testify before you today to discuss the budgetary needs of the Financial Services Committee.

As Ranking Member of the Financial Services Committee, I believe that it is critical that the Committee receive an increase over its funding level for the 114th Congress. The minority receives one-third of the staff slots and total budget, with total control over both categories. At the beginning of the 113th Congress, the Committee sustained a 13 percent cut to its budget. We were able to weather the impact of that cut by limiting new hires and allowing for the natural attrition of staff.

At the beginning of the 114th Congress, the Committee received a 1 percent increase in its funding. While we appreciated the additional funds, a larger increase is needed given the mission of the Committee and the scope of its issues that will be confronting it this Congress. Chairman Hensarling has made what I believe to be a very fair request for additional funding that will put our Committee on par with other Committees of similar size and exclusivity. I fully support his request.

I must note that the Financial Services Committee is an exclusive Committee. However, our funding is less than that of other exclusive Committees, even though our issues are no less complicated, no less critical. In fact, I would argue that our issues are more complicated and touch the lives of all Americans. Our Committee is at the forefront of addressing the complicated derivatives market, critical consumer issues, monetary policy, banking rules and regulations, and the Nation's housing policy. These are important issues.

My Chairman has indicated that in addition to aggressive oversight of many laws and agencies under the Committee's jurisdiction, he will also be moving major legislation. Of note, he will soon be introducing legislation to replace the landmark Dodd-Frank Act with his Financial CHOICE Act. Now, while I disagree with the legislation that he is proposing, I agree that such a comprehensive rewriting of our Nation's finance laws requires substantial resources in the form of experienced policy staff.

We must also reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program, that is NFIP, whose authorization expires at the end of September. The Chairman has also expressed an interest in completely re-vamping the Nation's housing finance system.

All of these legislative endeavors are highly technical, extremely complicated, and vitally important, and they all require sufficient resources in order to best serve our respective Members, caucuses, and taxpayers.

Moreover, the Chairman has created a new Subcommittee on Terrorism and Illicit Finance. This Subcommittee requires addi-

tional resources in order for the members on both sides of the aisle to be properly informed. The issues covered by this Subcommittee are highly complex and critical to our Nation's fight against terror and require highly experienced staff with backgrounds in the Bank Secrecy Act and the PATRIOT Act.

We also require an expert researcher on staff so that we can delve deeply into the aforementioned issues and quickly provide Members with accurate facts and statistics.

At the beginning of the last Congress, our Committee rules were revised in order to grant our Chairman unilateral subpoena authority. The majority has used this authority and has several ongoing investigations. I anticipate the continuation of these investigations and the initiation of new investigations by the majority.

The House has also given our Committee the authority to conduct staff depositions. Given that it was the will of the House to give the Committee this new authority, it should be the will of the House to provide additional funding to help the Committee to properly use this authority.

Again, the amount the Chairman has requested is a very fair increase that would result in a very significant positive impact on our Committee's operations, especially given the new powers that the Committee has been given. The issues faced by the Financial Services Committee are highly complex, highly complicated, technical, and can be at times controversial. The requested increase in funding for the Committee will improve our ability to conduct the appropriate oversight of these issues and protect the American taxpayers. I hope that you will give full consideration to our funding request.

Thank you. I yield back.

[The statement of Ms. Waters follows:]

Opening Statement of the Honorable Maxine Waters

(CA-43)

Ranking Member, Committee on Financial Services

Committee on House Administration

February 16, 2017

10:15am

Good afternoon, Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady. I am pleased to have the opportunity to testify before you today to discuss the budgetary needs of the Financial Services Committee. As Ranking Member of the Financial Services Committee, I believe that it's critical that the Committee receive an increase over its funding level for the 114th Congress.

The Minority receives one-third of the staff slots and total budget, with total control over both categories. At the beginning of the 113th Congress, the Committee sustained a 13 percent cut to its budget. We were able to weather the impact of that cut by limiting new hires and allowing for the natural attrition of staff. At the beginning of the 114th Congress, the Committee received a 1 percent increase in its funding.

While we appreciated the additional funds, a larger increase is needed given the mission of the Committee and the scope of issues that will be confronting it this Congress. Chairman Hensarling has made, what I believe to be, a very fair request for additional funding that will

put our Committee on par with other Committees of similar size and exclusivity. I fully support his request.

I must note that the Financial Services Committee is an exclusive committee. However, our funding is less than that of other exclusive Committees even though our issues are no less complicated and no less critical. In fact, I could argue that our issues are more complicated and touch the lives of all Americans.

Nevertheless, our Committee has been underfunded compared to Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce. We are also underfunded compared to and

Oversight and Government Reform and Transportation and Infrastructure, which are not exclusive committees. This simply isn't fair and I'm pleased to join with the Chairman to try to rectify this.

Our Committee is at the forefront of addressing the complicated derivatives market, critical consumer issues, monetary policy, banking rules and regulations, and the nation's housing policy. These are important issues.

My Chairman has indicated that, in addition to aggressive oversight over many laws and agencies under the Committee's jurisdiction, he will also be moving

major legislation. Of note, he will soon be introducing legislation to replace the landmark Dodd-Frank Act with his Financial CHOICE Act.

While I disagree with the legislation that he is proposing, I agree that such a comprehensive rewriting of our nation's finance laws requires substantial resources in the form of experienced policy staff. We must also reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), whose authorization expires at the end of September. The Chairman has also expressed an interest in completely revamping the nation's housing finance system. All of these legislative endeavors are highly technical, extremely complicated and vitally important.

And they all require sufficient resources in order to best serve our respective Members, caucuses, and taxpayers.

Moreover, the Chairman has created a new Subcommittee on Terrorism and Illicit Finance. This Subcommittee requires additional resources in order for Members on both sides of the aisle to be properly informed. The issues covered by this Subcommittee are highly complex and critical to our nation's fight against terror and require highly experienced staff with backgrounds in the Bank Secrecy Act and the PATRIOT Act.

We also require an expert researcher on staff so that we can delve deeply into the aforementioned issues and quickly provide Members with accurate facts and statistics.

At the beginning of the last Congress, our Committee rules were revised in order to grant our Chairman unilateral subpoena authority. The Majority has used this authority and has several ongoing investigations. I anticipate the continuation of these investigations and the initiation of new investigations by the Majority.

The House has also given our Committee the authority to conduct staff depositions. Given that it was the will of the House to give the Committee this new authority, it should be the will of the House to provide additional funding to help the Committee to properly use this authority. Again, the amount the Chairman has requested is a very fair increase but would result in a very significant positive impact on our Committee's operations, especially given the new powers that the Committee has been given.

The issues faced by the Financial Services Committee are highly complicated, technical, and can be, at times, controversial. The requested increase in funding

for the Committee will improve our ability to conduct the appropriate oversight of these issues and protect the American taxpayer.

I hope that you will give full consideration to our funding request.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentlelady yields back.

I want to thank each of you for being here. Good detail in the testimony. The creation of the additional subcommittee certainly has been explained. We are in a situation where we want to make sure that we indeed have coequal branches of government. And it has been very difficult for the House to do its job unless you have the proper resources to do. I know you have an Oversight Subcommittee.

And so the issues that you have are very complicated. We recognize that. And we will take a good look at this and try to make the proper decision as we make our way through.

At this time I will recognize the Ranking Member of the Committee, Mr. Brady, for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just to the Ranking Member, the one-third, two-third agreement, is that working out with your Committee?

Ms. WATERS. Yes, it works out very well. We do discuss with the Chairman some of—on some other things he has been very generous in responding to us. I think with the appropriate resources he will be even more generous.

Mr. BRADY. Okay. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Anyone else have questions they would like to ask?

We thank you for coming. Appreciate it.

Ms. WATERS. You are welcome.

Mr. HENSARLING. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee now welcomes Chairman Thornberry and Ranking Member Smith of the Committee on Armed Services. Would the official reporter please enter a page break into the hearing record to begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The House Committee on Armed Services is tasked with oversight of military operations, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Energy, among other areas. Its primary focus is to maintain and create common sense solutions regarding defense policy.

On behalf of the Committee, we want to welcome Chairman Thornberry and Ranking Member Smith. And at this time the Chair recognizes Chairman Thornberry for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. MAC THORNBERRY, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS**

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And with your permission, I would like to submit a written statement for the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman and Members, thanks for having us. And I want to say I particularly appreciate the Ranking Member who also serves on our Committee. So he can correct anything that I don't get quite right. But we are glad to have him.

Mr. Chairman, I thought I might make just a few comments that are not reflected in my written statement. And let me just start with our mission. Article I, section 8 of the Constitution says it is Congress' responsibility to provide and maintain, build and support, and write the rules and regulations that govern the military forces of the United States. A lot of folks think that all comes from the Pentagon and we kind of look over it, but actually the Constitution says it is our job.

And that job that we as an institution have to do has to happen in one of the most complex, dangerous security environments any of us have ever seen. And currently we have got to do so with a military that has been damaged severely because of CRs, sequestration, the pace of operations, and a variety of factors that we all have some responsibility for.

So I think it is just important to start with: What are we doing here? And our Committee, as well as the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, have primary responsibility for fulfilling that mandate that the Constitution puts on our shoulders.

So that is kind of where we have to focus right now, partly to repair the damage that has been done in the military. We had a hearing, for example, last week with the Vice Chiefs of Staff, who reported that half of the planes in the Navy cannot fly today; that 3 out of the 58 combat brigades in the Army are available to fight tonight, 3 out of 58; and the Air Force is short 1,550 pilots and thousands of maintainers. And, again, the list goes on.

So repairing the damage is a key part of what we have to do. The other part is reform. We have got to get more value for the taxpayer dollars. We have to make the Department of Defense more agile to respond to this complex environment.

So over the last couple years we have instituted a new retirement system for the military—and this is all, by the way, in the defense authorization bill. We have made major changes in military health care. We have revamped the commissary system. We have made organizational changes at the Department of Defense. We rewrote the Uniform Code of Military Justice. We have made a number of changes in acquisition. And we have much more work to do.

And so I just think it is important to keep in mind the scope of what our responsibility is. We authorize about half of the discretionary budget of the United States Government.

And it is also an opportunity for Members to legislate. For example, last year there were 1,259 provisions that were sent to conference. The conference report that came back from the Senate had 961 provisions in it. Between the Committee and the floor, we dealt with about 700 amendments.

So it is an opportunity for Members to legislate. But, obviously, all of that puts responsibility on our shoulders. And it is a responsibility, obviously, that we have fulfilled for 55 straight years. But I don't know that we have ever had a more challenging environment in the last 55 years if we are to succeed at rebuilding, repairing, and continuing our reforms.

So, Mr. Chairman, what we are asking for this year is funding to be able to fully staff to our authorized level. We have an authorized number of people, but we haven't had the money to hire that many to meet that need, to, for the first time in I think 7 years, give COLAs to our Committee staff, as well as merit pay, and then to undertake some of the technology needs. And we can talk more about some of those specifics if you would like.

Last point, which is related to people and technology, is most of the work we do—much of the work, probably most—is in a classified environment. Now, that adds operational costs, it limits who we can hire. But it also just reminds us that out of all these classified programs, we are the only oversight the executive branch has. Unless there is a leak, the press shouldn't be dealing with all of these classified.

So it is on our shoulders. We have got to dig deep into these programs. We need the best people. And, frankly, we need more assistance in order to do the job the Constitution puts on our shoulders.

Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Thornberry follows:]

**Testimony of Chairman William M. “Mac” Thornberry
Before Committee on House Administration**

February 16, 2017

Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady and Members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to testify on the budget request for the House Armed Services Committee.

My partner on the committee, Ranking Member Adam Smith, and I are both acutely aware of the budget challenges and daunting mission facing the agencies we oversee. The legislative branch, and the Committee on Armed Services in particular, is no different. The taxpayers rightfully expect their government to fulfill its constitutional responsibilities as effectively and efficiently as possible. While I wholeheartedly embrace this mandate, in my two years as Chairman of the Armed Services Committee I have seen first-hand what a few additional resources can do to truly expand the effectiveness of our oversight.

Last year, we stood up a dedicated team to focus on instituting major reforms to the Department of Defense. We wasted no time. In 2015, after considering the recommendations of the congressionally mandated Military Compensation and Retirement Commission, we implemented the first major change to the military retirement system in decades. Last year, we put the military commissary and health care systems on a sustainable footing. We have enacted the

most significant organizational changes to the Pentagon since Goldwater-Nichols and have mandated reductions in overhead, in flag officers, and in the number of civil servants. We have overhauled the Uniform Code of Military Justice. We have passed two rounds of deep acquisition reform designed to get more value for the taxpayer dollar. But, in order to accomplish those reforms, I had to reduce the number of staff members we have monitoring the individual programs of the Department of Defense. I still think that was the right call, but the truth is that we need to put more resources on both missions.

Reform must continue to be a major emphasis. We must become more agile in order to keep up with technological advances and with rapidly evolving threats. Our committee's oversight over the last two years, however, has uncovered systemic problems in the military that reform alone will not repair.

The military is facing a readiness crisis. From 2010 to 2014, the military budget was cut 21 percent. Yet, the world did not get 21 percent safer. We asked more of our military than ever, while the cuts insidiously eroded America's military capability. The Armed Services Committee hears it over and over again. Just last week we learned that less than half of the Navy's aircraft can fly because they are awaiting maintenance or lack spare parts. Only three of 58 brigade combat teams in the Army are considered "ready to fight tonight". Air Force pilots fly less than they did in the 1970s when our force was hollow and more than half

of their planes would qualify for antique vehicle license plates in the state of Virginia. The Marine Corps – which has been cannibalizing parts off museum aircraft to keep their planes in the air – is going to completely stop flying training missions in July due to lack of parts and funds for training hours.

The last time Congress passed a threat-based defense budget was in 2012. Keep in mind that in 2012 Russia was not bullying its neighbors, ISIS did not exist - nor was it inspiring terrorist attacks in the United States, and China was not building islands in the South China Sea. How have we responded? Cut the number of Airmen, Marines, and Soldiers; making deployments more frequent and dangerous for those who remain. That is simply immoral.

The committee is optimistic that we have a willing partner in the Administration to address these issues. Yet we must not forget that it is the responsibility of Congress, in Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution to “raise and maintain armies...”. The burden falls to us, and specifically the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, to do the oversight work necessary to ensure that the military is ready to fight today and in the future to be the guarantor of this nation’s security. It is equally important that as we race to rebuild the military that we do not overload the system with funding and plans that cannot be executed.

We must turn the tide, but without additional staff, Adam and I cannot do this work the way we should do it. The additional investment of approximately

\$3.1M we are seeking would provide the resources to hire to our full authorized manning of 71 and provide some long overdue adjustments to our current staff's salaries.

For the last three congresses, the HASC had been the largest committee in the House with 63 members. This year our membership reduced to 62 members while the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee grew, making us the 2nd largest committee this year. Simultaneously, the HASC has maintained the smallest staff to member ratio. Currently, the staff to member ratio is 1:1. If this budget request were approved, the staff to member ratio would only modestly grow to 1.14:1, which is still less than the ratio for the 1st and 3rd largest committees, who each average 1.45 staff for every 1 member.

Like the agencies we oversee, we have lived with the motto – do more with less. Even with the modest increase this committee received for the 114th Congress, I was only able to create the defense reform team by harvesting other billets from within the Armed Services Committee. We are taking a significant amount of risk in certain areas. For example, the full committee policy staff - with the responsibility for the military's activities in Europe, Asia, the Western Hemisphere, the Middle East, and Africa; ongoing contingency operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria; security cooperation; defense management and organization; national defense strategy; detention policy; counternarcotics; and

humanitarian assistance - has just 6 staffers: 4 for the majority and 2 for the minority, plus a clerk. The Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee, with oversight of special operations, counterterrorism, cyber, chem/bio defense, defense IT systems, science and technology, and emerging threats -- has only 2 majority and 1 minority staffer and a shared clerk.

The committee has suspended almost all other necessary administrative costs, such as equipment, and has frozen COLA and merit increases for the last seven years. Management of the workforce with leadership succession planning and talent retention has become virtually impossible. Recruitment of staff has become extraordinarily challenging because of our frozen salary structure. Candidly, to address the national security issues facing the nation and the military's readiness crisis, the HASC cannot afford to hire inexperience. The human capital we require comes at a price tag the committee can no longer afford. Likewise, retention has also suffered as we cannot adequately recognize the contributions so many of the staff make to national defense.

Finally, let me assure you that I remain committed to maintaining the Armed Services Committee's track record of delivering results and implementing internal reforms that minimize cost and waste. We estimate and manage our committee's budget conservatively. For example, last year, the committee returned \$15,000, less than 2% of our budget. And as you well know, each year the HASC produces

the annual National Defense Authorization Act, which authorizes over \$600 billion. Last year, 1259 provisions were sent to conference on the NDAA and the final conference report included 961 pieces of legislation. The NDAA routinely sees over 700 amendments filed between committee consideration and the floor - with votes taken on over half of those.

Put another way, the HASC bears sole responsibility for regularly authorizing *over 50%* of the discretionary Federal budget and – should this committee support the additional resources that would allow the HASC to man to its authorized levels – the HASC will do so with *only 6%* of the manning for the authorizing committees. The committee has shepherded this legislation through the House and negotiations with the Senate each year, culminating into the bill's signature into law for 55 years running. This would not be possible without the depth of experience of the staff.

Moreover, the HASC staff has taken the initiative to improve processes to reduce cost, waste, and staff resources associated with committee hearings, mark-ups, and conference negotiations with the Senate. These efforts have set the gold-standard for other committees. I would like to highlight just a few examples:

- The Speaker's office recently circulated information regarding a database created by the HASC to other committees as a "best practice" for capturing questions for the record.

- The HASC started a pilot program with the House Recording Studio to stream all HASC hearings on Youtube, saving the committee thousands of dollars that would have been spent on an outside vendor. By streaming directly on Youtube, the hearing videos will now be archived there as well, ensuring the public has an easily searchable and viewable archive for our hearings.
- The committee uses a digital file sharing system on Box to digitally share, approve and process negotiated bill language and conference report language between the House and Senate. This file sharing system allows the committee to reduce the amount of hardcopy material printed and made the process more efficient and saved staff time by eliminating burdensome administrative requirements.
- The staff has created a committee electronic report-language database used to draft, edit, and compile the committee report language that accompanies the annual defense authorization bill. This process had previously been accomplished using a paper-based system, which consumed a significant amount of paper and committee resources. It also allows committee staff to input and review legislative text, as well as identify and track provisions that may trigger sequential referral. The committee now uses the system to prepare required activities reports and oversight plans. As a result, the

committee has reduced paper purchase by two-thirds. A number of House and Senate committees have, or are considering, adopting a similar model.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that the military remains in a readiness crisis. As the Army Chief of Staff testified this year, “If one or more unforeseen contingencies happen then the United States Army currently risks not having ready forces available to provide flexible options to our national leadership...And most importantly, we risk incurring significantly increased U.S. casualties.” We are now at a point where we face impossible and unwise choices: Continue to cut needed systems and training, further eroding readiness, or break faith with the troops. No one in this chamber wants to do any of those things.

There is another way, and it comes through sustained oversight and pragmatic reform. Both efforts are our responsibility- they are our first congressional duty. I truly believe we have a narrow opportunity to arrest this crisis – but I need the resources to do so. Please accept my thanks for your time and your consideration of the committee’s request.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Chairman Thornberry.
Now the Chair will recognize Ranking Member Smith for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. ADAM SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON**

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member. I appreciate the chance.

I agree with everything the Chairman said. The depth of the job of putting together the defense authorizing act every year is enormous and contains all the things that Chairman Thornberry pointed out. And we have, I believe, the largest Committee, the most Members on the Committee of any committee in Congress. So the staff has to handle all of that input. And, you know, what Chairman Thornberry, those were the proposals that went into the bill. There were thousands more that were suggested that our staff has to sort through and try to figure out.

So it is a huge responsibility, and the issues are very complex, and we are incredibly dependent upon our staff. And it is the budget that you allocate to us that allows us to hire them and pay them and keep them. And I think that is the most important part of my testimony, is the importance of our staff, the need for high quality staff, the need for them to be compensated.

And also to understand, as the Chairman pointed out, over the course of the last 6 years it has been a difficult time. He mentioned the difficult time that has been in funding defense with the CRs, one government shutdown. You know, no consistency of budgeting. But that also applies to how it has impacted our staff. It has been a few years now, but actually we had to have unpaid furloughs for a number of our staff, and we have reduced the number of the staff.

So bottom line is I agree with the Chairman that we would love to be able to staff to our authorized level, because the work we do here is very important. And not only do we have all the members of the Committee, but national security issues are something that are important to just about every Member of Congress. So we take an enormous number of requests from people who aren't on the Committee.

Handling all of that is difficult. We have great members on the Committee. But there is no way we are up to it without the incredible expertise that comes from our staff. So we would just ask for the funding so that we can continue to do that job and hopefully make it 56 straight years.

And with that I am happy to yield and take any questions you might have.

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

**Testimony of Ranking Member Adam Smith
Before Committee on House Administration**

February 16, 2017

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Brady and Members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to once again to testify on the funding needs of the Committee on Armed Services. I am pleased to do so with my Chairman and friend, Mac Thornberry.

As the Chairman has already testified, the Committee on Armed Services bears the considerable responsibility of authorizing and overseeing more than 50% of the discretionary budget. For fiscal year 2017, that was over \$600 billion and the defense budget is likely to grow under the current administration. Even at this level, the country faces significant national security challenges and it is absolutely vital that we, the Congress, oversee the defense establishment to ensure that resources are being properly spent to achieve our national security objectives.

The operations, facilities and expenditures of the Department of Defense are vast. It is a difficult mission to oversee these operations and it has gotten more difficult every year since I became the Ranking member in 2011. This is partly due to the increasingly complex and difficult international security situation. Partly it is due to the continued fiscal disruptions on the department due to the budget caps directed by the Budget Control Act. We, the Congress, are also

responsible for considerable fiscal turbulence as we struggle to provide an annual budget and leave the department operating under extended continuing resolutions. But as I have testified in the past, the greatest challenge to continued committee oversight is reduced committee funding. Before I took over as the Ranking member in 2011, the Republican minority had a staff of 15. In the ensuing years that staff has been reduced to 13, suffered unpaid furloughs, salary freezes and has seen reductions to the overall committee operating budget. At the same time the responsibilities of that staff have increased to serving 28 members and overseeing a Defense authorization of over \$600 billion.

Reducing resources for staff is counterintuitive. As Members, we rely on staff to assist in conducting oversight and with the functioning of the committee. Staffing reductions and constrained pay don't make those tasks easier. We, the Congress, are interested in controlling spending and that is an important function. Unfortunately, we have failed to properly fund the most basic tool we have at our disposal for eliminating wasteful spending. The staff.

Staff is vital to controlling costs and overseeing policy. In this fiscal and dangerous national security environment, a professional staffer's value cannot be overstated. It takes years to gain an understanding of the complexities of national security and, when utilized, a single experienced staffer can achieve significant savings for the American taxpayer which easily surpasses their salary hundreds of

times over. Hiring and retaining qualified professional staff requires proper pay and compensation. The budget constraints of the past few years have taken us in the wrong direction on filling staff vacancies and properly compensating the experience that staffers bring to the committee.

In his testimony, the Chairman laid out the enormity of the annual National Defense Authorization Act. It is an annual piece of legislation that is absolutely necessary and that is why it has a 55 year unbroken streak. Certainly, we in the minority have our differences with the majority over some issues contained in the bill; but, taken as a whole; it is an example of what a bipartisan process can achieve. The NDAA would not be possible without the committee's experienced staff. Our ability to pass this legislation and to conduct oversight is tied closely to the funding request before you.

For this reason, I strongly support the Chairman's request for additional resources to allow us to staff to our authorized level and correct salary shortfalls that have accrued over years for outstanding staffers who have not had a COLA or merit increase. Additionally, I support the Chairman's request for funds to update committee technology and support equipment.

I am very proud to serve on the Armed Services Committee with my friend the Chairman as we execute our duty to provide for our men and women in uniform and for the defense of the nation. We are both committed to ensuring

responsible defense spending in support of national security. I fully support the Chairman's request for additional funding, and I hope you will look favorably on this request. I hope that your committee will carefully weigh the committee budget recommendations before you and that it supports us as we continue that vital mission.

The CHAIRMAN. I would like to thank both of you for your testimony. I will now recognize myself for 5 minutes.

You know, one of our issues that we look at as you come before us and look at your budget request is to realize that we do have through the Constitution coequal branches of government, yet we have handicapped ourselves on being able to do that job. And we have to make sure that you are equipped to do what is, in effect, authorizing half of our discretionary budget, in effect. It is a major undertaking. And I agree that there is not a more complex time in my lifetime than what we are in the middle of right now.

So we will look at this and be sure that we have got it right. And we appreciate your working together on presenting this to us.

And I will now recognize Mr. Brady for 5 minutes for any comments or questions he may have.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I have been on this Committee for 18 years, and the best part about it is we don't have any Democratic staff, we don't have any Republican staff. These men and women behind them sit behind me. And it doesn't matter, you can go to any one of them, and any one of them will always give you the proper information. They are totally professional.

And naturally I would like to thank our Chairman and Ranking Member, Chairman, for being here, but most importantly the staffer. I am pretty hard to handle from time to time. I am always asking a lot of questions. Right, Paul? But they always answer correctly.

I have got one thing, though, Mr. Chairman. I want to let you know that they send out a card every time we have a major markup, and in that card they ask you what would you want. I keep filling out lobster and filet, and I keep getting sandwiches and pizza. I mean, maybe you shouldn't even send a card out anymore. But I don't mind that. The only thing I do mind is the midnight snacks. If we can get done before midnight, I think I would give my Chairman a case of beer.

So thank you both for being here. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

Now anyone else have questions on our side?

I want to thank you for being here. We will look at this carefully. And if we need any follow-up, we will be in touch. But thanks for your effort. Great work the Committee does. Thank you.

Mr. THORBERRY. Thanks.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee now welcomes Chairman Roe and Ranking Member Walz. Will the official reporter please enter a page break in the hearing record to begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs is tasked with oversight of veterans programs, examining current laws, and reporting bills and amendments to strengthen existing laws concerning veterans and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

I want to welcome Chairman Roe and Ranking Member Walz. And the Chair will now recognize Chairman Roe for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. DAVID P. ROE, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TENNESSEE**

Mr. ROE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Brady, for the opportunity to discuss the Committee on Veterans' Affairs' budget for the 115th Congress. And Ranking Member Tim Walz joins me here today.

We submitted our funding request for the 2017 per your Committee's guidance. And as you know, the Committee has oversight over the entire Department of Veterans Affairs, various programs serving veterans at the Department of Labor, Defense, Arlington National Cemetery, and our overseas cemeteries, as well as other matters.

VA is the second-largest Federal agency, employing over 360,000 people with a budget just south of \$180 billion this fiscal year. In fact, over the last 10 years, VA has seen a budgetary growth of nearly \$100 billion and employee growth of nearly 140,000 employees. To put that in perspective, the number of employees added to the VA roles in just 10 years is roughly equivalent to the population of my home town of Clarksville, Tennessee.

Needless to say, oversight of such a vast, growing Department is critical. Ensuring effective stewardship of taxpayer dollars is essential. Waste of those dollars is unacceptable. Recognizing this, Congress has more than doubled the budget for the VA inspector general over the last 10 years. Although the VA IG's additional scrutiny is necessary and welcome, it is no substitute for effective congressional oversight.

Just before I became Chairman, I was stunned to learn that the budget of our Committee was slightly lower in 2016 than it was 10 years ago. Further, even with much appreciated increase in last year's Congress, the Committee's budget ranks 20th out of 23 House Committees. A cursory review of the House Committee budget relative to the size of Federal agencies they oversee shows an imbalance with respect to our Committee, one I am hoping you will help us remedy.

We owe it to veterans and taxpayers to ensure VA is making marked progress regarding veterans' access to health care, wait times at hospitals and clinics, the efficient operation of the Choice Program and any successor program, the backlog of disability claims, and the on-time and underbudget delivery of hundreds of millions worth of annual procurements, including construction projects and a myriad of other issues.

To accomplish this mission, the Committee needs the requisite staff expertise. On our majority staff we currently have four investigators. With additional resources, the Committee could hire an information technology investigator to oversee VA's \$4.5 billion annual IT budget. Just to give you an example, Mr. Chairman, 86

percent of that budget is spent on just keeping the current system working, not adding new things.

In the very near future, the VA must make a multibillion-dollar investment either by upgrading existing legacy systems, purchasing new systems, or a combination of the two. Having the staff expertise to guide the Committee's oversight on this topic is crucial.

The Committee also needs an additional healthcare investigator and a senior health policy expert. And just to show you, Mr. Chairman, this is an investigation right here I saw 2 weeks ago from Memphis, Tennessee, just one hospital that we have to oversee.

With more than 1,700 sites of care nationwide, numerous whistleblower complaints, and major reform of the healthcare system on the horizon, these skill sets are critical to our oversight and legislative efforts. Accordingly, we are requesting a \$500,000 increase in the Committee's annual personnel budget. Relative to the size of the primary agency the Committee oversees and its massive growth in recent years, I hope we can all agree that this is a modest investment to make.

Finally, at this time we are not requesting additional resources for Committee travel or equipment needs. With the budget allotted for the travel, the Committee has independently been able to conduct spot investigations of whistleblower complaints at various VA facilities across the country. These investigations are essential in establishing an accurate picture of events on the ground relative to what we are being told here in Washington.

Ours is a small Committee tasked with a humbling responsibility: making sure we keep the promise to our Nation's warriors and their families. Mr. Chairman, you have my assurance that we will continue to account and stretch for every dollar afforded us and we meet and exceed expectations—we hope we can. It is my humble request of you and the Ranking Member and Members of the Committee that we build on the oversight success of the Veterans' Committee last Congress with these small but important additions to our budget I have outlined.

I thank you for this opportunity to be here today. And now I would like Mr. Walz say a few words also.

[The statement of Mr. Roe follows:]

Honorable Phil Roe
Chairman
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
House Administration Funding Hearing
1310 Longworth House Office Building
February 16, 2017
Topic: COMMITTEE BUDGET FOR 2017
Up to 5 Mins.

Thank you Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady for the opportunity to discuss the Committee on Veterans' Affairs budget for the 115th Congress.

Ranking Member Tim Walz joins me here today.

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VA is the second largest federal agency, employing over three hundred and sixty thousand people with a budget just south of 180 billion dollars this fiscal year.

In fact, over the last 10 years VA has seen budgetary growth of nearly \$100 billion and employee growth of nearly 140,000. To put that in perspective, the number of employees added to the VA Roles in just the last 10 years is roughly equivalent to the population of my home town of Clarksville, Tennessee!

Needless to say, oversight of such a vastly growing department is critical. Ensuring effective stewardship of taxpayer dollars is essential. Waste of those dollars is unacceptable.

Recognizing this, Congress more than doubled the budget for the VA Inspector General over the last 10 years. Although the VA IG's additional scrutiny is necessary and welcome, it is no substitute for effective congressional oversight.

Just before I became chairman I was stunned to learn that the budget for our committee was slightly lower in 2016 than it was 10 years ago. Further, even with a much appreciated increase last Congress, the committee's budget ranks 20th out of the 23 House committees. A cursory review of House committee budgets relative to the size of the federal agencies they oversee shows an imbalance with respect to our committee, one I am hoping you will help to remedy.

We owe it to veterans and taxpayers to ensure VA is making marked progress regarding veterans' access to healthcare; wait times at hospitals and clinics; the efficient operation of the Choice program and any successor program; the backlog of disability claims; the on-time and under-budget delivery of hundreds of millions worth of annual procurements, including construction projects; and myriad other issues.

To accomplish the mission, the committee needs the requisite staff expertise. On the majority staff we currently have four investigators. With additional resources the committee could hire an information technology investigator to oversee VA's \$4.5 billion annual I-T budget. In the very near future VA must make multi-billion investments either by upgrading existing legacy systems, purchasing new systems, or some combination of the two. Having the staff expertise to guide the committee's oversight on this topic is crucial.

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Ours is a small Committee tasked with a humbling responsibility: Making sure we keep the promise to our nation's warriors and their families.

Mr. Chairman, you have my assurance that we will continue to account for, and stretch, every dollar afforded us as we meet and exceed 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 Mr. Walz 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. I want to thank you for your testimony, Chairman Roe.

And we will now recognize Ranking Member Walz for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. TIMOTHY J. WALZ, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

Mr. WALZ. Well, thank you, Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady, for the opportunity to appear before your Committee and support this proposed budget for the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

I am pleased to join Chairman Roe to support the budget, and we approached this like we do almost all things in our Committee, in a truly bipartisan manner, in looking out for what is in the best interest of our Nation's veterans.

The Chairman eloquently told you what our responsibility is. We do have a very small budget in relationship to the responsibility we have, the number of sites that are out there.

And I can attest also the Chairman's statements on, as we have increased our oversight ability, we have seen results. We have seen positive results for our veterans. We have seen positive results for the taxpayers. But the staff that we have are working at full capacity.

Much is going to be expected of us as we move forward. The Chairman clearly articulated that. Our care of the 22 million veterans in this country will only continue to increase. We will need to address the necessary actions to reform the manner in which VA delivers health care, both inside and in the community as we move towards a hybrid model. We must also contend with the growing backlog of appeals for VA benefits claims and ensure that VA is properly managing replacement of its aging IT infrastructure.

I think that in itself alone, that the IG and Chairman Roe, as we work together on the Subcommittee there, always ask for increases to the IG. But it is our responsibility, our responsibility as Congress. And if we don't have the resources nor the staff to be able to provide that oversight, there is a gap there.

And this Committee has proven time and time again to be good stewards of the taxpayer dollars, to have effectiveness in what we do, and to get real change. I remind folks that it was the ability to listen to whistleblowers as they brought them forward, both on Phoenix and St. Cloud, Minnesota, Tomah, Wisconsin, those ended up in this Committee. They were investigated. And we are seeing positive movement in the right direction.

That is good governance. It can't be done without professional staff. It can't be done without the budget necessary.

I would also like us to think about, and as the Chairman is right, there has been an increase in the budget. There has been an increase in veterans.

We also have a hiring freeze, that while it doesn't impact all of the VA, is something we need to think about and manage. And we have got 45,000 open positions. That will provide oversight to make sure that we are not hiring people who aren't doing their job. It will also make sure we are providing oversight to speed up the Federal hiring process that makes it so onerous that good cardiac

surgeons don't want to take the time, even though they want to serve.

So I fully support the Chairman's recommendation. I respect and understand the Committee has very difficult decisions to make. But I think the key numbers that Chairman Roe indicated to you, this is the second-largest Federal agency. It is one that the American people rally behind. It is spread out across from the Northern Mariana Islands to the Philippines. When a volcano erupts in the Philippines and buries a cemetery, that is our responsibility to figure out how to get the funds to dig it back out and to honor those veterans who are laid to rest there in the Philippines.

So I ask this Committee to give consideration to our request. And again, I can assure you that Chairman Roe is a man of his word. Every dollar is watched carefully. Every decision that is made is always in first and foremost the best interest of our veterans, this Nation's security, and the taxpayers.

So I yield back, and I am open for questions.

[The statement of Mr. Walz follows:]

**STATEMENT OF TIMOTHY J. WALZ
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER**

**COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BEFORE
THE HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
COMMITTEE**

February 16, 2017

Thank you Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady for this opportunity to appear before your committee to speak in support of the proposed budget for the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

I am pleased to join with Chairman Roe to support the proposed budget. We approached this effort as we do most things in our Committee – in a bipartisan manner, looking at what's in the best interest of the nation and our veterans.

As a committee we have endured budget cuts in previous congresses and have managed to do more with less. Our work is increasing, and I do not know how we can do much more without more resources. Much of our work is bipartisan, and we need to ensure that the Committee has the expertise, the staff, and the resources to assist us in meeting the many challenges before us.

Much will be expected of this Committee during this Congress. We oversee the second-largest federal agency charged with providing healthcare and benefits to our nation's 22 million veterans. We will need to address necessary actions to reform the manner in which VA delivers healthcare to veterans both inside VA facilities and in the community. We must also contend with a growing backlog of appeals for VA benefits claims, and ensure the VA is properly managing the replacement of its aging IT infrastructure, including an Electronic Health Record that must be interoperable with DoD and community providers.

We must ensure VA is recruiting healthcare providers to fill over 37,000 provider vacancies in the Veterans Health Administration. These positions are exempt from the federal hiring freeze because everyone recognizes that filling provider vacancies are critical to ensuring veterans have access to care. Twenty veterans a day are committing suicide. Many of our veterans are suffering from chronic pain and are struggling with opioid addiction.

We still have homeless veterans living on the streets and veterans who struggle to find good paying jobs. We must do everything we can to ensure our most vulnerable veterans are receiving the mental health care and services they need to survive, and that veterans are able to support themselves and their families. This will require a great deal of oversight and attention by our Committee, and Chairman Roe and I are ready to get to work.

We all know from reports in the press and from the hearings our Committee has held that many of these VA programs do not seem to be going well. This Committee must be prepared to make some decisions on behalf of the taxpayers and veterans to ensure that VA makes measurable progress towards its goals over these next two years.

In a tight fiscal environment, among many competing priorities, veterans must remain one of our highest priorities. All of us have veterans in our district who are relying on us to fight for them. One important way to achieve this is to ensure that the resources we have provided to the VA are producing the outcomes that we have intended.

All of this will require an enormous amount of policy, guidance, and oversight by the Committee and it is essential that we have the necessary resources in order to meet our responsibilities. I believe, along with Chairman Roe, that our proposed budget provides those needed resources.

On a final note, as you know, I am the new Ranking Member for the Committee. Change often brings a new direction and focus to our efforts and many changes to the Minority staff of a committee. We currently have staff vacancies we need to fill, particularly in the area of Oversight and Investigation – one of our most critical functions especially in light of the challenges VA has and continues to face. We also need someone to lead our efforts on the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee, so we can ensure veterans are getting the benefits they deserve.

While I understand the fiscal pressures faced by all of us and by our country, I respectfully request that you support our proposed budget level so that we can play our critical and essential role in supporting those who have served and sacrificed for our nation.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ranking Member Walz. And of course I never know whether to call Chairman Roe Chairman Roe or Dr. Roe or Mayor or any of the other hats that he has worn or just Congressman. But I appreciate the work that you are having to do. And it is just not easy.

Tell me again approximately how many employees the Department of Veterans Affairs has.

Mr. ROE. The number of employees, Mr. Chairman, is a little north of 360,000 total the VA hires. And what we are doing—I just left an hour meeting with new Secretary Shulkin. We have a tremendous job ahead of us with revising the Choice Program. And just this one—I mean, this brought it to light to me. We went down to Memphis, Tennessee with an hour's notice and walked in this hospital. And I have been poring through this investigation right here that we have done at one hospital, and it is just a symptom of what is going on across the country.

The veterans deserve—you hear them—there is not a single person sitting up there that doesn't have tens of thousands of veterans in their home—in their districts. There are two veterans sitting here in front of you. And it is our responsibility to do this right, and we need the resources to do it.

I am mind-boggled at \$180 billion. It is 180,000 million dollars. And not all of it is being spent wisely either.

The CHAIRMAN. You know, our responsibility is, obviously, to review your request, make sure you have got what you need to be equipped to do your job, and hopefully be stronger as a Committee. For us constitutionally, we are supposed to be a coequal branch of government, and we have sort of diminished that ability over a long period of time. So how do we get that to where we can actually do what is our responsibility?

So we will look through this, try to do what is best. If we have any follow-up, we will get back in touch with you.

At this time I will recognize the Ranking Member of the Committee, Mr. Brady, for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member. My question for the record, Ranking Member, there is a one-third, two-third split. Is that working out with the Committee?

Mr. WALZ. It is, and I appreciate the question. I would also like to thank the Chairman for the comment about this is our responsibility and we should not diminish it. While I trust the IG, it is up to us to do it.

Yes, it is. And the reason I would say so, Mr. Ranking Member, is the professionalism of the staff. It truly is a bipartisan professional staff where we work with each other. I get information from Chairman Roe's staff as easily as I do from ours.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. At this time I will recognize Mr. Davis, the Vice Chairman of the Committee, for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member. We have seen through the news media over the last couple of years how important your Committee is to getting our veterans the service that

they deserve. And I appreciate everything that your Committee does to hold the VA accountable.

As most of you know, many of us in our district offices have upwards of 100 open cases for our veterans who are either not getting the care that they need when they need it or not getting the service that they deserve when they were promised that service when they signed up to protect our Nation.

With that in mind, I notice that you have asked for a slight increase in your travel budget. Does that mean that you are going to be able to come to more facilities throughout the Nation for accountability purposes? And how can we help you do that to ensure that the agency that you oversee is serving our veterans as they should?

Mr. ROE. We actually did not ask for an increase in our travel budget.

Mr. WALZ. We will if you will let us.

Mr. ROE. Yeah, if you want to let us have it.

Mr. DAVIS. You know what, it was my fault. It was an increase over your actual spending.

Mr. ROE. Actually, what we are doing is adding these positions. Just to give you an example, we are going to have to oversee probably the transformation of the VA's IT system. They are spending \$4.5 billion a year, 86 percent of which is to take this legacy system and make it work.

And to give you an example, right now we don't have interoperability. I remember 4 or 5 years ago sitting in a committee hearing and seeing where the VA and DOD flushed a billion dollars trying to make the DOD and VA systems talk to each other, and they couldn't do it.

As you know, DOD—Chairman Thornberry was here just a minute ago with the Ranking Member—they are putting in an electronic system there that is an off-the-shelf system. We are going to have to oversee that in the VA, and it is a much bigger project. I have got to have somebody that has that expertise to help me do it.

Mr. DAVIS. Excellent.

Mr. ROE. I don't have it.

Mr. DAVIS. Excellent.

You know, I have asked this from some of the Chairmen and Ranking Members who came in yesterday: If you were to get extra dollars, if you were to have access to extra funds, what would you be able to spend it on and what would you do to make the VA work better?

Mr. ROE. Here are two of the major things. The IT part is integral in making everything else work. For instance, when you have someone that comes in your office with a claim, they have a disability claim, the disability people can't look back into that record. They have to do it all by paper. When that claim is then denied and they go through an appeals process, the appeals people and the claims people can't go back and forth.

So we are going to have to have some expertise on our Committee that helps us when we transform into a different system.

Health care is another piece. That is a huge piece when people don't feel like they are getting the quality of care that they need.

And we need that expertise to go in and do these kind of investigations, when we just pop into your district with an hour's notice. That is what we did in Memphis, Tennessee. And we need to do more of that.

Mr. DAVIS. Well, thank you. I hope you do. And as you are talking about hiring the staff to make sure that the IT issues are more streamlined at the VA, I would urge you to also help us in implementing a bill that just passed unanimously Ted Yoho and I introduced, called the Wingman Act, to allow our certified caseworkers in our district offices, something I used to be, to have better access to a site to provide better service to our veterans.

If we get pushback from the VA in implementing that, I would love to have your Committee's help in ensuring that that is seamlessly implemented too, to do what we all want in a bipartisan way, which is to serve our veterans better.

So thank you very much. And I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

The Chair will now recognize Mr. Raskin for 5 minutes.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

And welcome, Chairman Roe and Ranking Member Walz. It is a great pleasure to hear you guys.

Chairman Roe, did I just hear you correctly to say that a billion dollars was spent trying to promote the interoperability of the IT systems between DOD and the VA and it failed? Or was it a million dollars?

Mr. ROE. No, sir, you almost flipped over like I did. You heard it right. It was a billion dollars. A thousand million dollars. And it was probably that is a low number. We had Secretary Shinseki in and also the Secretary of Defense in, and they just couldn't do it. And I actually made a trip twice to Great Lakes, Illinois, to watch where they were trying to make these records interoperative, and they were never able to do it.

We have wasted a mind-boggling amount of money on that process. And finally what DOD did, they just got an off-the-shelf system. And what the new system needs to be able to do, and the Vista system that they have, is a good electronic health record system. I put one in my practice. I have actually initiated an electronic health record.

They built on top of that a lot of other features and tried to internally do things it was never designed to do. We need something that does scheduling, something that does the E.H.R., something that pays the bills promptly. One of the reasons in your district I am sure you hear from your providers that doctors that are seeing patients, they are not being paid in a timely fashion, and so they drop out of the system, making the Choice Program even harder to work and to implement.

Mr. RASKIN. So forgive me for being optimistic here, but is there some opportunity of improving the situation that you guys are working on? What are the prospects?

Mr. WALZ. Well, if I could, Chairman, I would say yes. And I would say the Chairman's leadership has been instrumental in that. And I tell you, Congressman Raskin, that I have talked about this seamless transition since I am blue in the face in the time that I have been here. At no time in the previous 10 years have I seen

us be so close. I think there is a concerted effort, both from the Secretary over to the Senate VA Committee, the leadership on this Committee, that we are there.

This is not an easy thing. It is difficult. Technology costs a lot. You always regret that computer you brought that was outdated in 6 months. VA has not had strategic vision on this. The same thing with DOD, finally got to this point because they were spending 90 percent of their budget maintaining an old system. And these are not just old systems. They are 50-year-old COBOL systems. Don't do what they need to do.

And this is not just a spreadsheet. An electronic medical record is a diagnostic tool, as Dr. Roe knows, and you tie it into billing, you tie it into scheduling, you tie into the private sector as we move to that. It is the cornerstone piece to reform of the VA, and it is going to take oversight.

So you should be optimistic. And I think I would go back to the budget request. If we are going to be responsible and get the blame for what is not working at VA, I would like us to have the tools to change that so that doesn't happen.

And I think where Dr. Roe said this, something when we do this, it was this team of professionals that went out and found the issue, some of you remember, of the outrageous travel allowances and the movement that was happening inside the VA. That happened by a site visit from the Committee, not the IG, not anybody outside of that. It came from good Article I oversight. And this is one of those too that if we get this wrong, we are going to waste money and we are going to put veterans in a worse position.

Mr. RASKIN. And is there a timetable for actually implementing this or is it just kind of incremental improvement we are talking about?

Mr. ROE. It can't be incremental. The VA is going to have to make the giant leap, and that is going to be hard to get done. It will be a culture change.

And this isn't easy. Look, I have shifted from paper to electronic health records. It is painful to do it. You would have to run two parallel systems and implement this over time. And that is one of the reason we need expertise that neither one of us have to be able to go make sure this is done properly.

Mr. RASKIN. Okay. Well, thank you very much.

And, Mr. Chair, I will be curious as a new Member of the Committee to spread out this line of inquiry about the Federal Government generally to what extent we have got interoperability and advanced, up-to-date IT technology in the various departments.

Thank you. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back. And we will make sure they don't charge you for this time that you have used on questions today at the next hearing.

I now recognize Mr. Smith for 5 minutes for any questions he may have.

Mr. SMITH. Sure. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to our colleagues here. You have got a big job to do. And I certainly admire your willingness and certainly the capability to do the job.

Let me reference a specific scenario that reflects a larger concern that I have. And, Mr. Walz, you are probably aware of this geographically. The Black Hills Healthcare System, there is a lot of controversy there with some decisions that central folks at the VA have chosen to make. I fear that it is reflective of a larger issue, and that is the care for veterans in rural areas.

We know that it is not always more expensive. Sometimes more resources are needed for rural areas. But just perhaps a reflection on the unique needs of rural areas.

So would you say that your Committee is well suited, given the resources and so forth, for oversight of rural concerns? And anything that we should be aware of relating to that?

Mr. ROE. Well, I think a couple things. And thank you for the question. I live in rural America, and certainly I know you do in your district, and it creates a challenge when a few people are spread over broad areas. It is one of the reasons that we have to make the Choice Program work.

And in October I went to Lubbock, Texas, and also to the Yakima Valley in Washington. And Dan Newhouse's district goes from the Canadian border all the way down to the Oregon border. So he has a huge rural area. And we need that Choice Program to work.

And the Choice Program will be where a veteran, and I absolutely believe this in the core of me, to make the VA work better, I think you have to have the veteran in charge of healthcare decisions. And when you do that, you put that veteran in charge with their card, so that they can choose where they go see their primary care doctor, begin, initiate their care.

And back to your question a minute ago, one of the things that the VA does on technology is they store—have stored all this information on site in a server at a particular hospital. If it were cloud-based, you would have access—everybody would have access to it. And now we don't. It is siloed, information is.

But rural America where I live, making sure veterans get care there is absolutely essential. And that is one of the reasons we need a healthcare technician, someone who can actually look in that and make sure and investigate along those means. It will help us. And if you have any particular issues or just examples of where a veteran is not getting that, please, Members, bring them to us. It helps us figure out what to do.

Mr. SMITH. I would hope that, like you said, veterans themselves can be heard on these issues, because they feel they are not being heard.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Smith, and I think your question is exactly right. You know this well, that 15 percent of our population of this country statistically live in rural areas. Forty-three percent of our veterans live there. That is just the nature. I would argue it is cultural, and it is the sense of duty that sometimes emanates from our areas. Your Hot Springs area I am very familiar with.

And I do think the Committee is well versed for that. And I think that is what is driving some of the innovation to deliver care. No one is saying get rid of the core mission of the VA. No one is saying get rid of the polytrauma or burn centers.

But we are saying for that veteran that is living in Gering or Scottsbluff, that it might make more sense for them to be able to

figure out how they can manage their care there going, up to Hot Springs when they need to. And possibly an inpatient facility with 75 beds in Hot Springs that was well suited for post-World War II might be better incorporated into the local hospital up there with a wing that has a VA symbol on it and that is how we do it.

Those are decisions that we are going to talk about, but it is one that has already been brought to our attention. Your neighbors, Senator Thune and Mrs. Noem, have already been on it.

And as I would end with a point of personal privilege, Mr. Smith is my mother's Congressman, and she oftentimes says it is a good thing I don't live back there, it would be very difficult for her. So I thank you for that.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

No other questions?

I want to thank you for what you are doing, what you are attempting to do in a very difficult situation. Every Member comes to you two with complaints that they have about what is going on in their district. So you are almost making house calls, Dr. Roe, for our Members who have these issues with the VA for their veterans.

I am confident that you two are committed to doing this job, that you have been given this responsibility, and our constitutional role to be that coequal branch of government. So how in the world you can do what you need to do with the size budget and staff that you have now is a very difficult task. So we will take a good look at it and be in touch.

Thank you so much for being here.

Mr. ROE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Ranking Member.

The CHAIRMAN. I want to thank the Chairs and Ranking Members for their testimony. And I also thank the Committee Members for their participation.

I now recess the hearing. The Committee will reconvene, subject to the call of the Chair. We will reconvene at 12:15 p.m. today.

[Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee will come to order.

The Committee now welcomes Chairman Goodlatte and Ranking Member Conyers on the Committee on the Judiciary. Would the official reporter please enter a page break into the hearing record to begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The House Committee on the Judiciary is tasked with oversight of matters relating to the administration of justice in Federal courts, administrative bodies, and law enforcement agencies. Its primary focuses are to ensure that America's laws are efficient, fair, and enforced, as well as to guard against the consequences of executive overreach.

I want to welcome Chairman Goodlatte and Ranking Member Conyers. And at this time the Chair recognizes Chairman Goodlatte for 5 minutes.

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. Well, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. And thank you also to Ranking Member Brady and to the other members of the Committee. I really appreciate the opportunity to testify on the Judiciary Committee's budget for the first session of the 115th 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 114th Congress, for example, a total of 1,227 legislative measures introduced were referred to our Committee. I think I know of maybe one other Committee that would receive more bills than the Judiciary Committee. The Judiciary Committee held over 100 hearings and reported 69 bills and resolutions to the House and had jurisdictional involvement in the House passage of 88 bills and resolutions. Finally, a total of 22 bills in which the Judiciary Committee had a jurisdictional interest were signed into law by the President.

Additionally, the Committee convened numerous working groups to carefully examine complicated issues like encryption and police accountability. And the Committee also visited numerous locations throughout the United States to gather information from stakeholders outside Washington, D.C., on such important issues as police accountability, aggression toward law enforcement officers, and reform of our Nation's intellectual property laws.

Already in the 115th 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, litigation reform, prohibiting taxpayer funding of abortions, protecting the privacy of Americans' emails by updating the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, reauthorizing our Nation's cherished surveillance laws, criminal justice reform, and immigration reform, just to name a few.

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. We also expect to continue to engage in aggressive oversight of the Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Patent and

Trademark Office, and other agencies within the Committee's jurisdiction.

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 fact, the Committee expects to significantly increase its oversight of the Federal judiciary, including making sure Americans have access to important information about cases, making sure Americans have sufficient access to justice, and making sure the judiciary is using its resources effectively.

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.

Finally, the Committee will need to devote significant time and resources toward reauthorizing the many agencies and programs within the Committee's jurisdiction whose statutory authorizations have expired. And I know the Chairman and the Ranking Member are aware of the new requirements in our House rules related to reauthorization of these programs and Committees.

All of these issues are critical to the safety and economic well-being of millions of Americans. 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 police accountability, 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 gaining a better understanding of the successes and deficiencies of the current law.

While I have and will continue to do what is necessary to ensure that the Judiciary Committee is operating efficiently and effectively, I respectfully request that when allocating funds to Commit-

tees, you take into account the enormous legislative burden of the Judiciary Committee and the likelihood that it will require more resources when compared with other Committees.

And I would point out also that, in that regard, the Committee has been what I would call lean and mean for a long, long time, that if you look at the staffing on both the majority and minority sides of this Committee, we operate with less personnel than I think is fair and effective given the staffing in some other Committees.

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

[The statement of Mr. Goodlatte follows:]

Statement of Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte
Committee on House Administration
Judiciary Committee Budget for the 115th Congress, First Session
Thursday, February 16, 2017

Chairman Harper, 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 115th Congress.

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of the heavy workload of the committee, including work on issues of great importance to the entire Congress, such as regulatory reform, litigation reform, prohibiting taxpayer funding of abortions, protecting the privacy of Americans' emails by updating the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, reauthorizing our nation's terrorist surveillance laws, criminal justice reform, and immigration reform, just to name a few. 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. We also expect to continue to engage in aggressive oversight of the Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, and other agencies within the Committee's jurisdiction.

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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 fact, the Committee expects to significantly increase its oversight of the federal judiciary, including making sure Americans have access to important information about cases, making sure Americans have sufficient access to justice, and making sure the judiciary is using its resources effectively.

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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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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 police accountability, 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 gaining a better understanding of the successes and deficiencies of the current law.

While I have and will continue to do what is necessary to ensure that the Judiciary Committee is operating efficiently and effectively, 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. Chairman Goodlatte yields back.

The Chair will now recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Conyers, for 5 minutes.

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

Mr. CONYERS. Thank you, Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady, and also new Member Jamie Raskin. We welcome you and are honored to be appearing here with my Chairman, Bob Goodlatte, to present our 2017 budget request for the House Judiciary Committee.

I join with my colleague, the Chairman, to consider this budget request favorably for several reasons. To begin with, this request reflects the fact that the Judiciary Committee is responsible for some of the most critical issues facing our Nation and is among the most active Committees in the House of Representatives. Our Committee plays a major role in dealing with extremely vital and contemporary legislative and oversight issues that have nationwide significance.

The Committee's responsibilities, of course, as has been indicated, include oversight of the Department of Justice and the Nation's criminal code, as well as the Federal court judiciary system. It also examines complex issues presented by proposed mergers, including multibillion-dollar mergers. It includes intellectual property disputes and the Federal regulatory process, all of which affect most facets of our society.

Such extensive responsibilities, obviously, require the Committee to expend extensive time and resources. For example, during the 114th Congress, one in five of the legislative measures introduced were referred to our Committee, the House Judiciary Committee. Our Committee reported 69 substantive bills and resolutions, and the Committee had a jurisdictional interest in 22 of the bills signed into law during the last Congress. The Judiciary Committee held over 60 subcommittee hearings and more than 25 full Committee hearings, as well as 40 full Committee markups.

It is also very likely that the Committee's workload for the current Congress will more than likely increase. Chairman Goodlatte has proposed an ambitious hearing and legislative schedule during which the Committee will continue to work on immigration policy, criminal law issues, patent and copyright concerns, criminal justice reform, and many others. These hearings will of course necessitate travel expenditures, particularly with respect to policing and intellectual property reform. And so, accordingly, we urge you to prioritize the Committee's budget request and to consider our request in full.

Absent an increase in funding, the Committee will be unable to attract and retain the highly qualified staff who are crucial to support the work of the Committee. As the details reveal in the budget submission, the 12 percent increase from our 2016 Committee allocation will ensure that our staff who are working long hours and are stretched thin can keep up with the Committee's ambitious agenda.

I am pleased that Chairman Goodlatte is committed to working cooperatively with me in an effort to ensure that the Committee

meets a sufficient level of funding. And given the severe negative ramifications that could result from an underfunded Committee staff, I believe it is imperative that adequate Committee staff resources be available for our issues. And so I urge the Committee on House Administration to grant us this modest increase in the Judiciary Committee's budget.

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

Members of this Committee, I appreciate your attention to our request, and I am happy to respond to any questions that you may have. And I thank you very much.

[The statement of Mr. Conyers follows:]

**Statement of the Honorable John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member,
Committee on the Judiciary, for the Hearing on the Committee's
2017 Budget Request before the Committee on House
Administration**

Thursday, February 16, 2017, at 12:15 p.m.

Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee, it is my pleasure to appear before you today with Chairman Goodlatte to present our 2017 budget request for the House Judiciary Committee.

I join with my colleague Chairman Goodlatte in urging your Committee to consider this budget request favorably for several reasons. To begin with, this request reflects the fact that the Judiciary Committee is responsible for some of the most critical issues facing our Nation and is among the most active committees in the House.

Our Committee plays a major role in dealing with extremely important legislative and oversight issues that have nationwide significance. The Committee's responsibilities include oversight of the Justice Department and the Nation's criminal code as well as the federal court system. It also examines complex issues presented by proposed billion dollar mergers, intellectual property disputes, and the federal regulatory process, which affects all facets of our society.

Such extensive responsibilities obviously require the Committee to expend extensive time and resources. For example, during the 114th Congress, 1 in 5 of the legislative measures introduced were referred to

the Judiciary Committee. Our Committee reported 69 substantive bills and resolutions. And, the Committee had a jurisdictional interest in 22 of the bills signed into law during the last Congress. The Judiciary Committee held over 60 subcommittee hearings and 25 full Committee hearings as well as 40 full committee markups.

It is also very likely that the Committee's workload for the current Congress will increase. Chairman Goodlatte has proposed an ambitious hearing and legislative schedule during which the Committee will continue to work on immigration policy, criminal law issues, and patent and copyright concerns, among many others. In addition, several of these hearings will necessitate travel expenditures, particularly with respect to policing and intellectual property reform.

Accordingly, I urge you to prioritize the Committee's budget request and to consider our request in full. Absent an increase in funding, the Committee will be unable to attract and retain highly qualified staff who are crucial to support the work of the Committee. As detailed in the budget submission, the 12% increase from our 2016 Committee allocation will ensure that the Democratic staff - who are working long hours and are stretched thin - can keep up with the Committee's ambitious agenda.

I am pleased that Chairman Goodlatte has committed to working cooperatively with me in an effort to ensure that the Committee meets a

sufficient level of funding. Given the severe negative ramifications that could result from an underfunded Committee staff, I believe it is imperative that adequate Committee staff resources be available for our issues. I urge the Committee on House Administration to increase the Judiciary Committee's budget.

Chairman Goodlatte and I have submitted a budget 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 happy to respond to any questions you might have.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

I want to thank you both for your testimony. And we recognize the importance of what the Committee does. I had the privilege my first term of serving on Judiciary. It is a great Committee. And I appreciate the leadership that both of you are showing and working together on trying to present this budget.

One of my main concerns is the fact that we have a constitutional responsibility. We are a coequal branch of government. And yet we have sort of let that escape just a little bit over probably many decades. So how we get that back to make sure that you are equipped to do that responsibility that you have, we want to make sure that we take a good look at this and see.

I want to recognize Mr. Brady, the Ranking Member, now for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member.

I am sure you probably answered this as part of your testimony, but for the record, for the Ranking Member, the one-third, two-thirds agreement is being honored?

Mr. CONYERS. Yes.

Mr. BRADY. That is all, Mr. Chairman. I yield back. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

We also know that you have many responsibilities to take care of these things. So how we go forward in this body to make sure Congress does its job is of great importance to this Committee. And so we appreciate your time. Thank you for your testimony. Thank you.

Mr. CONYERS. Thank you very much.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chairman now welcomes Chairman Black and Ranking Member Yarmuth of the Committee on the Budget. Would the official reporter please enter a page break into the hearing record to begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. Congratulations to Chairman Black for officially being selected to serve as Chairman of the Committee. The Committee on the Budget is tasked with oversight of congressional consideration of spending, revenue, and debt limit legislation.

I want to welcome Chairman Black and Ranking Member Yarmuth. And at this time the Chair will recognize Chairman Black for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. DIANE BLACK, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TENNESSEE**

Mrs. BLACK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Brady, for the opportunity to testify this afternoon regarding the Budget Committee's funding resolution for the 115th Congress.

I am pleased to report that during the 114th Congress the Budget Committee stayed within the spending levels approved by this Committee. Therefore, we are requesting that our annual funding level for the 115th Congress remain frozen at the 2016 level of approximately \$5.1 million. This requested allocation will provide the Committee the necessary resources to adequately fulfill our current and future priorities.

I intend to continue the Budget Committee's past practice of carefully managing our funding allocations with respect to the Committee's operations. For example, I am committed to keeping our staffing levels considerably below our current limit of 66. The Committee currently has 43 staff members, and we expect to continue near or at that staffing level over the course of the 115th Congress.

Additionally, we will continue to monitor 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 the minority, and I intend to maintain this tradition. Under the 2016 spending allocation, the Committee was able to provide the minority with one-third of the Committee's budget. This division of financial resources ensures that both the majority and the minority have sufficient resources to properly fulfill the Committee's many responsibilities and maintain a highly professional staff.

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

I would like to point out, however, that in support of the Cannon Renewal Project, the Committee obligated \$300,000 in both 2015 and 2016 to pay for the additional renovations of the Budget Committee's hearing room in 210 Cannon. This renovation will allow our hearing room to be fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, while also improving space efficiency for Members and staff, and no further obligations for these renovations will be required.

Our request for a frozen funding level is both responsible and disciplined, and provides flexibility to meet the Committee's potential future needs.

Further, it is my understanding that Mr. Yarmuth supports this budget request and our plans for the management of the Committee's funds.

In closing, I would also like to express the Budget Committee's appreciation and thanks to the staff of the House Administration Committee, especially Staff Director Sean Moran, and the staff of the Architect of the Capitol for their wonderful assistance provided to the Budget Committee during the move of the majority staff from the Cannon to the Longworth last year. Moving offices is never easy, as we all know, but with the professionalism exhibited by both staffs, the move was seamless and trouble free.

And I would also like to thank the Chairman and the Ranking Member for their support in finding additional space for the majority staff within the Longworth Building earlier this year. The additional space has benefited both members and staff of the Budget Committee.

And thank you for your time, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

[The statement of Mrs. Black follows:]

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DIANE BLACK
INTERIM CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET
February 16, 2017

Thank you, Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady, for the opportunity to testify this afternoon regarding the Budget Committee's funding resolution for the 115th Congress.

I am pleased to report that during the 114th Congress the Budget Committee stayed within the spending levels approved by this committee. Therefore, we are requesting that our annual funding level for the 115th Congress remain frozen at the 2016 level of approximately \$5.1 million. This requested allocation will provide the Committee the necessary resources to adequately fulfill our current and future priorities.

I intend to continue the Budget Committee's past practice of carefully managing our funding allocations with respect to the Committee's operations. For example, I am committed to keeping our staffing levels considerably below our current limit of 66. The Committee currently has 43 staff members and we expect to continue near or at that staffing level over the course of the 115th Congress. Additionally, we will continue to monitor our expenditures closely to ensure 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 intend to maintain this tradition. Under the 2016 spending allocation, the Committee was able to provide the Minority with one-third of the Committee's budget. This division of financial resources ensures that

both the Majority and the Minority have sufficient resources to properly fulfill the Committee's many responsibilities and maintain a highly professional staff.

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

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In closing, I would also like to express the Budget Committee's appreciation and thanks to the staff of the House Administration Committee, especially Staff Director Sean Moran, and the staff of the Architect of the Capital for the wonderful assistance provided to the Budget Committee during the move of Majority staff from Cannon to Longworth last year. Moving offices is never easy, but with the professionalism exhibited by both staffs, the move was seamless and

trouble free. I would also like to thank the Chairman and Ranking Member for their support in finding additional office space for the Majority staff within Longworth earlier this year. The additional space has benefited both Members and staff of the Budget Committee.

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

The CHAIRMAN. The gentlelady yields back.

The Chair will now recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Yarmuth, for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. JOHN A. YARMUTH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF KENTUCKY

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Brady, thank you for providing us this opportunity to testify about the Budget Committee's use of funds in the 115th Congress.

I am also pleased to be here alongside our Chairman, Mrs. Black. We are both testifying before the House Administration Committee for the first time as the new Chairman and Ranking Member, and we do so with the commitment to carry on the tradition of running the Budget Committee's operations in a bipartisan manner.

While we may not see eye to eye on the overall budget priorities of the country, we are, however, in agreement on the funding distribution of the Committee's budget. As in previous years, in the 115th Congress, the majority will make one-third of the funding and resources available to the minority for personnel. The minority budget will continue to cover costs of equipment for both staffs, providing the same quality and services for both majority and minority.

I would like to note that, over the last year, the minority budget had lower expenditures than normal. However, that was a one-time anomaly. There were a number of staff who left during the year and weren't replaced, including the staff director and a senior analyst. My predecessor, Mr. Van Hollen, who was running for Senate and not returning to the Committee, decided to hold off filling these positions to give the incoming Ranking Member the opportunity to make those personnel decisions. Over the past few weeks, I have filled all of our vacant positions, and the minority staff is now at full strength.

That being said, there is not a lot of flexibility in the minority budget, which essentially covers staff salaries. Funding has been frozen at the same level for the last 3 years, and we are now operating at 18 percent below what the minority budget was in 2010.

While we have been able to manage within these funding levels and expect to during this Congress, we can't absorb any further cuts without doing damage to our mission. As we look to the future, continuing to freeze resources over the longer term is not sustainable, particularly if the growth rate in private-sector wages increases and draws talented people away from government service. We have highly experienced analysts on the staff who are experts in a wide range of public policy areas. If we want to retain them and attract new people who are skilled, motivated, and experienced, we have to pay competitive salaries.

I also have concerns beyond staff salaries. The Committee's commitment to save money in the current fiscal climate means we are keeping equipment longer. The Committee's computer server is beyond its original warranty, as are most of the computers. While I am in favor of getting the most out of the equipment we buy, there is a point where it becomes counterproductive and, worse, makes our information systems vulnerable to cyber attack. New computers and equipment will be needed in the near future.

We owe it to the American taxpayer that we spend their money as efficiently as possible, and we will continue to look for ways to do more with less. But we must recognize there is a limit. And, as the urgency to deal with our long-term budget challenges builds, we will need the best possible analysis and advice from Budget Committee staff. We will need to attract and retain first-rate analysts and provide them the necessary support they need to perform at the highest levels. I hope that our budget allocation will reflect these important goals.

And I would like to join Chairman Black in expressing our appreciation to the House Administration Committee staff and to the Committee members for facilitating our move. We are in comfortable quarters now and doing well. So we appreciate that very much.

And I yield back.

[The statement of Mr. Yarmuth follows:]

Statement of John Yarmuth
Ranking Democrat, House Budget Committee
February 16, 2017
12:45 p.m.
1310 Longworth House Office Building

Review of the Use of Committee Funds of the 115th Congress

Thank you, Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady, for providing this opportunity to testify about the Budget Committee's use of funds in the 115th Congress.

I am also pleased to be here alongside our Chairman, Mrs. Black. We are both testifying before the House Administration Committee for the first time as the new Chairman and Ranking Member and we do so with the commitment to carry on the tradition of running the Budget Committee's operations in a bipartisan manner.

While we may not see eye to eye on the overall budget priorities of the country, we are, however, in agreement on the funding distribution of the Committee's budget. As in previous years, in the 115th Congress the majority will make one-third of the funding and resources available to the minority for personnel. The majority budget will continue to cover costs of equipment for both staffs, providing the same quality and services for both majority and minority.

I would like to note that over the last year, the minority budget had lower expenditures than normal. However, that was a one-time anomaly. There were a number of staff who left during the year and weren't replaced, including the staff director and a senior analyst. My predecessor, Mr. Van Hollen, who was running for the Senate and not returning to the Committee, decided to hold off filling those positions to give the incoming ranking member the opportunity to make those personnel decisions. Over the last few weeks, I have filled all of our vacant positions and the minority staff is now at full strength.

That being said, there is not a lot of flexibility in the minority budget, which essentially covers staff salaries. Funding has been frozen at the same level for the last three years and we are now operating at 18 percent below what the minority budget was in 2010. While we have been able to manage within these funding levels and expect to during this Congress, we can't absorb any further cuts without doing damage to our mission. As we look to the future, continuing to freeze resources over the longer term is not sustainable, particularly if the growth rate in private sector wages increases and draws talented people away from government service. We have highly experienced analysts on the staff who are experts in a wide range of public policy areas. If we want to retain them and attract new people who are skilled, motivated, and experienced, we have to pay competitive salaries.

I also have concerns beyond staff salaries. The Committee's commitment to save money in the current fiscal climate means we are keeping equipment longer. The Committee's computer server is beyond its original warranty as are most of the computers. While I am in favor of getting the most out of the equipment we buy, there is a point where it becomes counterproductive, and worse, makes our information systems vulnerable to cyber attack. New computers and equipment will be needed in the near future.

We owe it to the American taxpayer that we spend their money as efficiently as possible and we will continue to look for ways to do more with less. But, we must recognize there is a limit. And, as the urgency to deal with our long-term budget challenges builds, we will need the best possible analysis and advice from Budget Committee staff. We will need to attract and retain first-rate analysts and provide them the necessary support they need to perform at the highest levels. I hope that our budget allocation will reflect these important goals.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

The Chair will now recognize himself for 5 minutes for the purpose of questions.

You know, I had the privilege of serving on the Budget Committee my first term, and it is somewhat of a thankless Committee because you have the role to play that you have, and there are difficult decisions that have to be made that you have to keep us on track. So we appreciate the willingness to do that in a way that works, that is efficient.

And we also recognize that we have a constitutional role. As a coequal branch of government, we want to make sure that we have the ability to do our job in that role. So we will look forward to working through this and looking at these numbers and the testimony that you presented.

At this time, I will recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Brady, for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Madam Chairman and Ranking Member. Good luck and congratulations, I think. Being on the Budget Committee is not that easy.

But the only question I would have would be the one-third/two-thirds distribution, and you both answered that. So thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Any other members have questions they would like to ask? Seeing none, I want to thank you both for your time, and I appreciate your willingness to work together, and we will have a decision to you. Thank you.

Mrs. BLACK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee now welcomes Chairman Chaffetz and Ranking Member Cummings.

Would the official reporter please enter a page break into the hearing record to begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is tasked with oversight of the Federal Government and proactively investigates and exposes waste, fraud, and abuse. Its primary focus is to ensure efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability throughout the Federal Government, and that responsibility and primary focus remains steadfast.

I want to welcome Chairman Chaffetz and Ranking Member Cummings.

At this time, the Chair will recognize Chairman Chaffetz for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. JASON CHAFFETZ, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF UTAH**

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and to the Ranking Member as well. I appreciate this opportunity to talk about our budget and what we are presenting here.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is a Committee that was originally founded back in 1814. And, interestingly, it has had a variety of different names, but it was there to oversee all the government expenditures. It expanded; it contracted. An interesting note, at one point, when Abraham Lincoln served in the United States Congress, he actually served on this Committee. He was known as Spotty Lincoln. Spotty Lincoln was one who questioned the President about where did the Mexican-American War start. It is a really interesting heritage in history, and a lot has happened in this Committee, obviously, through several generations.

As you said, Mr. Chairman, the mission is to ensure the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of the Federal Government and all its agencies. With more than 2 million Federal employees and so much happening in the government, there is certainly a lot to look at. We can't look at everything. Each of the other committees does have a component of oversight, but we do have a broad mission and are able, under the House rules, to investigate anything at any time. There are some constraints as it relates to sources and methods that the Intel Committee looks at, but certainly we have a very active Committee.

We have reconfigured the subcommittees. We now have six subcommittees. We had six before, but we reconfigured one of those to look at intergovernmental affairs as well. We also in the last Congress put in a subcommittee that had not been there previously, and that was the IT Subcommittee. We spend more than \$80 billion a year on information technology. There are some 250,000 Federal employees who work on IT, and it really doesn't work. And we are one of the unique committees that can look across all the different bureaus and agencies and do that. And it has been a very productive, good bipartisan work happening in that subcommittee.

We believe we have the opportunity in this Congress to pay particular attention also to the reform component. We are Oversight and Government Reform. So, as it comes to all the personnel issues, those also fall within our jurisdiction. We have already introduced comprehensive bipartisan Postal reform legislation, four members on the Democratic side of the aisle and four on the Republican side of the aisle. And I think and I hope that, on the re-

form side, this will be our first significant piece of legislation. The Postal Service affects every single American, and we focus on that and have a mission to get that moving in the right direction and a financial trajectory to prevent a bailout.

We are also working on reforms that are needed in the workforce, empowering the inspectors general, which we have been very united on, promoting a strong cybersecurity, and other areas within our jurisdiction. As we look to these reforms, we will be sure to look at each problem and encounter these through the lens of authorizing and appropriating committees. I call it triangulating. We have got to be able to triangulate the problem, the Oversight Committee, working with the Committee of authorization, if it is not us, and then also with the Appropriations Committee, to actually institute those reforms.

As has been the case since the 108th Congress, 2003–2008, it is a two-thirds/one-third model, with the minority receiving 33 percent of the staff and budget funds to be used at the discretion of the Ranking Member. In this year's budget request—we did not ask for one last year, but we are asking for a 3-percent increase in this budget this year. We think this modest increase will help us provide not only the staffing resources that we need, but I also felt in the last Congress, the first time I was the Chair, that we didn't do as many field hearings as we would like to do. And that is where you see part of that increase.

My time has expired, and I yield back.

[The joint statement of Mr. Chaffetz and Mr. Cummings follows:]

Joint Statement before the Committee on House Administration
Budget Request for the 115th Congress
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Jason Chaffetz, Chairman
Elijah Cummings, Ranking Member
February 16, 2017

Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, we are pleased to be here today representing the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

The mission of our Committee is to ensure the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of the federal government and all its agencies.

As the principal oversight and investigative committee in the House, we provide a necessary check on the role and power of the Executive branch.

Genuinely good government oversight requires a commitment to expose mismanagement, waste, fraud, and abuse.

Our task is to identify problems, shine a light on them, and propose meaningful reforms to make government work better for those it serves.

We believe we have an opportunity this Congress to pay particular attention to the reform component to our work.

Already this Congress, we introduced comprehensive, bipartisan postal reform legislation and are hopeful we can work together in similar fashion to craft reforms related to the federal workforce, empowering Inspectors General, promoting strong federal cybersecurity, and other areas within our jurisdiction and expertise.

As we look at reforms, we will be sure to look at each problem we encounter through the lens of the authorizing and appropriating Committees and to work collaboratively with them throughout the process.

We will continue efforts to strengthen relationships with our oversight partners at the Government Accountability Office and throughout the community of more than 70 inspectors general.

We are unwavering in our commitment to the inspectors general.

We highlighted their importance and priority by once again making them the focus of our first hearing to start the Congress.

Billions of dollars are wasted each year by the federal government, and the IGs are the taxpayers' first and most crucial line of defense.

We want to ensure they are able to perform their duties efficiently, independently and without interference.

Organizationally, this Congress, we reoriented the Committee's six subcommittees.

We have a new subcommittee - the Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Affairs.

It has legislative and oversight jurisdiction over the relationship between the federal government and states and municipalities, including unfunded mandates, federal regulations, grants, and programs.

We also expanded the focus of the Interior subcommittee and renamed it the Interior, Energy and Environment Subcommittee.

The Committee is comprised of 42 Members, and is allocated for 118 staff personnel slots.

As has been the case since the 108th Congress (2003-04), our minority receives 33% of the staff and budget funds to be used at the discretion of the Ranking Member.

In our budget request, we are asking for a 3% increase.

This modest increase will help us provide for the staffing and other resources necessary to carry out the important work before us this Congress.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.
The Chair will now recognize Ranking Member Cummings for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MARYLAND

Mr. CUMMINGS. Thank you very much, Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady, Members of the Committee.

I want to associate myself with the comments of our Chairman. Our Committee has done quite a bit. We have a very wide jurisdiction. And we are constantly trying to weed out fraud, waste and abuse. We have taken on some very, very difficult and complicated matters and done it, in many instances, in a bipartisan way.

The Chairman will tell you that we have sent out 740 joint letters over the last couple years, and we have dealt with such issues as the Secret Service, where we are still in the process of trying to make sure that that agency runs the way it is supposed to run. But we could not have done it unless it was a bipartisan effort.

But to make those kinds of reforms—the Chairman just talked about the reform part of what we do—to make those kinds of reforms, it takes a lot of effort on the staff's part. We have got to have good people, and we have got to pay them well. I don't know about the Republican side of things, but it seems as fast as we train people and get them really moving forward, the next thing you know, there are people that come along and snatch them. So salaries are very important for us.

The other thing that I want to emphasize is I want to thank the Chairman too. Just this morning, he signed on a letter with me where we sent a letter to the—well, let me back up.

Lieutenant General Flynn had gone over to Russia to have a dinner back in 2015. And according to law, he is supposed to report his relationships with foreign governments, and he was supposed to report any money that he got in from that venture. DOD has told us that he did not.

And so just this morning, I want to thank the Chairman for joining in with me in a joint letter to try to find out what he was paid and why. We are trying to get to the bottom of why he did not report it.

The reason why I am raising that is because we delve into some very sticky subjects. And I think that, when I think about the jurisdiction of the number of things that come to us, it takes a lot of time. It takes a lot of effort. And so, again, the budget for us, I mean, I don't turn back money. I don't have it to turn back. We need every dime we can get. And so I am hoping that—I join the Chairman in requesting the 3-percent increase. I think that is important.

And, again, I want to go to something else that we are involved in, and the Chairman touched on this. And I think, again, it is a great bipartisan effort, but it is an effort that takes time and a lot of effort. That is the Postal bill. This Postal bill we are about to—hopefully, we will have it passed very shortly. But the Chairman and I were just talking about it. We will be in a situation where we will hopefully right the Postal ship, which was really in bad

shape, for the next 20 years, hopefully. But it took a lot of cooperation and a lot of effort.

A lot of times people look at our Committee and say, "Oh, you know, it seems as if there is a lot of negativity," but you would be surprised at the things that we have been able to accomplish. But you can't accomplish it unless you have the resources to accomplish it with.

Of course, technology, we are always trying to keep up with that. Keep in mind that we have one of the greatest threats to our national security, and this is something that we worked on very closely; that is cyber. Cyber is a big deal for us. And the Chairman, to his credit, has spent a lot of time trying to make sure that we look at those kinds of issues so that we can play our part as a Committee to stay ahead of that.

And so I hope that you will look at our situation favorably. I understand that we have a major role to play. We have a lot of whistleblowers now coming forward. We have to deal with them too. And so, again, I want to thank you for this opportunity, and I look forward to your decision.

With that, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the Ranking Member for yielding back. And I thank you both for your testimony.

We obviously want to make sure that we fulfill what is our body's constitutional role to be a coequal branch of this government. And we have probably handicapped ourselves some in having what we need to do our job. And so I appreciate the effort, your willingness to work together. We will take a serious look at your request. Thank you for the job you are doing.

And I also at this point recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Brady, for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Ranking Member, for being here.

The only question I would have had was the distribution, one-third/two-thirds, and you have both answered that. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Any other members have any other questions? Anyone? That was easy, wasn't it?

Mr. CUMMINGS. Thank you very much.

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. Thanks. We appreciate it. We will look at it and be in touch. Thank you.

The Committee now welcomes Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Johnson.

Would the official reporter please enter a page break into the hearing record to begin a new section.

The CHAIRMAN. The House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology is tasked with oversight of programs at NASA, the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Science Foundation, among others. Its primary focus is on scientific discoveries, space exploration, and new technologies. I want to welcome Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Johnson.

At this time, the Chair will recognize Chairman Smith for 5 minutes.

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ranking Member Brady. And thank you, other Members of the Committee.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify to you today about the Science, Space, and Technology Committee's budget for the 115th 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 0.4 percent of our funding for the last Congress went unspent once all obligations for 2016 were satisfied. We have done more with less, streamlined our administrative processes and procedures, and cut many IT and administrative support costs.

The Committee was very active in the last Congress, both in our oversight efforts and promoting legislation that advances America's interest in science, space, and technology. The Committee held over 100 hearings and approved 26 bills in the last Congress. Of those 26 bills, 22 received bipartisan support. In total, we passed 40 bills on the House floor and had 22 bills signed into law.

The Committee worked all the way until the final hours of the last Congress. In fact, the last bill signed into law by the previous administration was the American Innovation and Competitiveness Act signed into law on January 6 of this year. This law incorporates provisions from 11 House-passed Science Committee bills.

A number that may make our budget request look small is \$42 billion. That is the amount of Federal Government agency budgets that the Committee will consider, reprioritize, and reauthorize in the next 2 years. Times are changing, and the competition for who will lead the world is heating up. 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 60 years to become very broad and diverse.

Mr. Chairman, as you mentioned a while ago, 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 Di-

rectorate, the U.S. Fire Administration, and the United States Geological Survey, among others.

To carry out this task will require an increase in staff on our legislative teams. In addition, the job opportunities opening up for majority staff in the new administration will require pay increases in order to retain the valuable, experienced Committee staff vital to drafting this legislation. 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 Science Committee ensures that taxpayers and the American people receive a strong return on their investment.

Our request before you for \$11 million in the 115th Congress will allow the Committee to unlock new knowledge, increase productivity, raise American standard of living, and create more jobs. It will enable us to ensure that our agencies spend taxpayers' dollars efficiently, that our policies will open the door to new scientific breakthroughs, and that America will remain on the forefront of new technologies and discoveries.

We welcome your questions and thank you for your interest in our Committee's budget.

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

Statement of Science Committee Chairman Lamar Smith
Committee on House Administration
Science Committee Funding Hearing for the 115th Congress
2:15 pm on Thursday, February 16, 2017

Chairman Harper, 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 115th Congress.

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It will enable us to ensure that our agencies spend taxpayers' dollars efficiently, that our policies will open the door to new scientific breakthroughs, and that America will remain on the forefront of new technologies and discoveries.

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

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The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.
The Chair will now recognize the Ranking Member, Ms. Johnson, for 5 minutes.

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

Ms. JOHNSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and 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 115th Congress. Chairman Smith has already presented an overview of the Committee's finances. So I will make brief remarks on the minority budget.

As you know, Chairman Smith and I don't always agree on everything, but we do agree that an increase in resources available to the Committee would be very helpful to us as we conduct our oversight and authorization activities.

We incurred a 26.2-percent reduction in our Committee's budget in 2010 to 2013 that forced us to defer filling staff slots as well as to cut 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. And, thankfully, in the 113th and 114th Congresses, we received some stability in our budgets and were able to hire valuable new staff members and carry out several oversight trips.

In the 115th Congress, the Committee will need to develop and advance legislation to reauthorize or provide policy guidance on many of the agencies under the Committee's jurisdiction, including NASA, NSF, NIST, NOAA, 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 this Congress, including some that will result in a need to develop additional legislation.

As I have said to this Committee in the past, I place a high priority on making sure that minority members and staff will have the opportunity to appropriately be informed and engaged in the legislative and oversight activities of the Committee.

We made full use of our funds to carry out our responsibilities in the 114th Congress, and there will be no reduction in that need for at least the travel, the level of resources provided in the 114th. We still have several unfilled staff slots, and that staffing shortfall affects our ability to carry out our legislative and oversight activities.

Our budgetary restraints also affect our ability to compete with the private sector for skilled professional staff. As we are given additional funding for the 115th, I would plan, at a minimum, to hire a staff assistant to allow senior professional staff to focus their time on oversight and authorization activities.

In addition, I think that it will be very important for members of the staff to undertake oversight visits to government research facilities and laboratories under the jurisdiction of the Committee. It has been years since members have visited most of these facilities. And it is important that our policy initiatives be informed by an understanding of the actual work being undertaken at these Fed-

eral laboratories and our research universities. This need especially impacts our new members.

If we receive additional funds, I will plan on taking a number of specific domestic members and staff codels, including one to the West Coast to visit the DOE national laboratories as well as NASA facilities and high-tech enterprises. I would also like to have members visit Cape Kennedy in Florida and the Johnson Space Center in Texas to review NASA's activities, since it is the largest single authorization account under the Committee's jurisdiction.

In summary, I strongly believe that the Committee would benefit, on a bipartisan basis, from the increased funding being requested by our Chairman.

Thank you, and I would be happy to answer any questions.

I might add, since I have got a few seconds left, this is the most important Committee for the future of this Nation.

[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 16, 2017

Good morning, Chairman Harper, 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 115th Congress. Chairman Smith has already presented an overview of the Committee's finances, so I will make brief remarks on the Minority budget.

As you know, Chairman Smith and I don't always agree on everything, but we do agree that an increase in resources available to the Committee would be very helpful to us as we conduct our oversight and authorization activities. We incurred a 26.2% reduction in our Committee's budget from 2010 to 2013 that 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 and 114th Congresses, we received some stability in our budgets and were able to hire valuable new staff Members and carry out several oversight trips.

In the 115th Congress, the Committee will need to develop and advance legislation to reauthorize or provide policy guidance for many of the agencies under the Committee's jurisdiction, including NASA, NSF, NIST, NOAA, 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 115th Congress, including some that will result in the need to develop additional legislation.

As I have said to this Committee in the past, 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 funds to carry out our responsibilities in the 114th Congress, and there will be no reduction in the need for at least the level of resources provided in the 114th

Congress. We still have several unfilled staff slots, and that staffing shortfall affects our ability to carry out our legislative and oversight activities. Our budgetary constraints also affect our ability to compete with the private sector for skilled professional staff. If we are given additional funding for the 115th, I would plan, at a minimum, to hire a staff assistant to allow senior professional staff to focus their time on oversight and authorization activities.

In addition, I think that it will be very important for Members and staff to undertake oversight visits to government research facilities and laboratories under the jurisdiction of the Committee in the 115th Congress. It has been years since Members have visited most of those facilities, and it is important that our policy initiatives be informed by an understanding of the actual work being undertaken at our federal laboratories and our research universities. This need especially impacts our new Members. If we receive additional funds, I would plan on taking a number of specific domestic Member/staff CODELS, including one to the West Coast to visit DOE National Laboratories, as well as NASA facilities and high tech enterprises. I would also like to have Members visit Cape Kennedy in Florida and the Johnson Space Center in Texas to review NASA's activities, since it is the largest single authorization account under the Committee's jurisdiction.

In summary, I strongly believe that the Committee would benefit on a bipartisan basis from the increased funding being requested by the Chairman.

Thank you, and I will be happy to answer any questions you might have.

The CHAIRMAN. There you go. That is on the record and official, and nobody is objecting to that statement. So we thank you both for your testimony and recognizing the importance of it. And I know we have, particularly this country and many of us that are, you know, my age have great pride in the history of NASA. And so your role there is to see that we are where we need to be. And so when you look at space exploration, you look at what they have done, your Committee has a critical role on that and among other that you have. So we will look at your requests and take a careful look at that.

And I want to thank you both for your time.

At this time, I will recognize the Ranking Member of the Committee, Mr. Brady, for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just want to, for the record, the one-third/two-thirds minority-majority distribution is in effect?

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Yes.

Mr. BRADY. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Ranking Member.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman yields back.

I now recognize the Vice Chair of the Committee, Mr. Davis, for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Johnson. I appreciate your comments. And while we will not object to the comments about the status of the Committee, we too think our Committee is the best Committee in Congress.

But, you know, you mentioned oversight and your oversight responsibilities in many of your comments. And I appreciate that, and I think it is something that we as authorizers don't take advantage of enough sometimes.

And, with that, do you think that, with your budget request that you have made, that you are going to be able to fulfill all of your oversight responsibilities?

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Well, let me respond first. And I am happy to yield to the Ranking Member as well.

Mr. Davis, the reason we have asked for a 2.8-percent increase is to do just what you suggested, that is, be able to execute our oversight responsibilities in a better way than we are right now.

That 2.8-percent increase, as I mentioned a while ago, is an increase that we I think can justify. We have used almost all of our budget in the last Congress. And we will use these additional funds for oversight. We will use the additional funds for field hearings that we haven't been able to conduct.

And, also, if you take a look at our personnel, our staff ceiling is 67, but we only have 56 staff members now. So we have 11 vacancies. And so that 2.8-percent increase would allow us to conduct those additional oversight responsibilities, to attract staff that we need to do just that, and also to engage in more field hearings, which, of course, are staff-intensive as well.

So let me also add, in the case of oversight, and I am not sure that all full Committees have a separate oversight subcommittee,

but we do, and that shows the importance that we attach to that responsibility.

Also, if I may just respond to what the Chairman mentioned a while ago, and that is the interest of the American people in NASA in general and particularly among Members of Congress as well. The Ranking Member and I just came from a full Committee hearing, and the title of that full Committee hearing was "NASA: Past, Present, and Future." And we had some of the best witnesses you can imagine, including two former astronauts, various scientists, and others talk about the future of NASA. And it really is a fascinating subject.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Thank you.

Mr. DAVIS. Well, we wish you would have brought some of those fascinating witnesses here to join you today.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. If you need those additional witnesses for that 2.8-percent, we will be able to bring them over here, I am sure.

Mr. DAVIS. Ms. Johnson.

Ms. JOHNSON. My response is very brief. I do agree with everything he is saying, and we celebrate that.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. I don't hear that very often, that she agrees with everything I said.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you need us to get her to say that one more time?

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Yes. We are taping this. We will play it at Committee markups.

Mr. DAVIS. We will do that only, Mr. Chairman, if you tell the Committee that the House Administration is the best Committee in the Congress. Would you do that?

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Davis yields back.

I now recognize Mrs. Comstock for 5 minutes.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And having come over here for this hearing today from the Science Committee and those fascinating witnesses, I do agree and share the sentiments of our witnesses here and appreciate the good work we have.

And I don't know; you may have mentioned it, but it is a very high volume of hearings also. So we do cover quite a bit. And the staff are very, very good, as they are here also.

Thanks.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentlelady yields back.

I now recognize Mr. Loudermilk for 5 minutes.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, Mr. Chairman, in the 114th Congress, chairing the Oversight Subcommittee on the Science Committee, I can attest to just how busy that Committee really is and the tremendous work that it was doing, and looking forward to continuing working on that Committee in that light. And I think it is doing a tremendous amount of work, especially with the broad jurisdiction the Committee has.

Just one quick question. You have mentioned that, in the last Congress, the Committee used all but four-tenths of 1 percent of the budget. With these increased funds, do you believe that you can make similar efficient use of these moneys?

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Absolutely. And I appreciate the question.

Mr. Chairman, let me point out that both Mr. Loudermilk and Mrs. Comstock, as she said, are members of the Science Committee. So it is nice to be in good company here today.

Mr. Loudermilk, in response to your question, yes, again, we used up virtually all of our budget in the last Congress, and we used it well. I believe we were particularly active in a number of ways. And our number one priority is really to try to reauthorize all the agencies under our jurisdiction, which hasn't been done in 20 years. And that is going to require a lot of staff time, a lot of personnel. And we want to do that better than we have in the past too.

And then I mentioned a while ago the additional field hearings, the additional oversight that is necessary, as well as trying to fill some of those 11 vacancies that we have. And the 11 vacancies, by the way, are on both sides. That is the combination from both majority and the minority. And so we would like to, in effect, staff up. It doesn't exceed our ceiling, but it is going to require some additional funds, and we think that 2.8 percent will just about be right.

So I appreciate the question.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Yes. And let me say that the work the Oversight Committee has been doing has been tremendous, even uncovering things that other committees have not, like cybersecurity breaches with the FDIC that just through the work of this Committee was able to uncover and investigate.

So, with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The Chairman. The gentleman yields back.

And certainly the cybersecurity issues are extremely important in this Congress, and we appreciate the work. We will take a careful look at this.

I appreciate you both being here. Thank you.

Mr. Smith of Texas. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I ask unanimous consent that testimony for the Committee on House Administration's budget be entered into the record.

Without objection, so ordered.

[The statement of The Chairman follows:]

**Statement of the Honorable Gregg Harper (R-MS)
Chairman, Committee on House Administration
Hearing on “Committee Funding for the 115th Congress”
February 15, 2017**

Members of the Committee, I am pleased to present the budget request for the 115th Congress for the Committee on House Administration.

I respectfully request \$10,343,130 for the 115th Congress. For the first session, the Committee requests \$5,021,565 and \$5,321,565 for the second session. A substantial portion of the requested increase for 2018 is to support our Committee’s institutional role hosting New Member Orientation which I will discuss later. These funds are separate from our day-to-day operational budget request.

Our Committee anticipates a demanding agenda this Congress. At the top of the list is a need to strengthen the House’s cybersecurity posture. The Committee will work closely with the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer to continue to improve the security of House information and networks.

The budget request includes funding for a technical/cybersecurity professional to assist our Director of Technology Policy with these initiatives.

In addition, we will continue to address critical Capitol Security issues and conduct vigorous oversight of House administrative operations and federal elections. The request includes funding for an entry-level counsel position to assist our General Counsel

on election law matters, as well as funds to support travel for contested elections.

The Committee will continue to explore methods to streamline Member and Committee office operations, such as the committee hearing publication project, which can result in savings and increased efficiencies.

The Committee also intends to expand and enhance the successful outreach and training program for Member and Committee offices initiated last Congress. The program includes staff professional development training courses and educational briefings on timely administrative topics.

Finally, the Committee is responsible for the bipartisan New Member Orientation program. This program helps transition Members-elect into their new role by educating them on House Rules, regulations and administrative operations of running a congressional office. Funds allocated for New Member Orientation are internally separated from the Committee's operating budget and are used exclusively to support that program.

The Committee's budget request was developed in consultation with Ranking Minority Member Brady and I thank him for his support. In keeping with the long-standing practice of the Committee, the Minority will receive 1/3 of our Committee's operating budget and staff slots.

The Committee has operated with significantly reduced resources since the 111th Congress and has been among the

smallest Committee percentage increases over the last several years. If funded at the requested amount, the Committee's operating budget will be \$1.02 million (9.3%) lower than the 111th Congress authorization. With New Member Orientation funds included, the request remains \$726,359 (6.6%) below the 111th Congress amount.

I believe the funding request will enable the Committee to adequately fulfill our important responsibilities in a fiscally prudent manner.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the hearing is adjourned.
[Whereupon, at 1:16 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]